

that this method of receiving pupils who pay premiums as I have described, must necessarily have the effect of preventing the employment of a large number of young persons who would be only too pleased to have an opportunity to be apprenticed to this particular trade.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: We will have to secure a permit to cross the street if we continue like this.

Hon. V. Hamersley: No one will be able to do anything.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You have not legislated yet for the type of sanitary paper employers should provide for their employees.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: It is very evident that you are not a manufacturer or you would appreciate a Bill like this.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There is another clause in the Bill that is essential if we agree to the amendment to which I have already referred. It is the clause that will empower the Governor, on the recommendation of the Minister, to revoke any declaration that he may have previously made declaring any premises in which not more than four persons being members of the same family and working at home, are employed, not to be a factory. It is thought that circumstances may arise subsequent to the declaration of premises of this description not to be regarded as a factory, which make it desirable that the Act should have application. In those circumstances it is considered that the Governor should, if recommended by the Minister, have power to revoke any such declaration previously made and to apply the provisions of the Act to the premises concerned. It is not desirable that a declaration once made should be irrevocable, notwithstanding what circumstances may arise. I think I have covered practically all the points dealt with in the Bill. It differs slightly from the measure that was introduced last year, and has one or two new features. I hope the Bill will be given every consideration by members because there has been such a large increase in the number of small concerns, which are to-day exempted from the operations of the Act, that they have become an absolute menace to the bona fide manufacturer, who may employ one or two more persons than are engaged in the smaller concerns. Because of the addi-

tional one or two employees, the bona fide manufacturers are subject to unfair competition and I do not think any member of the House approves of that sort of thing. If agreed to, the Bill will make a big difference to the legitimate employer. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

## ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [6.8]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 6.9 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

*Wednesday, 21st August, 1935.*

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

## QUESTION—MINING RESERVATIONS.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Lands: What was the total number of reservations granted under the Mining Act for the purpose of gold-mining for the years ended 30th June, 1933, 1934, and 1935 respectively.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: The total number of temporary reserves granted for the years ended 30th June, 1933, 1934, and 1935 respectively was—1/7/1932 to 30/6/1933, 22. 1/7/1933 to 30/6/1934, 36. 1/7/1934 to 30/6/1935, 48.

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.***Ninth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.33]: The Acting Leader of the Opposition in the absence of his leader entered, it seems to me prematurely, upon a political campaign against the Government. I recognise the difficulties the hon. member was faced with. First of all, he is acting for the Leader of the Opposition, but an Opposition which is a hybrid Opposition and, like all hybrids, sterile.

Mr. Thorn: That is very funny.

The PREMIER: It is not funny, it is true. And let me tell the hon. member who has, so early in my speech, ventured to make an interjection, that I shall have something more to say in regard to the hon. member himself before I conclude. The Acting Leader of the Opposition expressed his regret at the illness of our colleague, Mr. Kenneally. Whilst I accept his expression of regret, and whilst I take the view that notwithstanding the illness of a Minister his department, or the work of his department, should not be exempt from criticism, still I do take exception to a remark of the hon. member. The hon. member said that notwithstanding his, Mr. Kenneally's, many absences from the State, and remembering also that the Deputy Premier, Mr. McCallum, was absent from his office for a long period attending Premiers' Conferences in the Eastern States owing to the regrettable illness of the Premier—

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I should have said "absent with the Premier."

The PREMIER: It is not what he should have said; it is what the hon. member did say. He sneered—

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: No, I did not.

The PREMIER: He sneered at the appointment of the "Minister for Australian Labour unions." Those are his words—"the Minister for Australian Labour unions."

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: "Unity" is what I said.

The PREMIER: I have the words of the hon. member, as reported. He said there never was any justification for the appointment of a full-time Minister for Employment, that the present Minister could have done the job just as well as the previous Minister had done. The regret expressed by the hon.

member for the illness of Mr. Kenneally was mere hypocrisy.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: No, no.

The PREMIER: I shall show the hon. member.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: My regret for his illness is really genuine.

The PREMIER: Yes, but the hon. member did not take care to be sure of his facts. He said that Mr. McCallum was absent for long periods at Premiers' Conferences owing to my illness. Actually, during my absence on a health trip Mr. McCallum never left the State. That shows that the hon. member was entirely incorrect in regard to his facts. He said that Mr. Kenneally had left the State on many occasions. Well, Mr. Kenneally has left the State on more than one occasion to attend conferences in the Eastern States. The hon. member criticised Mr. Kenneally's absence from the State on business which might be regarded as not of the State. This is where I protest. It was in the nature of a personal attack on the Minister, and I should like to say that Mr. Kenneally's activities, even when they may have occasioned his visits to the Eastern States, have been such as have been of very great advantage to Western Australia and, beyond that, to Australia as a whole. Who will deny that Labour, as an Australian-wide organisation, is of immense power and influence to our country? Will the hon. member say, will he suggest that it matters not what policy might be adopted by the Australian Labour Party? And in the councils of the Australian Labour Party Mr. Kenneally carries great influence, his advice and his attitude in the councils of this party are altogether enduring, and even though they may have involved his absence from the State for a few weeks occasionally, it is altogether for the good of this State and for the Commonwealth of Australia. The hon. member spoke about unemployment and quoted figures to show that the reduction in unemployment had already commenced during the term of the previous Government. It may be so, but the fact remains that when the hon. member's Government left office, there were 13,575 persons still receiving Government relief work for sustenance. Of that number over 34 per cent. were receiving sustenance only. And after 12 months the persons on the hands of the Government were reduced in number from 13,575 to 11,396, of which number 17

per cent. were in receipt of sustenance only, as against 34 per cent. when this Government took office. To-day the total number of people on the hands of the Government is 9,173. The total reduction since the present Government took office is 4,402. What is of the utmost importance is that 8 per cent. of these people are receiving sustenance as against 34 per cent. at the end of the term of the previous Government. The fact that the drop in the number of unemployed during the last nine months of the term of the previous Government was greater than during the last nine months of the present Government, even if true, means nothing. It is the administration as a whole and not any arbitrarily selected period that counts. The hon. member proceeded to say, "Unfortunately the present Government seems to be mainly concerned in providing jobs for metropolitan trade unionists, and is not vitally concerned whether the work for which they are paying men is justified or not." He further said, "My principal complaint against the Government is that they will persist in spending the bulk of the State's money in and around the metropolitan area, mainly for the benefit of their political supporters." It is the old attempt to raise the cry of town versus country. Could any man give expression to a more miserable sentiment than that the Government were actuated in their expenditure by a desire to find work for their political supporters? In trying to bolster up this impossible case, the hon. member said that a considerable amount of money had been expended on Stirling Highway. In the first place the expenditure on Stirling Highway is from traffic funds, and under the Act could not be expended in country districts. As to employing men and spending money in the metropolitan area, the fact is that for every man employed by the Government on relief works in the metropolis there are two employed in the country. Let me take main roads. In the country, at the 30th June, 1935, 1,737 men were employed, and 107 in the town. In the forests 1,044 men were employed, and none in the town; on railways 747 in the country and 66 in the town; on water supplies, sewerage, irrigation and drainage, 932 in the country and 1,916 in the town; land clearing, 771 in the country, and none in the town; and "other" (that is miscellaneous) 589 in the country, and 490 in

the town. The total figures are 5,820 men employed in the country and 2,579 in the town. Surely that meets the miserable charge of the hon. member concerning the employment of men in the city for political purposes. As all previous Governments have known, and the hon. member is perfectly aware, it is not possible to employ all the men in the country, and work must be found for them. The hon. member's charge of spending money for the benefit of our political supporters is really a charge of corruption against the Government. Does he stand up for that? I ask the hon. member to substantiate his case with a specific charge. Money has had to be spent both in the country and in the metropolitan area in some directions because of the wicked neglect of the Government of which the hon. member formed a part, especially with regard to railways and tramways. Here are some figures that may interest the House. For our two completed years of office our expenditure on works in the metropolitan area was £1,156,000, and in the country £2,848,000. That is 71 per cent. of our money was spent in the country, and 29 per cent. of it in the metropolitan area. For the same period the total loan expenditure in the metropolitan area was £1,685,000, and in the country £3,762,000. That is 70 per cent. of the total loan expenditure has been in the country districts, and 70 per cent. of the men who were employed were employed in the country districts. Yet the hon. member is humbug enough to say that the Government will persist in spending the bulk of the State's money in and around the metropolitan area, mainly for the benefit of their political supporters. The figures I have quoted show that there is not the shadow of justification for such a statement. It is quite unworthy of the hon. member to have made it, and to have made it without due inquiry into the facts and figures. His criticism of the financial position surely revealed his deplorable ignorance. He entirely evaded the argument advanced by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe. Here I hesitate to say what I know, but I do not believe that the figures the Acting Leader of the Opposition put forward in respect to the financial position of the State were his own.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Whose were they?

The PREMIER: I have a fairly good idea whose they were.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: They were taken from Mr. McCallum's financial statement.

The PREMIER: That statement has nothing to do with the figures that were quoted by the hon. member.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: With reference to loan moneys.

The PREMIER: I have an idea that the figures he quoted did not come from him direct, but came through another channel.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That is not true.

The PREMIER: Is it not?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It is absolutely untrue.

The PREMIER: We shall see.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That is where I got the figures.

The PREMIER: In all the years I have been in the House, and during the time when I occupied a position on the other side of the House, I have never listened to or encouraged any suggestion—and many suggestions were made to me—from any member of the Public Service. I hope we are not now entering into a period when a policy the reverse of that is adopted.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I ask the Premier to accept my assurance that I got the figures out of the statement made to the House last year by Mr. McCallum. I can give the Premier the pages dealing with the revenue and the loan figures if he likes.

The PREMIER: I accept the hon. member's assurance.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I am glad to hear it, because your innuendoes point to the contrary.

Mr. Thorn: They are a reflection on the service.

The PREMIER: There is no question of reflecting upon the service. I have been long enough in public life to know that the Public Service are not 100 per cent. right.

Mr. Thorn: The Acting Leader of the Opposition assured the Premier on several occasions that he did not get the information from any member of the Public Service.

The PREMIER: I accept the assurance. There will be something more about that later.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Surely members are entitled to refer to figures that have been published.

The PREMIER: The hon. member did not himself compile the figures he quoted. He had no idea of them, and had no understanding of them.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: They were all published.

The PREMIER: They were prepared for him.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Not by an officer of the Public Service.

The PREMIER: About that we shall perhaps have something more to say before the session closes. The hon. member evaded the real argument advanced by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe. The Government have been attacked on many occasions for their loan expenditure. It is said we have piled up the public debt of the State.

The Minister for Justice: It is said we were absolutely extravagant.

The PREMIER: That is the general charge against the Government made by members of the Opposition, by this or that half, in the Press and elsewhere. They say we have piled up the public debt. That was the point that was being answered by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe. To evade the real issue the Acting Leader of the Opposition joined up the loan expenditure with the revenue expenditure. The charge that we have been borrowing money at a rate greater than was the case with our predecessors is absolutely false. The total increase in the State's indebtedness during the term of the previous Government, including borrowing for loan expenditure and deficits, was £9,200,000, and the total increase in the case of the present Government for the same purposes will be £9,344,000—a difference, spread over three years, of £144,000. That is a complete refutation of the charge that the present Government have been borrowing extravagantly. Both the Acting Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Nationalist Party adduced figures to show that the present Government had more revenue than the previous Government. Are we not entitled to some credit for the increased revenue which by our policy we secured? We provided employment in place of sustenance, and from this the increased revenue was largely secured. In addition to direct benefits, all the channels of revenue have benefited indirectly. Further, our graduated emergency tax, substituted for the other side's wretched flat rate of 4½d. in the pound, including sustenance workers, brought in considerable additional revenue. But that was a matter of policy. The difference between the policy of an Administration that puts a 4½d. in the pound tax

on married people with £2 a week and on single people with £1 a week, irrespective of their condition, and the policy of the present Administration, which has exempted all persons up to the basic wage from payment of the tax, naturally has its effect on revenue. Whilst the tax imposed by the other side was one of a flat rate of 4½d. in the pound and equally applicable to the man with £2 a week and to the man with £2,000 a week, our policy altered that, and brought the tax up to a maximum of 9d. in the pound. Thus our policy in that respect is responsible for increased revenue. Has our mining policy not helped the revenue? What was the mining policy of the previous Government? Had they any policy at all with regard to mining? If so, it was a policy of negation, of sitting down and doing nothing. On the other hand, the present Government started a mining policy which in the first year of our office placed 2,000 men out in the mining areas of Western Australia, men who were on sustenance previously, and who would have been on sustenance to-day in Blackboy Camp had the mining policy of the previous Government prevailed. The result has been of great advantage not only to the people but to the revenue of the State. Whatever may have been paid by way of sustenance or assistance to those men who went out into the mining areas has been amply, and more than amply, repaid by the work they have done and the discoveries they have made. Then, because the present Government have had more revenue than the previous Government, we are accused by the Acting Leader of the Opposition of some extraordinary sort of financial figure-faking. However, with increased revenue there is always increased expenditure. Anyone who has had experience of Ministerial office knows perfectly well that an increase of revenue also brings the responsibilities of increased expenditure. With it all, the present Government have been able to bring about a great reduction in the deficits of the State. From an annual average of £1,281,000 during the term of the previous Administration, the deficit was brought down last year to £167,000. But all this brings us increased expenditure, which is incurred in many ways: for example, in the railways, the tramways, water supply, sewerage, and trading concerns. There has been a cessation of the use of loan money to bolster

up revenue, for instance, in interest due to the Agricultural Bank but not collected. Last year over £300,000 Agricultural Bank interest due but not collected was not taken into revenue from loan funds, as would have been done under the practice of previous years. In that respect, naturally, the Government are given no credit. To an extent, the present Government have made a restoration, in the salaries and wages of Government employees, of cuts made by the previous Government. Last year we incurred increased expenditure to the extent of £188,000 in this respect. Do hon. members opposite object to that? Do hon. members representing the National Party here object to what the Government have done in this way to restore salaries and wages cuts? Do they take into account these figures when criticising the total revenue and the total expenditure of the present Government as compared with those of the previous Government? The present Government have also had to meet expenditure on what is known as "Belated repairs"; that is, repairs to the assets of the State. Owing to the shameful neglect of the previous Government, £100,000 was debited last year to revenue for railway repairs alone. Therefore it is futile to add the revenue expenditure to the loan expenditure of the respective Governments by way of showing that we have had more money to spend, without having regard to the services we have performed with the extra funds. One might just as well compare the expenditure of Western Australia with that of New South Wales or Victoria. The comparison which has been made is not only irrelevant but ridiculous. It does not invalidate the contention that Labour has increased the indebtedness of the State by only £144,000 more than the previous Administration increased it. The difference is that we have employed the money on employing people instead of on deficits. We have given work to the unemployed. We are creating assets of value to the State with exactly the same amount of money as the previous Government used for sustenance and for financing deficits. The Leader of the National Party expresses concern for the future, and asserts that no effort has been made to spend loan moneys on a concerted plan. Well, what is the concerted plan? I am, of course, aware of the fact that the hon. member has advocated a policy of Empire works. With that sug-

gestion I find no fault, but what are the possibilities and what are the chances? Here we are faced with a situation which is immediate, which has to be met now, at once. So whilst in general the policy of Empire works might be entirely sound and good, surely it will be understood that before any achievements can be made in that direction, many years must pass. First of all, there will have to be conferences and meetings between the various portions of the Empire. Then there will have to be agreements entered into by all the Parliaments concerned. Seeing that we are unable to get agreement by a visit of our Prime Minister and some of his Ministers to the Old Country on what might be considered matters of mutual interest in regard to trading affairs, what possible chance would there be of arriving at an agreement of any kind on such an idea as that of Empire works—I mean, within a reasonable period? Therefore I consider that the time factor puts such an idea out of consideration, precludes our considering any such policy for the solution of our unemployment problem and our other difficulties of to-day. Sound as the policy of Empire works may be in essence, it is too impracticable of prompt achievement. Those who are governing the Empire have not taken the proposal seriously. Here may I digress for a moment to say, with all sincerity, that I believe there are within the Government of Great Britain men, or at least one man, not concerned at all about the Dominions.

Members: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: He is a man who has no conception of Australia, its troubles and difficulties. He is a man who views Australia in the light of the boss, or as a master would look upon the buttons or the yard-man. I will not hesitate to say who I mean. The man who has no conception of Australia, who is not concerned with Australia, and who has no desire, in my opinion, to understand, or know, Australia, is the present head of the Dominions Department in Great Britain. Reverting to the proposal of the Leader of the National Party, I would ask him what is the use of a proposal such as he advanced if it will not provide relief for people who want assistance straight away? I suggest to the hon. member that that is not the way out. Although, perhaps, all right in essence, it is certainly not the way out of our present

difficulties. Then the Leader of the National Party raised the question of the relationship between the Commonwealth and the States, particularly Western Australia. The secession petition was rejected and therefore we must endeavour to rectify our disabilities within Australia. That petition was rejected by a committee of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and not by the British Parliament. It was not rejected by the House of Commons nor yet by the House of Lords, but only by a committee appointed by those authorities. With much that the hon. member stated with regard to the manner in which the petition was received, handled and treated by the committee, I am in agreement, but I suppose we may accept the fact that, as no effective protest has been raised by the House of Commons, although the matter has not come before that tribunal, the House of Commons has endorsed the action of the committee. Therefore we have to meet the situation as we find it. It is true, as the hon. member says, that when the announcement of the decision of that committee was made public, I said that that would not be the end of the fight. Now it seems inevitable that the fight must be waged in Australia. There are, I think, two aspects. There is the adjustment of the financial relationship of the Commonwealth and all the States, and there is also the assessment of compensation to the States that suffered special disabilities. A Constitutional conference was held in February of last year. On that occasion the States were unable to reach unanimity on the proposals submitted by the Commonwealth, but efforts must be maintained to secure some kind of agreement. To that end, I have proposed to the Premiers of the other two smaller States that a conference should be called in order to consider our difficulties and explore the possibilities. By that means the whole situation could be examined. With regard to our special disabilities, the work of the Federal Grants Commission is not yet completed, and while we may disagree with the findings of the Grants Commission that were announced last year, it must be remembered that those findings are only tentative. The members of the Commission were appointed for a period of three years, and we must hope for good results in their final year. The discussions with the Commonwealth have created a valuable good feeling with

the State, and I have every confidence that the Commission will endeavour to assess our disabilities impartially. The Acting Leader of the Opposition (Hon. P. D. Ferguson) made use of these remarks with regard to the question of finance—

South Australia is the first State in the Commonwealth to recover her financial position since the depression commenced . . . . South Australia has shown a credit balance in her finances . . . . To a very large extent the reason for South Australia's recovery has been due to the care extended to those who are engaged in the agricultural industry . . . . . Through adopting that policy, South Australia has achieved that position, and has turned the corner.

The Minister for Lands: He is very sanguine!

The PREMIER: Of course, the statements made by the Acting Leader of the Opposition are not at all in accordance with the facts, as I shall show. South Australia is the most highly taxed State in the Commonwealth. Moreover, South Australia's balanced budget was due entirely to Commonwealth grants. South Australia finished the last financial year with a surplus of £36,000, and Western Australia finished that period with a deficit of £167,000, the difference being £203,000. Last year, South Australia received from the Commonwealth a total grant of £1,576,000, while Western Australia received from the Commonwealth £733,000. The difference between the grant to South Australia and the grant to Western Australia was £843,000 in favour of South Australia.

Mr. Patrick: As assessed by the Federal Commission.

The PREMIER: Had we received the same favourable assistance from the Commonwealth as did South Australia, we would have had a surplus of not £36,000, as South Australia did, but of nearly £700,000.

The Minister for Lands: Then we would have turned the corner!

The PREMIER: We would have been well up the straight, and home.

The Minister for Justice: We would have been in Easy-street.

The PREMIER: Moreover, the South Australian income tax rates are the highest in Australia and, according to the Federal Grants Commission, the ability of South Australia to meet those rates is the lowest.

Mr. Patrick: That is why South Australia received the grant.

The PREMIER: Let me emphasise for the hon. member's benefit the statement I have

made. The South Australian income tax rates are the highest in Australia and, according to the Grants Commission, the ability of the people of that State to meet those rates is the lowest in Australia. That is the position. Then again, the South Australian sustenance rates are the lowest in Australia. According to a statement submitted to the Loan Council, out of a total of 126,000 persons in Australia who were dependent upon sustenance, South Australia had 36,000, more than any other State, or well over one-fourth of the whole, despite its small population.

The Minister for Water Supplies: And South Australia is an example to this State!

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: What about the seasons in the agricultural districts? Did that phase not have a great effect?

The PREMIER: We have our troubles, and our ups and downs with regard to seasonal conditions, and surely the hon. member would not suggest for one moment that because of the seasons, things are favourable to us as a Government.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: But with this State—

The PREMIER: We have to accept the position, all in all, in such matters.

The Minister for Justice: And last year the crop was not too satisfactory.

The PREMIER: Yet the Acting Leader of the Opposition had the temerity to say that because of the agricultural conscience of the South Australian Government, that State had turned the corner. That was his statement, and he followed it up by saying that South Australia had recovered her financial position.

Mr. Marshall: He would not say that if he were in South Australia at the moment.

The PREMIER: No. Most people in this State will be mighty thankful we are not involved in such conditions as exist in South Australia. In both Houses of Parliament, and elsewhere, on various recent occasions, the Government have been attacked for not enforcing, against the workers, the penal provisions of the Arbitration Act. The charge against the Government is that of partiality. It has been said that the penal sections of the Act are being enforced against employers but not against employees. Those are the charges, and they are absolutely without foundation. I invite anyone to mention one instance where

the present Government have invoked the penal sections of the Act against an employer. Such action may be, and has been, taken by unions, but it is equally competent for the employers to take action against unions if they so desire. It is illogical and ridiculous to say that harmonious relationships would be impaired if action were taken by the employers and, therefore, the Government should launch prosecutions. What kind of a complaint is that? It is open, as everyone knows, to those concerned, whether employer or employee, to take action under the provisions of the Arbitration Act. But because in some instances unions of employees, or the representatives of the employees, have taken action against employers and because no action has been taken by the employers themselves, that in itself, it would appear, constitutes a grievance on the part of the employers. The explanation made is that if the employers were to take such action, it would create trouble and disagreement. But the results would be exactly the same if the Government took action or if the employers took action. A member in another place stated that the union officials became virtually industrial inspectors under the Act on the one hand, and on the other hand that it was surely not the employers' duty to institute proceedings against offending unions. Surely that is an illogical statement! The unions take action only when the Act empowers them to do so, in the same way as the Act empowers employers to take action. Of course the employers are merely trying to force on the Government a task they are not prepared to tackle themselves.

The Minister for Justice: Which they have statutory authority to do.

The PREMIER: Yes, which they have statutory authority to do, but not the courage, apparently, sheltering themselves behind the excuse that it would tend to create disagreement or lack of harmony between employers and employees. That is a ridiculous statement. Everyone who has complained of the Government—the employers and those who speak for the employers—in regard to the recent disputes in this State are merely lacking in the courage to do what the Act empowers them to do. They are trying to soothe the Government on to do something which they have not the courage to do themselves. That is their attitude. What is the position, anyhow? Suppose

the Government instituted proceedings: If men are fined and they pay the fine, is the position any nearer a solution? The breach is widened; the men are antagonised and made more determined in their efforts. This is admitted by the employers themselves in their statements, and applies with equal force whether the prosecutions are launched by the employers or by the Government. On the other hand, if the men refuse to pay the fines, the Government cannot possibly gaol thousands of men and consequently must be stultified. All Governments have been aware of this, and as a matter of fact no Western Australian State Government has ever taken action against the workers in a big industrial disturbance. The inference contained in the attacks upon the present Government is that, if the Opposition had been in power, they would have enforced the penal sections of the Act. There is no other inference. Yet what action was taken by their party when they were actually faced with similar circumstances. Why were prosecutions not launched in the locomotive engine-drivers' strike of 1920? The men struck for better conditions; the strike lasted two weeks and was settled by negotiation. What action was taken in the tramway strike in 1919. Again the men struck for improved conditions and the strike lasted for seven weeks before settlement by negotiation. Or in the water supply workers' strike in 1923, when the very life blood of the State was threatened by a stoppage of work? The mines in Kalgoorlie were held up and the goldfields were in danger of a complete lack of water. The position in that case was identical with that of the mining dispute. No action was taken by the Governments in those days. In the water supply workers' case the Arbitration Court had issued an award against which the men struck. Yet no prosecutions were launched. The strike lasted 10 days before a settlement was arrived at. The "West Australian" newspaper at the time published a leading article strongly condemning the strikers, but that article contained no advocacy of prosecution by the Government and no condemnation of the Government for not launching a prosecution. That is the difference between the attitude of the "West Australian" in those days, when another party happened to be in office, and the attitude of the "West Australian" to-day towards this particular strike, which it has been flogging to death.



In all the instances I have recited in which strikes took place when non-Labour Governments were in office, the Government of the day were just as competent to take action against the strikers as are the Government of to-day. But nothing was done. Surely this proves that all Governments have been fully aware of the unsettling effect of prosecutions and the impossibility of enforcing penalties on a large scale. The Governments of those days, in my opinion, were right in not launching prosecutions, just as the Government of to-day were right in not doing so, either. It is impossible to enforce penalties on a large scale. Surely that proves, too, the hypocrisy and political bias demonstrated during the current attacks on the Government. This is by no means the whole story. Previous to 1932—this is important and I hope members will follow what I am about to say—the Arbitration Court was prepared to, and actually did, institute proceedings of its own volition for breaches of the Act. In 1932 a difference of opinion arose between the Arbitration Court and the Full Court concerning a matter of jurisdiction under the Financial Emergency Act. The Arbitration Court requested the Registrar to take steps towards proceedings for an appeal to the High Court to decide the question. The then anti-Labour Government, the Government of which the Acting-Leader of the Opposition was a member, refused to allow those proceedings to be carried on. The Government of which the hon. member formed part refused to allow an appeal, although specifically requested by the President of the Arbitration Court. The President of the court, as is well known, felt very strongly on the point. He stated—

The intentions of the court were frustrated. The Government would not allow the Registrar to take the necessary proceedings.

The Government of which the hon. member was a member would not allow the Registrar to take the necessary proceedings. What were the necessary proceedings? An appeal against the decision of our own court.

The Minister for Justice: Regarding its jurisdiction.

The PREMIER: Yes, and the decision of the Government created bad feeling. The court made no secret of its opinion that it was a serious attempt to hamper the court in the proper discharge of its functions.

These words are on record. The President of the Arbitration Court said—

This court has frequently had occasion to move the Registrar to take proceedings for offences against the Act such as strikes. What assurance has the court that such instructions in future may not be cancelled or countermanded by some authority now that a precedent has been established?

So seriously did he view the situation that instructions were issued that in future the court would take no action of its own account. There is the beginning and the end of it. An anti-Labour Government, by refusing to permit the court to carry out the court's wishes thus established a precedent and created the very situation against which members of the Opposition are now complaining.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Tell us what the Attorney General of the day said in reply to that statement.

The PREMIER: I know what he said. I remember the debate that took place in this House. The man is not living now, so I will not criticise his statement. Following on the debate in this House, there was no question as to where the real merits of the case lay. Anyhow, why should the Government stand in the way of the Arbitration Court's appealing for an interpretation of its powers? Why stand in the way of an appeal?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: The Supreme Court had decided the point, and there was no necessity.

The PREMIER: The answer is that it did not suit the policy of the Government of the day. Why not have let the tribunal ascertain whether there was a necessity or not?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Then it would have gone to the Privy Council, I suppose.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member say there should be no right of appeal to the Privy Council? Does he put forward as an argument that no appeal should have been allowed because the case might finally have been carried to the Privy Council? Does he say there should be no appeals to the Privy Council?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: No.

The PREMIER: Does he say he has no confidence in the Privy Council?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I did not say that at all.

The PREMIER: Then why not let it be thrashed out to the final court?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: If you had heard the statement of the then Attorney General—

The PREMIER: I heard it and have read it. I remember the debate in this House well, and in my opinion no more miserable attitude in defence of the Government of the day could have been adopted than that which was adopted at the time. So that from their own actions members opposite stand convicted of insincerity. Coming now to the mining dispute, that is where most of the charges were made against the Government. The adoption of the award delivered by the Arbitration Court was not compulsory. It was optional for the employers to accept or reject it. I can say at this stage that the mining companies were not justified in taking advantage of the award in the manner they did. It would surely have been a retrograde step for the men who, for the past 17 years had worked underground for 44 hours a week, to go back to a 48-hour week underground. More particularly was it without justification because of the position in which the industry stands. The price of gold rose from £5 9s. 10d. in February, 1931, to £6 14s. 9d. in October of the same year, and since then it has steadily increased. In January, 1934, the price was £8 3s. 7d., and at the time of the dispute it had further increased to £8 15s. This price is more than double the price at which gold was selling in 1930. During the whole of that time the companies derived the full benefit of the increased figure, while the men received practically nothing. Yet because some increase in wages was granted by the Arbitration Court the companies desired to extract the utmost from the men. It is said that the dispute injured our credit in London; but I will show that the action of the men had the sympathy of at least one mining company. It will be worth while my reading an extract from the speech made by the chairman of the North Kalbarri Gold Mines, Ltd., at a meeting held in London. I may say that the report of this speech was published in the "West Australian," though not on the page on which the reports of the dispute appeared from time to time, but in an obscure corner of a back page. This is what the chairman of that company had to say—

The dispute was particularly unfortunate for this company, for even if the men had accepted the proposal of the Chamber of Mines, and

agreed to the 40-48-hour fortnight this company would have derived little benefit. . . . It is always dangerous to interfere with old-established customs such as the weekly Saturday half-holiday in force all over Australia as it is in Great Britain. I can well imagine what would happen in England in the building trade, for example, if employers tried to interfere with the Saturday half-holiday. . . . Exception has been taken to the action of the Government in intervening on the side of the men, and in not upholding the award of the court, but Governments are a law unto themselves, and the Western Australian Government have to consider the interests of the State as a whole, as the stoppage of such an important industry as gold mining disorganised the business of the whole State.

Then the chairman of that company concluded by saying—

I do not mind saying that in this instance my sympathy was with the men.

Those words were uttered at the annual meeting of the North Kalbarri Gold Mines, Ltd. It is said that during the dispute the men lost £200,000 in wages and the companies lost £500,000 in production. Whether these figures are correct or not matters little, but the State suffered a loss of £40,000 per month in direct revenue. Surely the Government were entitled to step in and take action. I offer no apology to anybody for having done what the Government did. I would do it again and again in similar circumstances. People who in recent years have had the price of their product doubled, or more than doubled, and whose employees in the same period have not had one scrap of increased benefit, were given the opportunity of saying whether the men should work 44 hours a week or 40-48 hours a fortnight, and although they knew that within the bounds of the award they were right they knew also that morally they were wrong.

The Minister for Lands: They were very ill-advised.

The PREMIER: The whole State suffered from the holding up of the industry. Although it might be said that the men were not complying with the award of the court, there are nevertheless occasions when breaches of the law have been justified. If we look down the years of history we will find that step by step advancement has been made, and progress achieved by the fact that there were men courageous enough to defy the law. History has taught us that effective protests have been made against laws that have been unjust, and that nations have refused to

continue to be slaves all their lives. Members opposite know that freedom has been obtained only after years of struggle, and that alterations of laws that have operated unjustly have been brought about by a refusal on the part of a big section of the people to obey those laws. I do not wish it to be understood that I am encouraging disobedience of the law, but I would be the first to disobey a law that is known to be unjust. I have done it in the past, and I would do it again. In this case the miners were right to protest against an attempt to force them back underground for 48 hours. They had not worked for 48 hours underground for 17 or 18 years, and the attempt that was made to compel them to do so was an unjust exercise of the law. As the member for Northam (Mr. Hawke) remarked last evening, let members opposite beware of the capital they are trying to make out of this, but if it is to be their battle-cry we shall welcome it. The Government supported the miners because it was thought that morally they were acting within their rights. It is easy for members opposite to argue in the way they have been doing. They have never been out of the sight of the sky or sunshine; they have never been underground, let alone having spent eight hours of the day, or one-third of their lifetime in the depths below where discomforts are inseparable from the occupation of mining below ground, to say nothing of the risks miners have to take, and not knowing, when they leave their homes whether they will ever return to them. Surely if there is any occupation in this world where there is justification for a reduction of the hours of labour, it is the occupation followed by those who spend a third of their lives underground out of the light. So I contend that the mining companies were not justified in taking advantage of the award to force the men into working 48 hours. Again, and again I will support, and this Government and this side of the House will support any action that will prevent men working underground 48 hours. I am sorry that the hours were not fixed at less than 44, but so far as we are concerned the period will certainly be not more than 44. That is the policy of the Government, and I care not what criticism follows because of the Government's action.

The Minister for Justice: We said so before the elections, and we repeated it after the elections.

The PREMIER: The Acting Leader of the Opposition had something to say about an agricultural conscience. I wonder where he got the phrase. He said this Government had no agricultural conscience. I suppose the hon. member, although he was criticising merely the Government in that respect, would agree that the whole of the party represented by the Government have no agricultural conscience. Because, if we have no agricultural conscience now, we surely must have been bankrupt of any kind of agricultural conscience 10, 15 or 20 years ago. I wonder if the hon. member, although a farmer who should know something about his job, I wonder if his thoughts go back down the years to 1911.

The Minister for Lands: He was not in public life then.

The PREMIER: And to 1914, those two bad years in particular when the harvest failed. I happened to be a member of the Government that came into office in 1911, tremendously handicapped as we were, because it was a very bad year and there was almost a complete failure of the harvest. However, we went on, and in 1914, the worst year in our history, there was a complete failure of the harvest. What happened? There were the Government composed of a party that had no agricultural conscience. What was done? Was it not in those two years that the foundation was laid of a real policy to carry the farmers through? And not only in those particularly bad years, but also in the years that have passed since then. Who established the Industries Assistance Board? Was it someone with an agricultural conscience, or was it the members of this party without an agricultural conscience? And what part has the Industries Assistance Board played in the assistance of the farmers ever since that year when it was established? Have not the operations under the Industries Assistance Act been instrumental in enabling the farmers to make a living and carry on? Now I ask the hon. member which Government were responsible for the setting up of water supplies in agricultural areas: I mean the ordinary catchment water supplies all through our farming areas, and all the dams 15 or 20 miles apart? Who constructed them? They were constructed by the Labour Government right through the whole of the wheat-growing areas. And who extended in important directions the goldfields water scheme, and, during re-

cent months, when their life and existence have been in question, where was it that in parts of the wheat-growing area those catchment areas were converted into permanent water supplies? That work was all constructed by the Labour Government. Take the Barbalin water scheme, which cost £240,000. If the dry conditions had continued as we feared a month or two ago, that scheme would have been a standby for all the surrounding districts. And who spent £86,000 for a water supply in the Naremben district, represented by the Leader of the Opposition? Who set up the water supply at Kondinin, and who constructed railways to agricultural districts? Was it not all done by a Labour Government? And who started the first irrigation scheme in this State, down at Harvey? A Labour Government of which I was a member. And for prompt measures which it appeared should be taken this year to meet the situation—which fortunately is now not so severe as it was a month or so ago—who but the present Government were responsible? Did the Government fall asleep on it? No. While members opposite knew nothing about it, the Government committed themselves to £40,000 in the purchase of fodder from the Eastern States. That was long before anybody here knew anything about it. We were making preparations for the possible events if the dry season continued. In one contract the Government committed themselves to pay £40,000 to begin with for a supply of fodder for distressed farmers affected by bad seasonal conditions. And this while the price of local chaff went from £3 10s. to £7 10s.! The Government were not barking around about what they had done, but they did make that purchase in the Eastern States preparatory to what might happen. Where is the man who would charge us with political motives in doing that? If we held agricultural seats in this House, undoubtedly we would be charged by members opposite with political motives in the making of that purchase. Because we found work for unemployed men, members opposite have said we were finding work for our political friends. Did we establish the Industries Assistance Board for political motives? Were we looking for seats there? We do what we believe to be right, no matter whom it may affect. There is nothing meaner than to charge a Government with acting from political

motives, with being commercially-minded. No member of this Government cares at all about political issues; what we are concerned about is the State as we see it and understand it. It is unworthy to say to us that we are actuated by political motives. Who increased the capital of the Agricultural Bank? Was it not this party? And right through we kept on increasing that capital.

Mr. Patrick: And broke the bank.

The Minister for Lands: Who ruined it?

Mr. Patrick: You did.

The PREMIER: I do not wish to touch upon that. We have always pursued a broad agricultural policy. Will the member for Wagin say that this party and this Government have no agricultural conscience?

Mr. Stubbs: No.

The PREMIER: Of course the hon. member will not say anything of the sort; he is too honourable to endorse such a statement. Will the new member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) subscribe to the charge of his acting leader?

The Minister for Lands: He dare not.

Mr. Boyle: I am not responsible for any agricultural conscience.

The PREMIER: The hon. member himself said that from the Country Party the farmers have never yet received anything, that all the advantages they have had have been given by the Labour Government.

Mr. Boyle: I have given you full credit for what you have done.

The PREMIER: And it was true, and the hon. member's words were expressed in all sincerity, and they do more than I could do if I were to talk for an hour to refute the unfair charge against us.

Mr. Withers: The actions of the Labour Party made the Country Party possible.

The PREMIER: This is just a pitiful attempt to raise the old cry of town versus country. It arises from the hon. member's agricultural conscience.

Mr. Thorn: We heard a lot about it from the member for Northam (Mr. Hawke) last night.

The PREMIER: Yes, I know. And the member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn) had something to say about the Agricultural Bank Commissioners. I think that will be dealt with by one of my colleagues. The hon. member complained that the chairman of the Commissioners refused to meet him. He objected to that. I can quite understand his objection, but every member of the

House knows that much of the trouble we have on our hands now in regard to the Agricultural Bank is due to the political interference of the hon. member's class.

Mr. Thorn: No, no; interference from past Governments. I have never interfered with the Bank.

The PREMIER: Nearly every member on the opposite side has always wanted to have an open door to the Bank.

The Minister for Lands: The hon. member is squealing now.

Mr. Thorn: I am not squealing as much as you are.

The PREMIER: It is improper for any member of the House to make complaints at the Agricultural Bank. He is not allowed to go along log-rolling to the chairman of the Commissioners in order to get some consideration, not on the merits of a case, but for a man that happens to be an elector of his.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

The PREMIER: I had hoped to conclude my remarks before tea, and I regret that I have again to thrust myself upon the indulgence of the House. The Acting Leader of the Opposition attacked the Government for the delay in the matter of bulk handling. May I ask what his Government did for bulk handling during their three years of office? They utterly failed to do anything; notwithstanding their majority, they failed to get Parliament to pass any Bill dealing with bulk handling. I venture to say that at the end of our three years of office, a system of bulk handling will probably be well established, but surely it does not lie with the hon. member, who was a member of a Government that attempted to do something but accomplished nothing, to criticise the present Government on that score. Much less does it lie with other critics. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) who spoke yesterday said that the Government had been shelving the whole question, and in support of that allegation, said that the report of the Royal Commission had been referred to a committee of the Cabinet. Is there anything wrong in the Government's handing over a particular matter to a section of the Cabinet—two or three members? Is that any ground for a charge that the Government are shelving the question? We have reached this position at least, that the present Govern-

ment appointed a Royal Commission on the subject, and I go so far as to say it is the first and only thorough inquiry into bulk handling that has been made. There have been other inquiries, I know, but this was the first inquiry of the kind. I say the Government will stand up to their responsibilities, and their responsibilities will be to put before the House a definite proposal as to what should be done regarding bulk handling. That is not committing us in any way; it is to say that this House will have an opportunity at an early date to give its decision on the whole question of bulk handling. I venture again to say that although we have no agricultural conscience, bulk handling will be further advanced at the end of this session than it was when the Acting Leader of the Opposition was a Minister. The hon. member also criticised the Transport Board. He described it as the most irritating institution we have ever had in Western Australia. Criticism of that kind is easy and cheap. His criticism consisted of a lot of generalities about the policy pursued by the board. The hon. member must know that all investigations and decisions of the board are based on the provisions and intentions of the Act mentioned by him in his speech. The board invite assistance in and criticism of their work. Last year the hon. member introduced a deputation to the board regarding road transport for areas served by the Midland Railway Company. He was informed that the company had given assurances to adopt a policy of co-ordination by extending liberal concessions to those who desired to transport by road for stations on the Midland line. It was suggested to the hon. member that when those feeder services were in operation, he might report progress and advise the board whether settlers were dissatisfied. No such advice has been received either from the hon. member or from any settler concerned.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I assure you that I never had any invitation to report.

The PREMIER: I am stating a fact. The hon. member does not produce specific complaints and make them to the board.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I did produce them to the board on that same deputation.

The PREMIER: If my information is not in accordance with fact, I shall be pleased to have evidence of it from the hon. member. My information is that he has not done so.

No advice has been received from the hon. member or from the settlers concerned.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I gave the advice on the deputation.

The PREMIER: That is the statement supplied to me, and it is not fair for an hon. member to beat the air in that way and make general remarks of condemnation.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I was very specific.

The PREMIER: The hon. member was not specific.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I was.

The PREMIER: Anyhow, we shall have other opportunities to discuss the matter. Before resuming my seat, I desire to offer a few words of my own regarding a matter not before the House. We notice that overseas the position has become very difficult. A situation exists in which one nation finds itself in conflict with another nation. I desire to express my own feeling that all the indications and all the tendencies appear to be towards another world war. Whatever my views may be worth, I have no hesitation in saying that I am entirely opposed to the attitude of so-called highly civilised nations towards another section of the human race. I appreciate to-day perhaps more than I have done in years past the magnificent attitude adopted by the Government of Great Britain. If ever there has been an occasion in our history when we might well be proud to be descendants of and belong to that nation it is to-day, because of the attitude of Great Britain, and the Government of Great Britain, not only with regard to this trouble, but with regard to other questions of peace and the future so far as disarmament is concerned. It may not appear to us to be a concern of ours, but inevitably a conflict in one part of the world must lead to a conflagration all round the world, and we shall be brought into it. One thing that impresses me perhaps more than another is that a few weeks ago the Emperor of Abyssinia is reported to have said that he himself intended to lead his troops to battle, but he did not expect to meet Mussolini in the field. At least the Emperor of Abyssinia will be there, but the man, the dictator, who exercises such supreme power to-day in one country of the world, probably will not be there, although I do not charge him with want of courage. And so we come back to the old saying that those who make the quarrels must make the peace.

It is a shocking thing to contemplate—not for me perhaps or for any other member of the House and others who are reaching the *autumn of their lives*—that to-day in this so-called age of civilisation a few men can make quarrels that are responsible for wars in which millions of innocent young men have to take part. That is what will happen. I make no apology for these remarks. I abhor war; indeed, we all do. I have protested at every opportunity against war, and all kinds of diplomacy that lead mainly to war. I desire to place on record my absolute abhorrence of the position that is developing overseas, and of the possibility of the British Empire and ourselves being drawn into it. Let us voice our protest against it. It is a horrible thing that a war should now be threatening between this ancient race, white and supposed to be civilised, and another equally ancient race, members of the human family. If I may offer judgment upon the matter, I will conclude by saying I do not believe that anywhere in the world will the moral feelings of the peoples be with Italy.

**MR. PATRICK** (Greenough) [7.46]: The country is to be congratulated upon the improvement in the financial position. No doubt there are many reasons for that. As has been stated, more money has been available to the present Government than was available to the previous Government. It is not necessary to go into elaborate figures. It is only necessary to mention that this is due to the large increase in loan expenditure, the large increase in Commonwealth grants, and the large increase in taxation receipts. The Premier remarked on the increased revenue from the alteration in the incidence of the financial emergency tax. He took that as a tribute to the Government. When the Premier was introducing this tax he assured the House, in reply to criticism, that although he was altering the incidence of the tax it would not bring in any additional revenue. We were assured that the Treasury had gone into the matter and that this was to be the position.

The Minister for Justice: With the rise in wages there was naturally an increase in taxation income.

Mr. PATRICK: It may be argued that as conditions improve additional revenue is bound to come in from taxation. I would point out that this tax began to bring in additional revenue from the moment it was

introduced. There has been a certain amount of interest saved by overseas conversions. Another important factor is the high price of gold. The final factor, which may not be a big one, and which certainly has relieved the Government from the necessity for spending a certain amount of money, is represented in the activities of the Lotteries Commission. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith), when giving what might be termed an exposition of simple arithmetic, referred to the fact that it was necessary to borrow in depressed times. I agree with him there. But if that argument is sound, then it is not so necessary to borrow in times of prosperity. That seems to be the inevitable inference from the hon. member's argument. But may I point out that the present Government were, during a time of unexampled prosperity, perhaps the most reckless borrowers in the world's history.

The Premier: Not a good word—"reckless."

Mr. PATRICK: It is a good old English word.

The Premier: It is not an honest word.

Mr. PATRICK: To realise what years those six years of abounding prosperity were, one need only point out that during that period wool averaged 20½d. per pound and wheat a little over 5s. per bushel. Borrowing during that period averaged over four million pounds annually, and the deficits for the same period averaged £158,000—not a good record in times of abounding prosperity. The improved financial position is a matter for congratulation, but it is unfair and absurd to make comparisons between those times of prosperity on the one hand and the strenuous period of the previous Administration on the other hand. As the Premier himself said in this Chamber at the end of that period, for three years we had been at close grips with the most deplorable condition of things we had ever known. Let us consider the extent of the disaster which overwhelmed Western Australia in 1930. Wheat, which at election time was worth 3s. 10d. per bushel at the siding, was worth 1s. 9d. at harvest time. I have checked my figures with the Wheat Pool trustees. The average for the previous year's crop, paid by the Pool, was 3s. 11½d. per bushel at the siding. The price at election time, I repeat, was 3s. 10d. per bushel,

and the price at harvest time 1s. 9d. In that year we actually shipped 17,000,000 bushels more wheat than we had shipped in the previous year, and we shipped the greater quantity for £840,000 less money. If we had simply got the price ruling for wheat at harvest time, the State would have benefited by nearly four millions more money from the wheat crop alone. That additional money, if put into circulation, would have made an enormous addition to the finances of the State. The natural result of what occurred was that the farmer's purchasing power faded away and that State revenue absolutely collapsed. The landslide in revenue had commenced prior to this period. At the end of his 6-year period the present Premier budgeted for a surplus of £105,000, and the actual deficit was about £518,000. The point is that revenue slipped in that year to the extent of £742,000 as compared with the estimate. Therefore the landslide in revenue had already begun in the last year of the Premier's previous term of office. In this connection it is interesting to make a few comparisons between the farmer's purchasing power in 1932 and his purchasing power in 1912, when wheat was 3s. 7d. per bushel. I am taking that period because it is practically the period which has been taken by President Roosevelt for the purposes of comparison with the present day. His idea is to restore the farmers' purchasing power so that a bushel of wheat will now buy the same amount in other commodities as it did in the period 1909-14. Therefore the year 1912, when wheat was at the very reasonable price of 3s. 7d. per bushel, may be taken as a mean. In 1912 a bushel of wheat would purchase 14 loaves of bread; in 1930 it would purchase only 5½ loaves. In 1912 a bushel of wheat would purchase 15lb. of sugar; in 1930 it would purchase 5½lb. In 1912—and this may interest the member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn)—the bushel purchased 7lb. of raisins; in 1930 it purchased 2¾lb. Corresponding figures are—for rice 15lb. and 7lb.; for cornsacks 7 and 3; for weatherboarding 56ft. and 14½ft.; for galvanised iron 10ft. and 5ft. That is to say, the purchasing power was one-third to one-half for foodstuffs in 1930 as against 1912. As regards cornsacks, whereas one-twenty-first of the value of the crop was needed for their purchase in 1912, one-ninth was needed in 1930. A bushel of wheat bought only a

quarter as much timber and half as much iron in 1930 as it bought in 1912.

Mr. North: Are those State figures?

Mr. PATRICK: Yes. The same comparison would apply to fencing material, wire, barbed-wire, and other materials required by the farmer. I give this illustration to show how costs were piled up on the industry in good times by the Australian tariff policy. When prices of commodities such as wheat collapsed, those high costs remained. There is not the slightest doubt that when wheat and wool were at high prices, they practically carried the rest of Australian industries. Standards and everything else were raised, and costs were raised; and the costs were maintained at the high level after the prices of primary products had collapsed.

The Minister for Lands: The people paid high prices for both wheat and wool during that period, and thus were carrying the industries.

Mr. PATRICK: The people of Australia paid world prices. Another point was raised by the member for Canning (Mr. Cross), who said that the Australian people were bonussing the farmer to the extent of the exchange. The position, of course, is simply that the exchange is due to the low prices of primary products. If wheat and wool went back to normal prices, funds would accumulate in London and the exchange would return to the normal level. In point of fact, taking export and import figures for the last year, if the exchange now were not being pegged by the Commonwealth Bank, if it were an open go, the exchange would certainly rise. It is interesting to note that one of the effects of the exchange position is that the goldmining industry has gained to the extent of nearly 35s. per ounce in Australian currency owing to the rise in exchange. That is to say, the goldmining industry has gained an amount of 35s. per ounce owing to the depressed condition, principally, of the wheat and wool industries.

The Minister for Lands: All industries have shared in that.

Mr. PATRICK: Of course all industries have shared. It may be said that all the primary industries shared.

The Minister for Lands: They did.

Mr. PATRICK: But the present rate of exchange exists only owing to the low prices ruling in primary industries.

The Minister for Lands: To that extent, they shared.

Mr. PATRICK: If the prices for wheat and wool reverted to those that were paid in earlier years, the rate of exchange would be back again at the previous figure, and gold would be worth 35s. an ounce less than it is to-day.

The Minister for Lands: But that does not get away from the fact that it was shared.

Mr. PATRICK: What I consider to be the lesson to be learnt from a period such as we have been passing through, is that we must build up reserves during good times to enable us to tide over periods of depression. That is a point that may be of interest to the Minister for Agriculture, for—I am speaking from memory—during the course of his maiden speech in this House, he accused some of the large firms of building up reserves. Personally, I regard that as an extremely sound policy. In fact, if some of the big firms of Australia had not built up reserves in prosperous times, they would be on the rocks to-day. I can cite the instance of a Scottish company that affords a good example. The New Zealand Land Company, operating all over Australia, realised that droughts might be experienced at times in some States when good seasons operated in other parts of the Commonwealth. With that knowledge, they built up tremendous reserves to enable them to overcome difficulties arising in drought periods. The result has been that the company have been able to pay the same rate of dividend in bad periods as in prosperous years.

The Minister for Lands: That is good.

Mr. PATRICK: I knew the Minister for Lands would agree that that is a sound policy. To-day the position is that the increased interest bill has been met to date practically speaking, by the savings on the conversion loans, and now increased taxation will have to be obtained from what is tantamount to a stationary population, in order to meet the future interest bill. Here again the Government are losing a considerable volume of revenue. Recently inspectors from the Taxation Department have travelled through the goldfields to launch prosecutions against men who have not sent in returns. It is understood that the inspectors are to travel through the rest of the State. The South Australian Government have secured largely increased



revenue by adopting the principle of collecting taxation at the source. We are already doing that with the financial emergency tax and the hospital tax, and, with very little additional trouble, we could do the same with the income tax on salaries and wages. If that policy were adopted, it would avoid the prosecutions that are taking place to-day. Most of us do not miss taxes that are collected at the source, whereas if we receive at the end of the year a notice to pay so many pounds, we appreciate the fact that we are called upon to pay a considerable amount. The ordinary individual hardly knows that he is paying the financial emergency tax and the hospital tax, because he has never had the money so collected, to spend. If the Government collected the income tax at the source, as the South Australian Government do, they would reap a large increase in revenue. There is no doubt that the spending of loan funds in times such as the present is inevitable. What is important is the adoption of the wisest method by which it can be spent. On one occasion the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) said that in spending loan money—at the time when he was sitting in Opposition—we should spend it on works that, when completed, would create additional employment. Adopting a long view of the matter, I think it is better, as far as possible, to spend loan money on putting the primary industries on a sound basis. It would pay the Government to give the commissioners of the Agricultural Bank, who would not waste the money, a large proportion of the loan funds to enable them to turn some of the present wheat farms into more profitable concerns than they are to-day.

The Minister for Lands: Why do not your friends in the Federal Government do that?

Mr. PATRICK: To date the State Government have spent millions of pounds on improving farms, but apparently there is no loan money available to protect the assets so created from vermin such as rabbits, emus and so forth. Although his promise has been thrown up at the Premier several times, I do not mind mentioning it again. Two years ago the Premier said that he would defy the Loan Council, draw a cheque for £100,000, give the money to the farmers and defy the Loan Council to dishonour the

cheque. I think the Premier will admit having made that promise.

The Premier: We have done it.

Mr. PATRICK: To-day the condition of the farming industry is far worse than it was two years ago, because thousands of farms have been abandoned. Despite what the Premier said, he is not prepared to defy the Loan Council to the extent of one shilling!

The Premier: That is not right.

Mr. PATRICK: I know that the matter was treated in a jocular manner last year. When the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) was speaking, the Premier and the Minister for Lands interjected to the effect that those promises went by the board because the farming constituencies had not returned supporters of the present Government.

The Minister for Lands: Because they rejected the principle. In voting for you, they voted to the contrary.

Mr. PATRICK: I think the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) made a similar statement the other night, and it is fair to the Minister for Lands to tell him that, in a paper known as "The Wheatgrower," there is certain confirmation of the statement. This is an extract from the last conference report and refers to a statement made by Mr. Bradley, of Morawa, who, as the Minister knows, is a supporter of the Labour Party. The extract reads—

Mr. Bradley (Morawa) stated that he was not disappointed with the result of the deputation. He had reminded the Minister that a Labour Government had been in power for two years, and they had not honoured any one of the promises which the Premier, when speaking at Morawa some years ago, had made.

I understand that the Premier spoke at Morawa, Mingenew and other centres and repeated the promise he had made in this House.

The Minister in reply had stated that the Government were not bound by any statement of policy made prior to the elections inasmuch as by rejecting Labour candidates, the farmers had rejected the Labour policy.

The Minister for Lands: That is all right, but what the member for Avon said was wrong.

Mr. PATRICK: I think that is pretty flimsy, and not a very logical statement for the Minister to make.

The Minister for Lands: It is quite logical.

Mr. PATRICK: When the Premier made his promise, he said he was not making it from a political point of view, as the farming constituencies did not return Labour members.

The Minister for Lands: You are not entitled to expect it, when you turn down our policy.

Mr. PATRICK: We did not turn that policy down. The promise was made by the Premier.

The Minister for Lands: And he has kept his promise.

Mr. PATRICK: The fact that the representation of the constituencies remained as formerly, was no reason why the Premier's promise should not be honoured.

The Premier: I never made any such promises.

Mr. PATRICK: The rehabilitation of the farming industry is one of the questions that require to be dealt with by Statesmen. Up to the present all Governments, Federal and State, have been merely Micawbers waiting for something to turn up, and hoping against hope that by some miracle the prices of wheat and of wool would go back to their previous high standards.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is practically world-wide; they are all Micawbers to-day.

Mr. PATRICK: The Federal Government appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the marketing of wool, but absolutely ignored the findings of that commission. Also they appointed another Royal Commission, which probably made the most exhaustive inquiries ever made into the wheat industry. We are still awaiting the result. Two years ago, in answer to a question by a constituent of mine, I put up the following:—

1. It is indisputable that under Australian conditions wheat cannot be produced profitably at present prices.

2. That as these unprofitable prices have now obtained for five successive seasons, farmers must be carrying an accumulated burden of debt.

3. That some plan for the adjustment of this debt is urgently necessary.

4. That a board comprising creditors' and farmers' representatives with an independent chairman, preferably a judge, should be set up to deal with debts on a voluntary basis.

5. The board to have compulsory powers where no agreement is possible.

The Minister for Lands: When did you put that up?

Mr. PATRICK: Two years ago, in answer to a question by one of my constituents as to how I stood. That is practically the position that has been adopted by the Federal Royal Commission.

The Minister for Lands: It savours of repudiation.

Mr. PATRICK: It is not a question of repudiation at all. What we contend is that every property should be valued and, if found to be carrying more than its present-day economic value, at least the surplus amount should be written off. There is no repudiation about that, for that value has gone. I know a working man in this city who lost £400 recently through having an interest in a well-known company in this city which wrote down its capital by one-half. The company did that because the money was absolutely lost, but the result is that the man who put his savings into that company now stands to lose his £400. No one is going to lose anything by writing off something already lost. To-day many companies in this city are writing off capital. Even this policy would not solve the whole question, because in addition there has to be a great deal of money spent in replacing worn-out plant. And even then the farmers would be in the same position if there were not a decent price obtainable for their commodity. Australia has a fixed price for sugar, butter, dried fruits, clothing, galvanised iron, and a hundred other things—in fact, it is that policy which is mainly responsible for the high cost of production to-day. Yet local consumers expect to get their wheat at so-called world price. I might here quote from a well-known man in South Australia, Professor Perkins, the Director of Agriculture who, to speak in a vulgar sense, always has the guts to say what he thinks. He said—

Is it morally indefensible to sweat the cottage worker, or to underpay factory hands; but permissible to sweat the rural worker? Our primary producers have been compelled to sell in the cheapest market; but to buy in a highly-protected home market, the dearness of which has been progressively rising since the beginning of federation.

Nations like France, Italy, and Germany have not hesitated to raise prices to 10 or 12 shillings a bushel.

New Zealand raised it to 6s., while Australian farmers were getting 1s. 9d.

During the war, the price of wheat was controlled in order to keep the price down, in order to prevent the producer from exploiting the war and

receiving too high a price for his commodity; now it is necessary to control the price of wheat in order to prevent collapse. We hear people outside talking about world's parity prices, but to-day world's parity prices for most commodities, especially wheat, do not exist. For instance, in Germany bread costs three times the price it is in Great Britain and four times the price it is in Belgium. And so on in different ratios throughout all the European countries. The so-called world price is a lower price than that at which any country in the world can produce. It is merely a dump surplus price. For instance, in France, where the growers are getting up to 12s. per bushel for their wheat, they are dumping the surplus into Great Britain at 9s. per quarter. So it is absurd to think that Australian people should get their wheat at world's parity price, when no such price exists. And it is not that price we are expected to take, but that price, less the cost of freight and so forth. How would the Queensland sugar people like to sell their raw sugar at 4s. 6d. per cwt., less freight to the Old Country? Yet that is the price of sugar in Great Britain, as quoted in recent English papers, namely 4s. 6d. per cwt. landed. How would the sugar people of Queensland like to have to take that price, less freight? Yet that is exactly what the people of Australia expect to pay for their wheat. The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) said that on account of the ratio between exports it would be an impracticable proposition in Australia. And of course he was taking the figures merely for Western Australia. But when we are talking about the Australian price, we have to take it on an Australian basis. During the year just concluded, the production of wheat in Australia was 132,254,000 bushels. For local requirements there were 53,000,000 bushels, leaving 79,254,000 bushels for export. Anyone looking at those figures casually would be apt to say that so much should be estimated on the 79,000,000 bushels and so much on the 53,000,000 bushels, but from the 53,000,000 bushels must be deducted the quantity used for seed which does not leave the farms. Allowing a basis of 2s. 4d. per bushel siding price for export—that is about what it would work out at this year—it would require an all-round local consumption price of 4s. 3d. per bushel to pay 3s.

at the sidings all over Australia. I do not consider that that would be a very extravagant price to ask the Australian consumer to pay—4s. 3d. per bushel at the siding. During the 16 or 17 years previous to the slump, wheat averaged easily 5s. per bushel, and I do not think the consumers had to pay very much more for their bread in that period. Even the high prices then ruling were nullified to a certain extent by the high costs in Australia. I have been growing wheat for a long time.

The Minister for Lands: So have I.

Mr. PATRICK: A month or two back I was greatly interested, when looking through some of my old ledgers, to notice the difference on the expenditure side 16 or 17 years ago as compared with the present. The increases were absolutely amazing.

The Minister for Lands: What is your position as a result of the prices?

Mr. PATRICK: The Minister need not worry about my position. To give a siding price of 3s. per bushel would require an Australian consumption price of 4s. 3d. I am taking this year's crop because I do not think the production of wheat in Australia will increase greatly during the next year or two. It has already declined from the peak by over 80,000,000 bushels. An important point is that, in fixing the price at 3s. per bushel at the siding, we should provide no incentive to the wheatgrower to bring unprofitable land into cultivation. If we fixed a high price as on the continent of Europe, say, up to 10s. or 12s. a bushel, what inevitably would happen would be that some of our outback lands that cannot profitably grow wheat under ordinary conditions would be brought under cultivation, and we would have the same old trouble of over production. By fixing the price of wheat on a basis of 3s., there would be no encouragement for over production. Even at that price, there would not be a great deal in it for the wheatgrower, but if he knew ahead that he would receive at least 3s. per bushel at the siding, he would understand exactly where he stood. This year also has revealed one of the weaknesses of the farming industry in this State. Even the Premier must have received a scare at the opening of the season. He has told us of the large amount the Government had to provide to assist farmers. The Government should be commended for the prompt action they took. But the weakness re-

vealed by this season's opening was that very few farmers had any reserves of wheat, oats or hay to provide against an unfavourable period. That is bad farming. Every farmer should carry on his operations with certain reserves of foodstuffs, because he never knows when a dry season will be experienced and his stock will need to be fed. Every financial institution controlling farms should insist upon the farmers maintaining certain reserves of foodstuffs. It is a foolish policy to compel a farmer to sell every grain of wheat and every ton of chaff on his place and maintain no reserves.

The Minister for Agriculture: That has been the policy.

Mr. PATRICK: I do not think it has; the policy has been to squeeze the last penny out of the farms.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is what I said.

Mr. PATRICK: It would pay financial institutions to insist upon such reserves being maintained. Some of the best farmers in the Midland district this year had immense reserves of chaff and oats. But for those reserves, they would have lost sheep in thousands.

The Minister for Lands: I know some people who did not have them.

Mr. PATRICK: Maybe, but to be without them is not good farming. I know one farmer in the Midlands who fed about 200 tons of hay and 5,000 or 6,000 bags of oats to his sheep this year. Had he not done so, either his sheep would have died, or it would have been necessary to move them elsewhere. Another problem with us to-day, mentioned I think indirectly by the member for Beverley (Mr. Mann), is that of farm labour, bound up with which is the problem of a farmer keeping his sons on the land. A farmer under one of the Associated Banks told me that he had two sons of about the age of 20 or 21 years and asked his bank what wages would be allowed for them if they remained on the farm during the year. The reply of the bank was that 5s. each per week would be allowed. The boys consulted their father, pointed out that they could get jobs outside and asked what they ought to do. The father replied, "If you are looking after your own interests, you will take the jobs outside." They took them.

The Minister for Lands: Who advised them in that way?

Mr. PATRICK: The farmer himself.

The Minister for Lands: A very short-sighted farmer.

Mr. PATRICK: The result was that the farmer, without the additional labour of his family, could not carry on, and to-day he is walking about the streets of Perth. Many other farmers are confronted with a similar position. No doubt farm labour is presenting a very serious problem. The only way in which labour can be retained on the farms is by making farming more attractive and profitable. I have pointed that out before to-day. I am not one of those who believe in paying farm hands a low rate of wage. I consider that a man driving, say, a six or seven-horse team on a farm, is entitled to at least as high a rate of pay as a man who drives a horse in a baker's cart in the city. The man on the farm is doing far more highly skilled work, and work which is more essential to the country.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: And it is harder work.

Mr. PATRICK: That is so. A farm can pay only according to the income it is making. I think the Minister for Lands asked about my position. Regarding the farm in which I am interested, we, fortunately, have always been able to retain our men. They have been with us for long periods, but I have no hesitation in saying that during the last three or four years, they have drawn more money in wages out of the farm than the owners have drawn. We have been simply marking time.

The Minister for Lands: But you have preserved the asset.

Mr. PATRICK: The asset has depreciated to a certain extent, because we have not been able to maintain the improvements as we would have liked to do or as we would have done had more money been available. There is another aspect of the question. This problem has been referred to in the House. It deals with the baking trade, and foreigners coming into it who are prepared to work long hours and will possibly push other men out of the industry. The danger is that in certain types of farming foreigners are prepared to work almost for nothing and, having got upon the farms, may push out Australians who are already there.

Mr. Sampson: That constitutes a grave danger.

Mr. PATRICK: With regard to the Agricultural Bank, I am going to criticise the Minister for Lands, not over the appoint-

ment of the present Commissioners, but because of the methods employed in appointing them. It is a habit with some people to sneer at Parliament and members of Parliament. People in the country have said to me that the Government created these positions, and then appointed one of their number to the leading position. The Minister could have got over the difficulty if he had done what is usually done with the higher-paid Government officials, such as the Commissioner of Railways and others, advertised the positions all over Australia. In that way applications are invited and the best men appointed. The Minister could easily have invited applications for the highly-paid post of chairman of Commissioners; and that would have overcome the difficulty. I have no quarrel with regard to the actual appointments. I recognise the outstanding ability of the chairman of the Commissioners. Probably he would have been appointed whatever had been done. I merely take exception to the method employed in making the appointment.

The Minister for Lands: Is it not what any Government would have done?

Mr. PATRICK: Although the chairman of the Commissioners is a man of outstanding ability, he has a very big problem to face. The position as regards the abandonment of farms is positively alarming. Country people know how improvements go back if a farm is left for any length of time. I purchased a property in my own district. It had been abandoned only for a couple of years, but it cost me 30s. an acre to re-clear the land. The original cost was only £1 an acre.

The Minister for Lands: In your district land which has not been abandoned would cost that to clear.

Mr. PATRICK: It would soon cost that much to re-clear the properties if nothing was done on them for a year or two. The position is an alarming one. Everything possible should be done to finalise a policy that will keep present holders on their farms. In a recent visit to my district I was alarmed to notice that several good men, clients of Associated Banks which were prepared to keep them on their properties, had begun to drop their bundles after five years of depression. I have known men to walk off their farms, despite the utmost efforts of the local Associated Bank manager to keep them there. Their dis-

couragement has sapped their morale, and it takes very little nowadays to make them walk off their holdings.

The Minister for Lands: Is that why the Primary Producers' Association carried resolutions against evictions?

Mr. PATRICK: I am referring to farmers who are walking off their properties without having any reason to do so. I know of many cases of that kind. The present Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank have a big problem to face, because of the rate at which farms are being abandoned. A considerable amount of discontent is evidenced in my district concerning the distribution of moneys provided by the Federal Government for crop failures. I am going to quote figures to show the extent of the disaster that overtook some of the northern districts this year. I will quote the rainfall to show that it was not due to lack of rain. At Mullewa the rainfall last year was 18.89 inches; at Three Springs 19.41, at Ajana, 19.53. I have taken the wheat yield figures from the map prepared by the "Western Mail." The actual wheat yield for the district extending from Ajana to Northampton was 4.8 bushels for 1934. For the two years previously, 1932 and 1933, the average was 12.8. For the upper Chapman the relative figures were 4.2 and 13.1, for Mullewa they were 5.6 and 13.5 for Geraldton they were 3.5 and 11.8, and for Irwin-Mingenew they were 5.6 and 14.5. I contend that this money should have been allotted on some basis of uniformity. Under the present system it has merely been given as a sort of dole. I wish to quote from what is known as the pink form issued by the Agricultural Bank. This form goes on first to ask for a return of the acreage cropped, and receipts and expenditure. Over the page it requires to know what money the farmer himself has in hand and what he has in the bank, what money his wife has in hand and how much she has in the bank, and what money any dependants have in hand and how much they have in the bank. It also asks if the farmer or his dependants possess a motor vehicle. Presumably if they do possess a motor vehicle they are ruled out. There are farmers in my electorate who have never had anything else but motor-propelled vehicles on their farms, because there is no water for horses. Some time ago lads were encouraged by newspapers such as the "Sunday Times" to form pig

clubs. Pigs were sent to these youths who were encouraged to look after them, rear the progeny, and bank the proceeds in the savings bank. It is a mean thing for the Agricultural Bank to want to know what the children of the farmer have got in the bank. Presumably, if they have any money that little bit of cash has to be exhausted before any sustenance is given.

The Minister for Justice: You are presuming too much there.

Mr. PATRICK: If so, why is all that information required?

The Minister for Justice: It may be that some of them may have a good deal of money.

Mr. PATRICK: I will quote from remarks made at a deputation which waited on the Minister for Lands the other day. The Minister's interpretation of the Act is that he was prevented from granting assistance to any farmer in adverse circumstances who had suffered losses. He could not get away from that. The whole thing is a common sense interpretation of the Act. When the Acting Federal Prime Minister, Dr. Earle Page, was in Western Australia, he said the States could make the interpretation of the Act as elastic as possible.

The Minister for Justice: He was not serious.

The Minister for Lands: He did not say that.

Mr. PATRICK: I think that was reported in the Press. If I had known that the Minister for Lands had not seen the report, I would have brought a copy of the paper along with me. In the interpretation of any Act there is a common-sense interpretation and a strictly legal interpretation. Strange to say—there being a legal member in the Chamber who can probably confirm this—a common sense interpretation and a legal interpretation are often synonymous.

The Premier: Did you say "synonymous"?

Mr. PATRICK: Yes. To prove that, I wish to refer to a case recently heard, on appeal, by our Chief Justice. Undoubtedly an opinion had been given by the Crown Law Department, who took the matter up. The Act under discussion was one drafted by that department—the Transport Act. The appeal heard by the Chief Justice related to four farmers who had carted their produce in one truck. While the Crown Solicitor, Mr. Gibson, was putting up his

argument, the Chief Justice interrupted, speaking to this effect: "Pardon me, Mr. Gibson. This is an Act for the co-ordination of transport. Here we have a case of four farmers who presumably did not have enough produce for each of them to purchase a truck, and so they decided to purchase one truck between them to cart the products of the four. Don't you consider, Mr. Gibson, that is co-ordinating transport?" Mr. Gibson replied: "I think, your Honour, that I am not impressing you with my argument." The Chief Justice said: "No." Evidently in that case the Chief Justice gave a decision against the Crown on what may be termed common sense lines.

The Minister for Lands: But the Chief Justice gave another decision, which was not on common sense lines.

The Premier: He has given decisions that have been upset by higher authorities.

Mr. PATRICK: In this case the only authority is the Minister for Lands. If the Chief Justice of this State can give a common sense decision in a case like the one I have mentioned, surely the Minister for Lands might take the risk of giving a common sense decision in a case like this. I could imagine the Minister arguing his case before a similar type of judge. He would be declaring: "I do not know what 'adverse circumstances' means. If it simply means adverse financial circumstances, then it merely means financial circumstances that are against the man." The Minister's interpretation appears to be that the man has to be absolutely up against it, without funds to carry on, before he can get any assistance. I can imagine the Minister arguing such a case before a gentleman like our Chief Justice, and the Chief Justice interrupting him to say: "Mr. Troy, I have perused this pink form. I have also read the report of a Federal Royal Commission in which it is stated that wheat farmers have been carrying on for the last four years at unprofitable prices. Surely if a man has been carrying on an industry at unprofitable prices for four successive years and then gets practically an absolute loss of his crop, one could interpret those facts as constituting adverse financial circumstances." Anyhow, that would be my interpretation of the Act.

The Minister for Lands: You are not stating the facts properly.

Mr. PATRICK: There have been cases in which a farmer has been on one of the

Associated Banks, and although he was right up against it, the bank was prepared to find him finance to carry on for another year. But the farmer who has had a total loss of his crop gets no assistance from the Agricultural Bank. That is absolutely wrong. I myself am in a rust district, but I am not putting up a case for myself now, because my crop is up to the ordinary average of the district, and therefore I collect nothing. The Minister for Lands, I consider, should be able to collect something. Some crops in our district, when harvested, did not average a bag. I was lucky in having varieties which escaped the rust. To me it seems rather unfortunate that the Agricultural Bank have the allotting of this Federal money, because undoubtedly they must be biassed towards their own clients.

Mr. Thorn: That is the Minister's decision.

Mr. PATRICK: Work of this sort might well have been taken away from the Agricultural Bank. In this morning's newspaper the chairman of the Agricultural Bank Commissioners, Mr. McCallum, comments on the heavy work the staff have to do, working overtime in the endeavour to value 14,000 securities. Mr. McCallum stated that the work had been held up to a considerable extent because the staff had to handle the allocations to the various farms. Undoubtedly the Agricultural Bank staff have plenty to do without handling this Federal money. It would have been better to provide, as was done in South Australia, a separate board to deal with the matter.

The Minister for Lands: Why waste money like that?

Mr. PATRICK: The work has been done by one man, and in this State. The first bonus here was allotted by one Federal officer. It was probably the most expeditious paying-out done in the history of Federal bonuses.

The Minister for Lands: I did not know that a distinction was laid down.

Mr. PATRICK: I suggest, further, that the Government might do something in the way of reducing costs. I ask the Minister for Lands, why should he not re-adjust the whole basis of land rent payments? Why not spread those payments over 30, 40, or even 50 years?

The Minister for Lands: Land rents?

Mr. PATRICK: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: We did that.

Mr. PATRICK: I know what the Minister is going to say — that it would make no difference, because the rents are not being paid. Most likely that is the argument the Minister will put up.

The Minister for Lands: You had a former Minister doing that.

Mr. PATRICK: As regards a road board with which I am connected, this Parliament some years ago enabled the board to reduce their rates. The board refused to do so on the ground that many people were not paying their rates. At a largely attended public meeting held to advocate reduction of rates, the main argument used was that with a lower rate there would probably be more revenue than was obtained from the few persons paying the higher rate. The rate was reduced, and I am pleased to state that the result was as predicted. By reducing the rate to half, more revenue was collected than had been collected from the few people paying on the higher scale. Land rents, of course, have always gone into Consolidated Revenue. They had no right to go into Consolidated Revenue, since they represented the proceeds of disposing of a capital asset of the State. Personally I do not think it matters whether payment of land rents is spread over 40, 50, or even 60 years. The spreading would afford great relief to the farmers concerned. There is no use talking of fines, because, as the Minister for Lands knows, such fines would never be paid. The farmers themselves have shown that they are in earnest as to reducing costs. Now I come to the question of bulk handling. I am very pleased with the report of the Royal Commission because it confirms the stand we have taken all along. Regarding the position from the point of view of the Minister for Employment and the promotion of local industries, I regard it as a wonderful tribute to the brains of the local engineer who conceived the present scheme and carried it to a successful issue. In support of that, I will quote the opinions of outsiders. In their report to the South Australian Government, the members of a committee of inquiry from that State, who visited Western Australia recently, state—

The unorthodox system is undoubtedly the one most suited to South Australian conditions by reason of its low installation cost and facility for extending storage.

They go on to state something that will be of interest to the Minister for Railways—

The railway trucks used for the carriage of bulk wheat in Western Australia are older and smaller, and the sides are much lower than on trucks in this State.

Some years ago I pointed out that the stock trucks we were using in Western Australia were out of date compared with those available in South Australia. Although our agricultural development may be more recent than that of South Australia, the trucks we use for wheat are older and more out of date.

The Minister for Railways: Some of them are.

Mr. PATRICK: The point is, that if the sides of the trucks are higher and the trucks themselves are bigger, they can more easily be converted for the purpose of handling bulk wheat.

The Minister for Railways: The trucks that have been constructed lately have a much higher capacity.

Mr. PATRICK: That is so. The committee also reported—

A country bank manager said that bulk handling was the one thing of permanent value that had been done to improve the farmer's position.

I shall also quote from a statement made by the South Australian manager of Dreyfus & Co., Mr. Alford. He said—

Although he could not agree the time was opportune, he was in agreement with the report in stating that if bulk handling were installed, the Western Australian system was to be preferred to that in use in New South Wales.

That merely confirms the attitude adopted by the present people.

The Premier: The Royal Commission endorsed all that.

Mr. PATRICK: Yes. The Premier, by interjection during the debate, inferred that the previous Government had held up bulk handling.

The Premier: No; not that they held it up, but had failed to accomplish anything.

Mr. PATRICK: I do not think the previous Government failed in their accomplishment.

Mr. Sleeman: Then why did not you put it through?

Mr. PATRICK: By granting the 53 sidings, the Government accomplished more than the Bill they presented to Parliament would have achieved. That action enabled the scheme to be proved a success. If those

facilities had not been granted by the previous Government, I think the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) will agree that there would have been little chance of their being granted by the present Government.

Mr. Sleeman: I will agree that the sites should not have been granted in the circumstances then existing.

Mr. PATRICK: It was one of those experiments that came off successfully as, for instance, when Bismarck bought the shares in the Suez Canal.

The Premier: Not Bismarck; you mean Disraeli.

Mr. PATRICK: Of course, that is so. In this instance the report of the Royal Commission shows that the action taken was amply justified.

Mr. Sleeman: Then why did you not put the scheme through when you had a majority?

Mr. PATRICK: We did not put it through because we did not have a majority.

The Premier: And that is a very good explanation.

Mr. PATRICK: Members sitting alongside, and behind, me voted solidly on the question.

The Premier: Not all of them.

Mr. PATRICK: The Country Party voted solidly for it. Only one member sitting on the Government side, the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson), voted for it, and if we had received a little more assistance like his, we would have carried the proposal through. In the circumstances, it was a good thing the Bill was not carried.

The Minister for Lands: It was.

Mr. PATRICK: It has given Co-operative Bulk Handling, Ltd., an opportunity to carry out the present scheme without costing the State a penny. As the Premier knows, that money previously had to be guaranteed by the State.

Mr. Sleeman: At any rate, it is a Charlie Chaplain scheme.

Mr. PATRICK: The weak part of the scheme relates to the facilities at the port. Recently I received a letter from the captain of a wheat boat. He is an old friend of the family, and, at the time he wrote to me, I happened to be in Northampton. He wanted to see me. Two days later I received another letter from him saying that he had always regarded Fremantle as the last



stronghold for leisurely and comfortable loading, but, unfortunately, his ship had been loaded with bulk wheat, and he had to sail away before I had time to see him. He also commented on the fact that it was evident, from the primitive appliances on the wharf, that something had been working against the successful carrying out of the bulk handling scheme. There is no doubt about the success of the country installations, and that view was confirmed by the Royal Commission, the members of which also agreed that there was no doubt there would have to be better appliances at the port.

Mr. Sleeman: Yes, and the pigsties will have to be done away with.

Mr. PATRICK: Very little time will be left this year to carry out any extensions of the scheme, and I hope the Government will consider the recommendations of the Royal Commission and give effect to them as soon as possible. It would be a good thing if the company were allowed to put in the necessary additional sidings. It would be very satisfactory for farmers if they could effect a saving of 2½d. per bushel in these times. As the Royal Commission pointed out, that saving really amounts to a bonus of 2½d. per bushel on the wheat.

Mr. Sleeman: Do you think the men who will be displaced from employment at Fremantle should be provided for first?

Mr. PATRICK: I listened with interest to the remarks of the Premier and members sitting on the Government side of the House, who represent mining constituencies, when they dealt with the recent miners' strike. In one way I was rather disappointed with the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech. When I noticed a reference to the proposed amendment of the Arbitration Act, I thought the Government might intend to amend that Act—

Mr. Needham: So they do.

Mr. PATRICK: I thought the Government might propose to amend the Act to enable the Arbitration Court to enforce their own decisions. The Bill has been introduced in another place, and I was disappointed to find what the amendments really amounted to. The Premier, in the course of his remarks, pointed out that, in his opinion, the Arbitration Court had been interfered with by a previous Government with respect to a decision that was not required. The Arbitration Act should be amended to allow the court to enforce their own decisions. Recently a cablegram appeared in the "West

Australian" in which it was stated that a comparatively small concern like the Milk Board in England had imposed a fine of £100 on a milk supplier who had broken the Act, without referring the matter to any court at all.

The Premier: That board is under an Act which permits the board to take action. I think I gave the reason earlier.

Mr. PATRICK: The reason given was that either the employees union or the employers should take action.

The Premier: No.

The Minister for Justice: The court was not allowed to do what it wanted to do previously.

The Premier: It was prevented by the previous Government.

Mr. PATRICK: For an interpretation of an Act passed by this Parliament I should not want to go beyond our own Full Court.

The Premier: Are you opposed to any legal court?

Mr. PATRICK: As one who supported secession, I am satisfied with a Western Australian Court, without taking the case to the Federal court.

The Premier: But you would take a case to England about some other matter.

Mr. PATRICK: What other matter?

The Premier: Secession.

Mr. PATRICK: That was taken to the highest court in the realm. The Federal Government recently appointed a special officer to police arbitration court awards, but here the Government have broken down one of the awards of the Arbitration Court. I am not arguing this question on its merits, for I have every sympathy with the miners. In fact I would say that since this Government are not doing what the South African and the Canadian Governments are doing, namely, putting a heavy tax on gold itself, and seeing that the high price of gold is due to fortuitous circumstances, the miners are entitled to a great deal more than they are getting to-day. If the Government were imposing a heavy taxation on the companies I could understand their attitude, but I think the miners are entitled to all they can get, considering the high price of gold. But it is a dangerous and deplorable principle for the Government to palter with the law to save the hour. The Premier has referred to past history. I have read in past history instances of the people themselves rising up against a Government, but I have never

known of a Government breaking down one of the country's laws.

The Premier: Then you do not know history.

Mr. PATRICK: There are instances where Governments have been compelled by outside people to break down their own laws, but never before have a Government done it of their own volition. I would remind the House that one of the greatest judges in Australia's history, the late Mr. Justice Higgins, resigned as President of the Arbitration Court on a principle closely akin to this. When he delivered an award and the then Prime Minister, Mr. Hughes, broke down that award by referring it to an outside body, Mr. Justice Higgins resigned.

The Minister for Lands: You know the Government did not break down an award.

Mr. PATRICK: The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) said the Government should have prosecuted the mine owners. Well, why did they not do so if the mine owners were breaking the law? But the mine owners were prepared to refer the matter to the Arbitration Court. The President of that court recently lectured the Kurrawang wood cutters, saying they were ignorant foreigners having a good time in this country, but led astray by outside advocates. Yet he remained absolutely silent on the breaking down of one of his own awards by the Government.

The Premier: That is not a fair remark.

Mr. PATRICK: Yes it is. If the President of the Arbitration Court lectured one body of men for breaking an award, he should also have addressed his remarks to other people. We have heard a great deal about political influence having a bearing on the Agricultural Bank. I never once approached the previous trustees of the Bank.

The Premier: Nor did any one of your party. They have never done it!

Mr. PATRICK: I am stating my own case; other members of the party can speak for themselves. I have certainly gone to the Agricultural Bank and interviewed the manager and other officials to get information.

The Minister for Lands: You can do that now.

Mr. PATRICK: Yes, but I have never attempted to interview the trustees to get them to alter any decision, and I have no wish to interview the present commissioners

with that object. But if it is good to take that institution away from political influence it is equally good to take away the Arbitration Court also.

The Minister for Lands: Tell us something about orderly marketing.

Mr. PATRICK: Certainly some system of orderly marketing is necessary in the world to-day, because this is what might be called a regulated world. I am going to quote a few remarks from a Canadian publication. The writer gives an account of how things are tending in other countries. He says—

Let me summarise this new world development. In thirty-eight countries the governments have instituted price supporting measures of one kind or another. Of these countries twenty-seven have established marketing control of one or more commodities through organisations of producers; in twenty-three government monopolies of greater or lesser extent have been created; in twenty-five minimum prices for home consumed agricultural products have been fixed; in fifteen measures for control of production have been adopted; in eighteen imports of agricultural produce have been regulated by quotas, and in twelve the milling industry has come under regulations with regard to the quantities of imported wheat in the making of flour. This is a tremendous change in economic policies from those prevailing before the war and even up to 1929.

So for the protection of our own producers in this word of extreme nationalism we have to go into some form of orderly marketing. The gold mining industry is having a wonderful effect on the State's prosperity. That is due almost entirely to the high price of gold. One has only to quote a leading mining company in this State to prove that. The company have probably one of the most up-to-date mining plants in Western Australia and have issued returns based on the standard value of gold—a little over £1 an ounce. The figures show a loss on every month's workings. Of course, when the premium and exchange are added, a considerable profit is shown. I agree also with the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) and the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) that it is necessary to have some form of protection for investors. Awful ramps have been put over the people in this country and also in Great Britain. Mines are being floated which perhaps would pay on an immediate capitalisation of £40,000 or £50,000, but they are being floated with a capital of millions, providing tremendous rake-offs for the promoters, with the result that they are

over-capitalised and have no earthly chance of ever paying. Then we have boomsters, and what was supposed to be one of the leading mines of the State had circulated glowing reports that stone yielding 200 ounces to the ton had been struck. Anyone who knows anything of mining is aware that it is not a value of 200 ounces to the ton that is going to create a mine, but a body of stone giving 8, 10 or 15 dwts. That announcement of 200-oz. ore was contained in a big heading in the "West Australian," and when I see statements like that it makes me rather suspicious about the mine. I have known of other mines that issued similarly glowing reports and have long since gone west.

The Premier: You are referring to one of the new discoveries.

Mr. PATRICK: One of the big discoveries; I do not mind mentioning the name, the Yellowdine Company. I have been watching the progress of the company and have noticed that to date they have found no development below 100 feet. It would be much better if the company put down a few bores to ascertain what is below the 100 feet rather than issue reports about ore of 200 ounces to the ton to catch the unwary.

The Premier: I suggest that you say nothing detrimental to the mine.

Mr. PATRICK: What I have said I consider is not detrimental. I am taking the long view in the interests of the State. Propositions boomed in that manner do incalculable harm to the mining industry of the State. That is the crudest form of booming.

The Premier: You might be misunderstood outside of Western Australia.

The Minister for Lands: There is no doubt that some of it did go 200 ounces.

The Premier: Of course, that statement is true.

Mr. PATRICK: It might be true. I was told of another mine that struck a patch and issued a report about ore going 40 ounces to the ton, but there was not one ton of the ore.

The Premier: Do not say anything that will be detrimental to the industry.

Mr. PATRICK: I am not saying anything detrimental to the industry. What I am saying is really for the good of the industry.

The Premier: I am sure of that.

Mr. PATRICK: I know that shows are being boomed in London that are not going to do the industry in this State any good. We know that in this State local companies have conducted the crudest form of boom. In the Yilgarn-Coolgardie district, less than a year ago I think, the Lieutenant-Governor and a party attended a big dinner to mark the starting of the machinery on a particular mine, and that mine has long since closed down because it was proved to be absolutely valueless. I consider that the mining industry in this State, from the point of view of taxation, has been extremely lucky. I was surprised that the Minister for Mines offered what amounted to a semi-apology for consulting the mining interests about imposing a small tax on the profits on gold here. In South Africa and Canada the taxation on gold mining is something stupendous. I hope that the price of gold will hold for many years and that every encouragement will be given to genuine development. One other matter I should like to touch on is the question of the Irwin coal seams. The Premier will remember that I put a question to him when the report was issued by the Royal Commissioner on the coal mining industry, Dr. Herman. He recommended that it would pay the State to make investigations into the value of those coal deposits. It is well known that that is a place of great geological interest. Visiting scientists from all over the world have spent a considerable amount of time in the district, and I think it would pay the Government to give effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner. It would be a wonderful thing for the northern part of the State if coal of suitable quality were discovered there. Not only would long haulage be saved, but, looking into the future and the needs for light and fuel of the various towns along the Midland line to Geraldton, it would be an important development.

The Premier: A good deal of investigation has been made.

Mr. PATRICK: A certain amount of investigation has been made, but Dr. Herman recommended further investigations. I commend the Minister for Employment for his strenuous campaign in favour of local products. I deeply regret that he is not able to be present to-night. I believe that his health has broken down under the stringency of the work he has done during the last two or three years.

Mr. Wilson: That is so.

Mr. PATRICK: Though we might differ in politics from the hon. gentleman, we can all commend the tenacity and courage with which he carries out what he believes to be right, and I for one shall be very pleased to see him back in his old place on the front bench. It is very discouraging to note that imports from the Eastern States increased last year by a sum of no less than £840,000 as compared with the previous year, in spite of the Minister's campaign. While a large amount of that increase was due to the importation of mining machinery and other requisites for the mining industry, it also included large items like confectionery which could be manufactured in this State. I reiterate the argument I advanced last session, that where this campaign should be conducted with the greatest intensity is on the goldfields, because our best buying market at present is undoubtedly there. From what I can gather from people who reside on the goldfields, it provides a wonderful market for Eastern States products, even primary products.

The Premier: Due, if I may say so, to the most unfair railway rates provided by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. PATRICK: There may be something in that, but I think it would pay to keep intensive propaganda going there.

The Premier: The Commonwealth rates are most outrageously unfair.

Mr. PATRICK: The Premier's remark brings me to the question of secession. Like other members on this side of the House, and probably some on the other side of the House, I was very disappointed that this State was not allowed to put its case properly before the Imperial Parliament. Last night we heard some remarks about a Boston tea party. If the people of this State were absolutely determined to secede from the Commonwealth, nothing could prevent them from doing so. There is a warfare that can be carried out which has proved to be even more terrible in its economic effect than actual warfare. I refer to the type of warfare which an old nation like the Chinese carried out against civilised European nations. They absolutely drove Great Britain, France and other great powers out of China by the simple weapon of the boycott and passive resistance.

Mr. Sleeman: That is illegal, is it not?

Mr. PATRICK: In effect, it is the policy of the Minister for Employment carried to its logical conclusion. A member of another place, speaking somewhere the other night, referred to the fact that our markets would be at a disadvantage if the States of Australia were split up again instead of forming one Commonwealth. Actually the reverse would be the case in this State. In the future it looks as if we were going to be prevented from extending our markets in different directions because we are tied to the Commonwealth. The member for Beverley (Mr. Mann) referred the other night to the lamb industry. If that industry is going to be fixed on a quota basis, New South Wales and Victoria will have 90 per cent. of the export business and the rest of Australia will have 10 per cent. This State, which has all its development before it, will be in a bad position. Western Australia would be wonderfully placed if it were able to follow what seems to be the modern practice of bartering its produce. Great Britain has increased its prosperity enormously by this means. We saw an instance of that last year. Great Britain agreed to buy a considerable amount of timber from Poland on a purchase agreement whereby Poland purchased motor cars and steel from Great Britain. If that is to be the policy for the future, we shall have to go back to the old system and barter our commodities. I was struck by a letter which appeared in the "West Australian" the other day. The writer stated that the Soviet Government in Russia was crying out for beef. He suggested it would be a good idea to arrange an exchange of beef for oil.

The Premier: You are referring to Kirkwood. It was a very good letter.

Mr. PATRICK: We are buying immense quantities of oil from the United States, which in turn are buying practically nothing from us. If the Soviet Government is prepared to take our beef in exchange for oil, it would be very good business.

The Premier: It is a sound proposition.

Mr. PATRICK: I wish to refer to a statement in the Press that during the coming year the States cannot expect to receive so much money from the petrol tax. This tax of 7½d. a gallon on petrol is a monstrous one. It is actually more than the landed cost of the fuel in Australia. If there is to be a tax on petrol the whole amount should be expended on roads. Wonderful

work has been done on our country roads with the money we have had out of the petrol tax. I think about 2½d. per gallon has been paid to the State. It would be monstrous if the Commonwealth Government took a greater share of the tax into revenue. Already motor vehicles and petrol carry sufficient taxation. Our railway people hardly know how well off they are in respect to competition from motor transport. A vehicle which costs £100 in the United States fetches £300 in this State. We are paying from 1s. 7d. to 1s. 8d. a gallon for petrol in the metropolitan area, and considerably more than that in the country districts, whereas it is sold at the bowser in the United States for about 4d. To take more out of the tax than is now being paid and give the States less for road making would be monstrous. I hope the Government of this State will take a long view of the circumstances generally, and will attempt to place the essential industries of the country upon a sound foundation. Mining is a wonderful industry. It may last from 10 to 30 years, but inevitably it must decline. Many of the works on which we are spending loan money to-day will have vanished in a year or two, without creating any additional employment. On the other hand, agriculture, in spite of all the great industrial developments throughout the world, is still the source of livelihood for two-thirds of the people of the world. It is the one stable and abiding industry. By restoring prosperity to agriculture in this State we shall be laying the foundation for permanent prosperity in every other branch of industry in which the community is interested.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.27 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 22nd August, 1935.*

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

### QUESTION—BARRACKS BUILDING.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, What was the cost connected with maintenance and improvement of the Old Barracks building from the 1st July, 1933, to the 30th June, 1935? 2, What is the estimated cost for the current financial year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, £1,534 6s. 8d. for all buildings on Old Barracks reserve. 2, £578 3s. 4d. to complete present work.

### QUESTION—WHOLE MILK BOARD LICENSES.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What is the number of licensed producers under the Whole Milk Board supplying milk to the metropolitan area? 2, What is the number of licensed distributors under the Whole Milk Board—(a) producer-retailers; (b) vendors? 3, How many milk depots are licensed in the metropolitan area under the Whole Milk Act?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, 481. 2, (a) 226; (b) 1,007. 3, 26.

### QUESTION—WATER TANK, BEEBEEGYNING.

Mr. WARNER asked the Minister for Water Supplies: 1, What is the reason for the delay in the delivery of materials for