

note how this movement is growing. Mr. Menzies at the time was Attorney-General. Now we have the Federal Minister for Health and Social Services (Sir Frederick Stewart) and the Assistant Federal Treasurer (Mr. Spender) talking along the same lines. In view of the manner in which we have temporised with the problem of the wheat industry, I am convinced that if a vote on secession were taken at present, the previous decision would be reversed. If we cannot accomplish anything, what is the good of our being here? I maintain that, provided the facts are faced and Ministers are strong enough to do the right thing, something can be accomplished. A recent speech by Sir Hal Colebatch was headed "Get the Work Done." It was a plea for efficiency and for quick decisions in order to meet the challenge thrown out by totalitarian countries. That is what we want.

In conclusion, I wish to refer to the Bread Act, about which I have received numerous complaints. I am satisfied that the Honorary Minister is sincere in his views, but this matter has been discussed by the Geraldton Municipal Council, and I have been informed by many people that the Act is operating very unsatisfactorily in Geraldton. If the Act is submitted for reconsideration this session, I am afraid that, in view of the case presented to me, I shall not be able to support the Honorary Minister. The Act has not operated as he said it would. After a visit to the Eastern States, he spoke enthusiastically of this legislation, but the fact remains that it has not given satisfaction to the people, and they are the ones who have to be considered. This is a question affecting not only the bakers and the employees; it also affects the public at large, and the public must be considered. I thank members for their courteous hearing. I regret having occupied so much time, but I felt it my duty to ventilate the matters with which I have dealt.

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

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [8.51]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 29th August.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned 8.52 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 23rd August, 1939.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, FREIGHT ON PETROL.

Mr. **STYANTS** asked the Minister for Railways: What is the freight, per gallon, on petrol hauled in bulk from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, inclusive of the charge for bringing back the empty "tanker" from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle?

The **MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** replied: 4½d.

QUESTION—BREAD PRICES.

Kalgoorlie-Boulder District.

Mr. **STYANTS** asked the Minister for Industrial Development: Is the maximum price of bread in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder district, as declared by the Wheat Prices Fixing Board, also the minimum?

The **MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT** replied: Yes.

QUESTION—PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS.

Mr. **WATTS** asked the Premier: 1, Is it a fact that copies of private members' Bills are made available at any time before the second reading is to be moved, either to any Government departments other than the Government Printer, or any member or officer of the Government? 2, If so, to what departments, members or officers of the Government are they made available, and how long has the practice been in operation, and will instructions be given to cease the practice? 3, If not, why not?

The **PREMIER** replied 1, 2, and 3, Copies of all Bills, when printed, are supplied to the Premier and the Crown Law Department. The length of time the practice has been in operation with regard to the Crown

Law Department is uncertain. The officer in charge of the matter at the Government Printing Office can certify only to forty years and his predecessor is unfortunately deceased. Private members would be inconvenienced if their draftsman, who is an officer of the Crown Law Department, were prevented from securing printed proofs of Bills which he has drafted. The Bills are not made available to anyone except the draftsman and his clerk. Instructions were issued some years ago for Bills to be forwarded to the Premier as soon as printed, and this was interpreted to include all Bills, including those of private members, though these were not desired. Although the Premier's Department is in charge of the Government Printing Office, in practice these Bills are never looked at.

QUESTION—SEWERAGE.

Offensive Odours.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Water Supplies: 1, What will be the cost, approximately, of the new stink pipe being erected to cure the offensive odours complained of in Karrakatta and Claremont? 2, Is this stink pipe to be illuminated for aircraft at night?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, A ventilating stack has been erected on the main sewer at approximate cost of £2,000. 2, Illumination at night has been effected in accordance with regulations of Civil Aviation Department.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day—Amendment—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, to which Mr. Seward (Pingelly) had moved an amendment as follows:—

That the following words be added to the motion: "But this House regrets to advise Your Excellency that in its opinion the provision made by the Conference of Premiers for stabilising the wheat industry is inadequate."

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton—on amendment) [4.35]: At this stage I intend to deal only with the amendment which has been moved. First of all I would say it is quite correct that at present no provision exists for the stabilisation

of the wheat industry—provision either adequate or inadequate—and that therefore the amendment means nothing. The Premiers' Conference is not over, but only stands adjourned, and will be engaged mainly in ascertaining what can be done to assist wheatgrowers in regard to the present season's production. Naturally, what may ultimately be decided by the conference will have its effect on the line of policy which may be adopted relatively to any proposal for assisting, or "stabilising" as it is termed, the future price of wheat. Briefly, the figures given last evening by the Minister for Lands with respect to the world's production of wheat, and showing that over two years' supply of the importing countries is already held by the exporting countries and that production is increasing both in importing and in exporting countries at what we might consider an alarming rate, appear to prove that the condition of the wheat industry is highly serious. I think the Minister for Lands said last night that over 1,000,000,000 bushels are now held as a carry-over. My impression is that if the figures of exporting countries—the Argentine, United States, Canada and Australia—were gone into further, that estimate would prove to be even very conservative as compared with what actually exists. The requirements of importing countries are estimated to be about 500,000,000 bushels each year; and it is asserted, from statistical reports, that over 1,000,000,000 bushels of wheat are available; so that importing countries do not need any wheat from exporting countries for two years, and then they would be able to supply their own meals. So there is no doubt that all wheat-exporting countries are in a highly serious position as regards future trade. Moreover, there is a prospect of the carry-over being considerably augmented.

Mr. SPEAKER: I trust the Premier will keep to the amendment.

The PREMIER: Yes, Sir. I am merely showing that there is not in existence any plan, and why there is necessity for some plan, dealing with stabilisation of wheat. People talk about the price of wheat being 1s. 2d. or 1s. 3d., or perhaps 1s. 10d. or 2s. 3d. at ports; but the fact of the matter is that wheat is unsaleable at any price in any considerable quantity. Any attempt to stabilise wheat at a remunerative price without some control of production is, in view of world conditions of trade and production,

a fairly tremendous task, and almost impossible of realisation in Australia. In these circumstances the pressing problem for this season, what we are going to do to assist those carrying on the industry, is being considered. The States naturally take the view that the Commonwealth should shoulder the responsibility, even though the Prime Minister, in opening the recent conference—where, it has been stated stabilisation proposals have been formulated, or agreed to, or applied—said that the Commonwealth Government, at a meeting of Cabinet, had decided that all it could do was to assist the wheat industry to the extent of £1,750,000. The Prime Minister also stated, as chairman of the Loan Council, that no increase could be expected in the loan programme as agreed to at the meeting of the council about two months ago, and that any assistance which could be rendered to the wheat industry regarding stabilisation proposals would have to come out of the revenues of the States or the Commonwealth as the case might be, or out of the loan programme which had already been allocated to the various States. Our share of the loan programme arranged by the Loan Council is £2,000,000. That amount, of course, has not yet been allocated to the works which are to be executed, and which will be submitted to the House in the usual form of the annual Loan Estimates. The Prime Minister said that the Commonwealth would not, because it could not, make any greater contribution; although he subsequently agreed to submit to the Federal Cabinet a proposition that the Commonwealth contribution be increased from £1,750,000 to £2,000,000, additionally to the money provided by the flour tax, which at the present price of wheat will mean about £3,750,000 throughout the wheat selling season. I think I made this position quite clear immediately after the conference took place. In fact, I made public statements in the Press, knowing that the matter was very urgent and that wheatgrowers and others were extremely interested in the position. So, rather than wait until I returned to the State to make a statement, I gave one to the Press, so that all concerned would know at the earliest possible moment as much about the circumstances as I did myself. I might say that in view of the adamant attitude of the Prime Minister, I agreed, on behalf of the State, to find some money from

the State's very limited resources to assist the wheat industry. The matter has not yet been brought to finality, mainly owing to the fact that the Premier of Victoria would not co-operate with the other States in providing assistance. When the discussion had got as far as it could, the Prime Minister asked me directly whether the Commonwealth's proffered assistance was acceptable to Western Australia. I replied that it was not; but that on the other hand I would not take the responsibility of rejecting it. That was the attitude I adopted. I still consider it is the function and the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government to assist the wheat industry in its present plight. That responsibility has been accepted by the Commonwealth Government in the past; in fact, it has been accepted by the central governments of all the wheat-producing countries of the world. Those central governments have made it their responsibility. If the Commonwealth Government will only provide assistance on certain definite conditions, then I do not think I would be acting in the best interests of the State if I rejected it, no matter how small or how inadequate it might appear at the time. That is where the matter stands at the moment. It is true that we have had a conference of officers and experts employed by the States and the Commonwealth to deal with the question of this year's harvest with a view to ascertaining what can be done regarding its disposal. As the Minister for Lands observed last night, it might be possible to utilise a fair proportion of this year's harvest by converting it into reserves of hay. The experts are now engaged in endeavouring to evolve a plan that will make the position a little easier than it is at present. Obviously, the Government has done all that it can in the circumstances. It has undertaken a tremendous responsibility in offering to assist the industry from the State's limited resources. It has done so under duress. That is the only way in which the industry can be assisted. The State is contemplating making provision for the sum of nearly £200,000 to assist the industry. I do not want to make this question a political one. As the Minister for Lands said last evening, the Government's desire is to render all assistance possible to every deserving industry in the State. The Government has gone as far as it can, in view of the previous policy carried out in Australia for many years past. If

the wheatgrowers of the State benefit to the extent of from 10d. to 1s. 2d. a bushel, that is not niggardly assistance, but is something which should be accepted and appreciated in the spirit in which it is given.

The amendment is based on the misconception that provision has already been made to assist the industry by a conference of Premiers; whereas, as a matter of fact, that is not so. It would really be futile to inform His Excellency of something which is based on wrong premises altogether; for until the ensuing conference is held, nothing can be decided. In my opinion, the amendment is futile. Therefore, I do not agree to it and shall vote against it.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York—on amendment) [4.45]: I am glad to have the Premier's assurance that finality in this matter has not yet been reached. I am aware that the deliberations of the conference have not been completed respecting a stabilisation plan for the wheatgrowers of Australia. I personally represent a great many of the wheatgrowers of this State, as do other members on this side of the House, and I say definitely we are not satisfied with what has been done.

The Premier: Who is satisfied?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Even the Government is not satisfied. I believe that. At the same time, I am not one to say that we will not accept what has been offered without a hope of securing something more. That is the attitude we ought to adopt. We should, if possible, extract from the Federal Government a greater degree of generosity.

The Minister for Lands: Generosity and responsibility.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am aware there has been much talk as to who is responsible for providing assistance to carry on the wheat industry. In the past, the Federal Government has accepted that responsibility. The farmers are not to blame for the present position, because when they sowed their wheat for the harvest which was reaped in 1938, wheat was 3s. 6d. a bushel, and they were then justified in hoping for a continuance of that price. As a result, we have had a harvest of 37,000,000 bushels; but, unfortunately, portion of it is at present unsaleable. The farmers cannot be held responsible for that. Nor can the Government be blamed. We do not

blame the Government. The Minister for Lands last night, in a carefully prepared speech, gave members the statistical position of wheat throughout the world. There is no doubt we must realise that to-day a surplus of wheat exists, a very large surplus. But, after all, this is an important industry. It is important both to the Federal Government and to the State Governments. I question whether much consideration has been given by the Federal Government and the State Governments to the way in which they will maintain their credits overseas. That is a matter to which consideration must be given. A further question arises, that of obtaining a market for the wheat. As the Minister for Lands said, we had a few weeks ago nearly 7,000,000 bushels of wheat unsold in the State; and, admittedly, wheat has been sold at a remarkably low price. As the Minister also pointed out, if it were not for sales of wheat to China and other countries whose people are substituting wheat for their usual food supplies, we would be in a hopeless position. To-day we have 3,500,000 bushels of wheat which it will be very difficult to dispose of. So that members may realise the position, I obtained this morning particulars of the wheat position in two of the big wheat exporting countries—Argentina—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Does that come under the amendment?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I desire to show how impossible it is to stabilise the wheat industry.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not wish to burke discussion, but would ask the hon. member to keep to the amendment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will prove how difficult it is to stabilise the industry. Some responsibility must be accepted by our Governments; it cannot all be placed on the farmers. The Argentine at the present time has 3,985,540 metric tons of wheat for sale, equal to 146 million bushels, and is offering it for 10 per cent. below the price of the last sale, which is equal to about 17s. 6d. a quarter of eight bushels. At that price it cannot sell. That country is stabilising wheat, unfortunately for us, by fixing a price of 3s. 2d. a bushel at the port of Buenos Aires. As the Minister explained to the House, the Argentine is able, by an internal currency, to do that, because it deals with the exchanges itself.

This action, of course, is encouraging production still further. On top of that, Canada has no less than 102 million bushels of wheat as a carry-over from the last harvest and at present is garnering another harvest which will add to that terrific surplus. Let members think of those figures—102 million bushels of wheat carried over from last harvest, which would provide for the whole of the requirements of Canada for a year. The present harvest, coming on top of that carry-over, will approximate 300 million bushels. Consequently, when we talk of stabilising, no country can continue to encourage the production of wheat at the present stage.

The Argentine finds itself in the position of having to use every available bit of storage and cover for its wheat, and at every siding and railway station ramps without covers have been built about 2 feet above the ground on which to store the wheat. A certain amount of waste will be entailed, but the country is faced with the problem of having to handle another harvest. That was our fear in this State. With the carry-over, the question arose where we would put the wheat. The Ministers who met in conference will have to give serious consideration to other production and to a restriction of the area cropped. There must be some restriction of area. For the Minister to say that he does not believe in restriction is idle. It is futile to continue to encourage the production of wheat when we cannot find a market for it.

The Minister is leaving for the Eastern States to-morrow night to be present at the resumption of the conference, and we should give him our backing and show him that we are behind him by doing something towards providing for restriction in one way or another. Certainly we cannot go on encouraging production. Still this will not relieve the farmers from the difficulties consequent upon the low prices. The proposed stabilisation scheme will give to the farmers at the outside 10d. a bushel which, with 1s. a bushel at a fourpenny siding—though the price has risen a little, being 1s. 2d. to-day—

Mr. Patrick: This morning it was 1s. 1½d.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That will bring the figure to only 2s., which is a very unprofitable price. On such a return the farmer cannot possibly make ends meet. There may

be a natural restriction because the people who have provided credit in the past will not be able to continue to provide credit when they know the commodity is being offered for sale at such a remarkably low price. We have to realise that hopes have been raised in the minds of the farmers that it is possible to give them 4s. a bushel.

The Premier: With control?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, without control.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the Leader of the Opposition is departing from the amendment now.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am dealing with stabilisation. We cannot stabilise wheat at 4s. a bushel. I defy any Government, Federal or State, to police such a scheme. Yet we have the present Leader of the Opposition in the Federal House saying that he could guarantee the farmers 4s. a bushel.

Mr. SPEAKER: What the Leader of the Opposition said in the Federal House has nothing to do with the amendment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: He made the statement, not in the Federal House, but in Perth to-day.

Mr. SPEAKER: That has nothing to do with the amendment. I must ask the hon. member to discuss the amendment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: How can we possibly stabilise the price of wheat if that idea is instilled into the minds of the farmers?

Mr. SPEAKER: The amendment is plain enough. The Leader of the Opposition must be, and I am sure is, able to appreciate what it says. Therefore, I ask him to discuss the amendment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The amendment proposes that we should advise His Excellency that the provision made by the conference of Premiers for stabilising the industry is inadequate. When other public men encourage the belief that 4s. can be paid, what is the position of the Premiers? There is only one way to meet the position, and that is to give the man responsible an opportunity to give effect to his proposal. Evidently in his mind there is a method of stabilising wheat, and at a price which I consider is impossible.

The amendment might be a little out of order. The present might be too early to table such an amendment, but the fact of its being moved does give an opportunity for us to point out that the farmers of this

State are not satisfied with the scheme that has been suggested. At the same time, I wish to convey clearly to the Minister for Lands that, while we are dissatisfied, we do not want him to return from the conference without the offer that has already been made, simply because we desire something more.

The Minister for Lands: You will accept that?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I would, though it is inadequate.

Mr. Rodoreda: What would be adequate?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: A price of at least 3s. 6d. at sidings. Even then some assistance would have to be given, or the debt condition of the farmers would need further consideration. They cannot meet their liabilities of years gone by with wheat selling at that price.

Mr. Rodoreda: Then that would not be adequate?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It would be adequate for the time being, bearing in mind the actual position. I suppose the Premier was quite right in describing the amendment as being a little premature, because no decision has been reached, although we have been advised that this is the best that can be done towards stabilising the industry. I sincerely hope that the Premier, who does not believe in restriction, does not intend to prevent us from accepting the 10d. a bushel which is probably available under the scheme. Such assistance will accomplish some stabilisation. Unfortunately, we in Western Australia are greatly dependent upon the primary industries, but the Eastern States have many other industries. Their economy is far broader than is ours. Therefore, it is much easier for them to stabilise their industry than for us to stabilise ours. While I am pleased that the Premier has approached the amendment as he has done, the position is definitely very serious. We do not want to see 8,000 men walking off their holdings because we cannot give them a stabilised price for a commodity so important to this State. The industry is of great importance to the State as it helps us so materially to meet our overseas indebtedness. Yet the opportunity is limited by the restricted market overseas in which to place our product.

MR. WATTS (Katanning—on amendment) [5.0]: I support the amendment. There is little doubt that the proposals made at the Premiers' Conference are quite inadequate for the wheat-growers. When dealing with the matter yesterday, the Minister for Lands took up the attitude, I think, that half a loaf was better than no bread. True, but he did not establish in my mind that a very vigorous effort had been made to increase the quantity of bread from a half to three-quarters of a loaf or more.

The Premier: Have you read the Prime Minister's second statement?

Mr. WATTS: Yes, although I did not find in the Press the report of any serious attempt to persuade the Commonwealth Government that more funds ought to be found for this purpose.

The Premier: You could not have read what was said.

Mr. WATTS: Representations of that nature may have been made, but I do not gather either from the Press reports or from the speech of the Minister that that was so. Viewed from the standpoint of the wheat-growers it can only be said at present that the offer is inadequate. Yesterday we gleaned from the Minister for Lands that the price the farmers were likely to receive as the net result of the proposals, if carried into effect, would be approximately 2s. 2d. a bushel at siding. Other calculations have been made showing a figure less than that sum, and certainly none has been made showing a figure greater. Because I do not want to throw this argument into the most unfavourable light, I will take the highest figure, namely 2s. 2d., although it may be less than that in the ultimate result. In the past two years considerable work has been done by the trustees under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I do not know that the hon. member can discuss that Act.

Mr. WATTS: It will have reference to the amendment. A lot of work has been done by the trustees under that Act. In evidence given before the select committee in 1937, Mr. White informed members of that body that 3s. 4d. a bushel had been used as a basis for debt adjustment. That was stated on page 22 of the evidence, question 65, and the amount was calculated on the State average of 12 bushels, which the witness regarded as a reasonable basis. On page 22 of the

evidence Mr. White said that 3s. a bushel, f.o.b.—this would be equal to about 2s. 4d. at siding—was an outrageous amount on which to operate, and that nobody could pay his way if that were all he was going to get for his wheat. Mr. White is a man of vast experience in these affairs. He said it was an outrageous price, because nobody could pay his way at that figure. Notwithstanding this, we are asked in this House to refrain from supporting an amendment regretting that the figure suggested should be a maximum of 2s. 2d. at siding, or 2d. less per bushel than the sum at which Mr. White said it was not possible to grow wheat. There is an accumulation of evidence, beyond what has been referred to by me, to indicate that that sum is totally inadequate. In consequence we are obliged, as representing, to some extent some of us and to a large extent others, the wheatgrowers of the State, to endeavour to show that further representations ought to be made, and can be made, to increase the amount.

I believe the majority of the growers would be quite satisfied this year, in view of all the difficulties, if they could receive an amount equal to the cost of production. We know that 2d. above the sum suggested would be the price at which it would not be possible to grow wheat, and the general opinion is that the price should be about 3s. 4d. a bushel at siding. I suggest that if a proposal to that effect were advanced, backed by the Commonwealth and State Governments, much of the argument would cease. It would not cease altogether, because even at that figure there would be no element of profit. At present we are asking growers to produce wheat, and to continue to do so, at a definite loss. The result will be that as debt adjustment has been made on the basis of 3s. 4d. at siding, all the debt adjustment that has been made will be wasted, because producers will not be receiving anything like the price that has been used as the basis of adjustment.

The Premier: Would you give the basic wage to everyone who is out of work?

Mr. WATTS: That is being paid by the Government.

The Premier: Oh, no!

Mr. WATTS: The basic wage is being paid to those people. When a man has certain family responsibilities, he has been getting full-time work for a long period.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is getting away from the amendment.

Mr. WATTS: I gather that the Commonwealth Government made certain proposals, and subsequently agreed to increase its proportion and reduce the States' proportion, because the States apparently were unable to go to the extent the Commonwealth Government required. A strong opinion exists—and I think it is the correct one—that the Commonwealth Government should be asked to contribute more; not that the States should do so. With the reservation that the Commonwealth Government should be asked to contribute more, I agree with those who say that the matter is a responsibility of that Government, although I think the States could within reason render their quota of assistance. I cannot altogether agree with Mr. Dunstan's point of view. He said he would have no restriction on production. The matter requires more mature consideration than that gentleman has given to it. I do not agree with his idea that Victoria is suffering more because Western Australia is getting some funds out of that State, as he indicated was the position. Victoria has had too much from us already, especially in respect of secondary industries.

The Minister rightly pointed out that the wheat industry proportionately is worth more to Western Australia than to any other State because of our great production relatively to our small population. That is a sound reason for going back to the Commonwealth Government and asking it for more assistance. It is all very well for the Minister to say that the request for an increased amount would be fantastic. From a perusal of the newspaper this evening, I do not think that the Minister's colleague, the Federal Leader of the Opposition, agrees with him.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Federal Leader of the Opposition has nothing to do with this amendment.

Mr. WATTS: On the point that the amount would be inadequate, the Minister said that 16 millions of money would be the figure if a sufficient bounty on wheat was paid. Two millions of that would represent the maximum amount the Federal Government could possibly find at present. I suggest that if this country was at war, it would not be a matter of merely two million pounds that would be raised.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! We are not dealing with war.

Mr. WATTS: It is necessary, I take it—

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not necessary at all. The hon. member must deal with the amendment. We are not discussing war, nor the possibility of war.

Mr. WATTS: War would affect the price of wheat.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are dealing only with the Premiers' Conference for the stabilisation of wheat.

Mr. WATTS: It would also affect that. If any defence was required, the Commonwealth Government would have to find many more millions than it is asked to find for the assistance of wheatgrowers. The Government could provide more adequate funds for the growers, just as it would have to find greater funds in the circumstances I have mentioned. If the industry is worth preserving, as the information we have received from the Minister for Lands leads us to believe it is worth preserving for Western Australia, it is equally worth preserving financially by a greater amount being added to the fund, just as a greater amount would have to be expended in the circumstances to which I have referred. That would provide the community with a share it does not now receive. It would benefit the country by way of trade and turnover in trade. The greater the amount that is found and the more adequate it is to the circumstances, the more likely is it that business and employment generally will increase and continue at a more satisfactory rate than is the case at present.

I cannot understand why the Minister for Lands should have taken up the attitude that this is the fullest amount the Commonwealth Government can provide. We are all agreed that the wheat industry in Western Australia is worth preserving, and is worthy of a greater effort on the part of the Commonwealth Government. It is of no use to ask the wheatgrower to continue in production at a price definitely below any cost of production, apart altogether from profits. I have the greatest respect for the Minister, and I think his bona fides cannot be impugned. I ask him to go back to the Commonwealth Government and point out that the amount it proposes to give is wholly inadequate. It means that the farmers are asked to lose still more money by

continuing production. I hope he will make every effort to have the amount increased.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth—on amendment) [5.13]: I appreciate the motive of the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) in moving the amendment. He is particularly concerned with the difficulties of wheat farmers owing to the unprecedented fall in the export price of wheat. He has my sympathy. The amendment, however, may be read in two ways. It suggests that the proposal of the Premiers' Conference is inadequate, and that the amount to be paid by way of relief is insufficient. There can be no possible disagreement about that. Members will agree that the proposed amount is inadequate as applying to wheatgrowing, and does not put the industry on anything like a profitable basis. The Prime Minister would probably be the first to agree that £3,500,000, the amount proposed to be found, plus flour tax, is not adequate to meet the present needs of the industry.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: It depends on the purse.

Mr. McDONALD: The word "adequate" has to be considered in relation to other circumstances. It has to be considered in relation to the amount of money the Commonwealth Government and the State Governments can find. We might agree that the amount found by the Commonwealth and State Governments for many things is inadequate; that the money found for the relief of unemployment is insufficient, that the amount found for our schools, our public health, etc., is not adequate.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! We are not discussing schools or health, but the Premiers' Conference and wheat stabilisation.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. I merely desire to point out that the term "adequacy" has to be considered in relation to the funds available. That is an unfortunate fact from which we cannot get away. Whether we view it from the standpoint of the Federal Government or the State Governments, the adequacy of the sum at present proposed to be set aside can be questioned in relation to the condition of the wheat growing industry. If we set aside approximately £7,000,000 for the current year and admit that amount is not all that is needed to meet the requirements of the industry

this year, it does not follow that conditions next year may not be better. The export price of wheat may have risen, and the amount available to assist the wheatgrowing industry may possibly be much larger.

Mr. Watts: What prospect is there of that?

Mr. Raphael: A war.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw hon. members' attention to the fact that we are not discussing what may happen this year or the year after. What is under discussion is the provision at present made by the Premiers' Conference.

Mr. McDONALD: Quite so, Mr. Speaker; but I think I might be allowed to say that when we are discussing the sum proposed to be allocated for the relief of the wheatgrowers at the present juncture, we may consider that, although the amount is inadequate for this season and although there may be a shortage between the revenue and expenditure of the farmers this season, this position may not necessarily continue in the following season. If we take an optimistic view, the position may not be the same in subsequent seasons. I am not prepared to support the amendment in terms that involve a reflection, or may even imply censure, upon the Federal and State Governments at this juncture. The Federal Government in particular and all State Governments to a degree are just now confronted by quite unprecedented circumstances. If I may be permitted to go a little further, the Federal Government is not only faced with the necessity to assist those engaged in the wheatgrowing industry, but with commitments already made. Most decidedly the Federal Government has to face a huge expenditure on defence.

Mr. SPEAKER: Of course that has nothing to do with the amendment.

Mr. McDONALD: No. If I can persuade you, Mr. Speaker, to adopt a rather more liberal view of the terms of the amendment, you will allow me to point out that if it is claimed that £7,000,000 is inadequate to meet the requirements of the particular branch of primary industry under discussion, we can reasonably bear in mind that the Federal and State Governments have other commitments to meet. If we regard those other commitments as of paramount importance, seeing that they are inescapable and involve the defence of the country,

then we must realise that the term "inadequate" may not be justly applied to the amount of assistance under discussion, having regard to the extent of finance available—even although, as I admit, from the point of view of balancing the farmers' ledger, and as the Prime Minister himself would be the first to admit, £7,000,000 is not an adequate sum with which to achieve that end. If I were to run the risk of speaking outside the strict scope of the amendment, I would also say that I do not think any Government, Federal or State, should exhaust its funds without regard to its obligations beyond any one industry. There are other industries that may require assistance. The Minister for Lands advanced that point during his speech last evening. That is a possibility that any prudent Government must take into consideration in determining what amount can be made available for the assistance of any one industry. In common with all others, I agree that the wheatgrowing industry in Australia is of national importance. Certainly it is of vital importance to a State like Western Australia. I am prepared to support the maximum national effort possible to raise funds for tiding the industry over the present crisis; but I am not prepared to say, if the amendment is intended to convey any such implication, that any censure is to be attached to the Federal or State Governments in relation to the financial proposals that are now under consideration. I do not know whether the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward), who moved the amendment, will consider his purpose has been achieved by the discussion that has ensued and the consideration given to the case on behalf of the wheatgrowers that has been presented to Parliament; but, if he desires the amendment to be taken to a division, I must move—

That the amendment be amended by the addition of the following words:—"to meet the present needs of the industry but considers that the provision proposed to be made should not be rejected without grave consideration."

The Premier: Why "without grave consideration"?

Mr. McDONALD: I could almost leave out those three words. I am satisfied to leave the amendment in the terms I suggest, and allow the whole matter to rest at the discretion of the Governments concerned, including our own State Govern-

ment. If those Governments, in the light of circumstances, consider that course necessary, let them reject the proposals. I think the Leader of the Opposition expressed similar views to those I advance when I suggest that we would be unwise to reject proposals that will represent a substantial measure of relief to the wheatgrowing industry of this State.

MR. BOYLE (Avon—on amendment) [5.24]: I find myself in a rather unfortunate position in face of the repeated warnings and rulings by Mr. Speaker that we must confine ourselves to the strict wording of the amendment. We must bowl at one stump in this game. I do not quarrel with, or disagree with, your ruling, Mr. Speaker; but I cannot understand why the Premier and the Minister for Lands will not admit the claim that the proposals of the Premiers' Conference are inadequate. I can see nothing wrong in advising His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor to that effect. No reflection upon the work of the Premier or the Minister in the Eastern States is implied by the amendment. Every member of the House will concede that both the Premier and the Minister did their best on behalf of the wheatgrowers. I do not think any member of this Chamber will cavil at that statement, but one can be too sensitive in such matters. The Premier has found fault with the amendment moved by the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward). I remind the House that the amount of £2,000,000 offered by the Prime Minister on behalf of the Federal Government is, of all the amounts granted to the wheatgrowing industry, the second lowest of the five made available to the farmers of Australia during the past nine years. The Premier knows that when the Prime Minister addressed the conference he offered £1,750,000, and that the Premier of Victoria, Mr. Dunstan, raised the one discordant note in consequence. In order to placate Mr. Dunstan, the Prime Minister then raised his maximum offer to £2,000,000.

The Premier: Nothing of the kind.

The Minister for Lands: No, certainly not.

MR. BOYLE: I am going on the Press report.

The Premier: Then the Press report was wrong.

MR. BOYLE: If so, that is different.

The Premier: The Premier of New South Wales, supported by me, secured that.

MR. BOYLE: You got the extra £250,000 from the Prime Minister?

The Premier: Yes.

MR. BOYLE: Then it was not a voluntary offer by the Prime Minister?

The Premier: It was not offered to placate Mr. Dunstan.

MR. BOYLE: I stand corrected on that point. Then the Commonwealth Government is to raise £1,750,000—

The Premier: The amount was not even to be raised; the Prime Minister said he would submit the proposal to his Cabinet.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We are getting it bit by bit.

MR. BOYLE: I am being put in order.

The Premier: Do you not wish to be correct?

MR. BOYLE: Yes. Naturally, we have had merely the Press reports to go on. My point is that £2,000,000 is the total amount that the Commonwealth Government is prepared to make available. The Premier said that the Prime Minister was adamant on the point. That means that the responsibility for finding £1,750,000 has to be shouldered by the State Governments. That is the position. The argument that now ensues is whether the farmers are to receive the assistance on an acreage or on a population basis. If the aid is to be paid on production, Western Australia will fare badly, for a much greater amount would have to be made available if the assistance were on the population basis, which would be far more reasonable. Australian industries that have received bounties have not been stabilised by any manner of means. An attempt is being made to provide a further bounty for the Australian wheatgrowers, but no sum for stabilisation purposes is mentioned at all. The member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) mentioned that £7,000,000 was to be raised, included in which was £3,500,000 that would be taken from the flour tax. With the addition of the £2,000,000 to be provided by the Federal Government, that brings the Commonwealth assistance up to £5,500,000, the balance of the £7,000,000 having to be found by the States. The Commonwealth "Year Book" discloses the fact that in 1931-32 the Federal Government paid a bounty of £3,429,000 to the wheatgrowers of Australia. At that time wheat

was priced at not less than 2s. 3d. per bushel at sidings, or over 1s. 2d. more than it is to-day. In 1932-33 the sum of £2,000,000 was found. In 1933-34—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! We shall find ourselves back to 1900 directly. The amendment has reference only to the provision made by the recent conference of Premiers, and suggests that the provision was inadequate.

Mr. BOYLE: Well, Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult to prove a case of inadequacy—

Mr. SPEAKER: Of course the Speaker is not to blame for that. The fault lies in the way in which the amendment has been drafted. My duty is to ensure that the hon. member keeps his remarks within the scope of the amendment.

Mr. BOYLE: How on earth am I to prove inadequacy without comparing the amount proposed with some previous sum? I fail to see how I can prove a case of inadequacy if I cannot quote comparable sums. I wish to point out to the House that the £2,000,000 that has been offered by the Commonwealth Government is in the form of bounty assistance to the wheat-growers. To indicate its adequacy or inadequacy is possible only by comparing the amount with previous sums that have been found by the Commonwealth Government for the assistance of wheatgrowers. In order to do that, surely I am permitted to refer to the first bounty granted in 1931-32? If I am not permitted to do that, it is impossible for me not only to prove a case, but even to state a case. I am proving from the figures I am quoting—and I take it I have your permission to continue—

Mr. SPEAKER: I think we had better get back to the amendment. I rule the hon. member out of order in going back through the Year Book to consult figures relating to past years with a view to speaking to the amendment under discussion.

Mr. BOYLE: This is a most extraordinary position, and I am afraid I shall be compelled to disagree with your ruling, Sir.

Dissent from Speaker's Ruling.

Mr. Boyle: I move—

That the House dissent from the Speaker's ruling.

Question put. and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	..	..	24

Majority against 5

AYES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Sampson
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Seward
Mr. Hill	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Mann	Mr. Warner
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Watts
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Doney
Mr. North	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Cross	Mr. Panton
Mr. Fox	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Styants
Mr. Holman	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Triat
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wise
Mr. Millington	Mr. Withers
Mr. Needham	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

PAIR.

AYE.	No.
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. Johnson

Question (dissent) thus negatived.

Debate Resumed.

Mr. BOYLE: I am very much afraid that any pearls I had to throw must remain in the bag, so to speak. I must bow to the decision of the House, but I find myself placed in an utterly impossible position. I cannot comment on the decision, but I think I am in order in contending that the tentative provision made is inadequate. I will leave the matter at that.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin—on amendment) [5.36]: The remarks that I had intended making on the amendment to the amendment will, upon the wholly unexpected ruling of the Speaker, need to be postponed to the discussion upon the main question. Therefore I content myself by requesting that the Minister for Lands, if he should intervene in the debate, will clarify the position and let us know exactly what addition to the present price of wheat is implied in the two bonuses that farmers are expecting to receive. I think the Minister is quoted as having said yesterday that the total amount would be 2s. 2d. a bushel.

The Minister for Lands: I did not use that as a specific sum. A specific sum cannot be stated. First of all the harvest has to be anticipated.

Mr. DONEY: Quite so; but the amount a farmer may expect to receive is based on the figure now being quoted for wheat, which is 1s. 1¼d. a bushel.

The Premier: Yes, but how much wheat? How many millions of bushels?

Mr. DONEY: The amount is being based on 140,000,000 bushels. I admit that the production for this year is likely to be nearer 170,000,000 bushels, but we are basing our figures on the yield of 140,000,000 bushels quoted by the Prime Minister.

The Minister for Works: Both are guesses.

Mr. DONEY: May I put it this way—the simplest way in which I can think of putting it—that the amount that we are likely to receive from the flour tax this year is £4,000,000?

The Minister for Lands: Nearly. We are not sure of that.

Mr. DONEY: Of course not; but the Minister must base his calculations on some figure, and I am doing precisely the same thing. I am taking the £4,000,000 as a basis, and that works out at 5¾d. a bushel. Using the same proportions, the £3,500,000 that we anticipate will ensue from the present bonusing method will provide another 5d. per bushel. Fivepence and 5¾d. plainly total 10¾d., and that, added to the 1s. 1¼d. per bushel which is quoted for wheat to-day, will make the amount exactly 2s. The Minister seems reluctant to admit that the assistance being granted will not amount to more than that. I would ask the Minister to explain—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order asking the Minister anything. He should address the Chair.

Mr. DONEY: In that case may I just hope that the Minister will find it convenient to make the required explanation. I am wholeheartedly behind the amendment of the leader of the National Party, the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald), to the amendment moved by the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward).

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

Amendment, as amended, put and division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	..	..	25

Majority against 5

AYES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. North
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Patrick
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hill	Mr. Seward
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Mann	Mr. Warner
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Watts
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Pantan
Mr. Cross	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Fox	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hawke	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Styants
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Holman	Mr. Triat
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Wise
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Withers
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Needham	

(Teller.)

PAIR.

AYE.	No.
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. Johnson

Amendment thus negatived.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [5.15]: May I be permitted, Mr. Speaker, to join with the other members who have already congratulated you on your elevation to the Speakership. I notice you have been subjected to a great deal of criticism, both inside and outside the House, for not wearing the wig, and I suppose also the gown. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) and the member for Beverley (Mr. Mann) were very indignant because you decided not to carry on one of the traditions of the Mother of Parliaments. During the last session of Parliament those members themselves did not follow slavishly some of the traditions of the Mother of Parliaments—I refer to something that was done to curb the power of the House of Lords. When a Bill is considered and passed by the House of Commons three times, and it is rejected by the House of Lords three times, it automatically becomes law. I do not recall that the two members to whom I have just referred urged last session that we should follow the procedure adopted by the House of Commons in respect to legislation rejected by another place. Reverting for a moment to the Speaker's wig and gown,

I read some comments by Philos in the "West Australian," who advanced the suggestion that if the Speaker wore the wig and gown, there was no reason why some of the members should not be somewhat similarly decorated. I cannot see anything wrong with a proposal of that kind. Why should not the Premier carry half-a-dozen stars, and the other members of the Ministry perhaps one or two each? Neither would there be anything wrong if the member for Swan decided to carry a decoration, if only to show that he had been singled out by his electorate for parliamentary honours, or if the member for Beverley also decided to wear a distinguishing badge, perhaps to let everyone know that he was something above everybody else in the Beverley electorate. My belief is that if the gentleman who occupies the Speaker's Chair does not desire to wear the wig, it should not be a matter that need cause us worry. Personally I prefer to see the Speaker without the trappings of office. Not one of the members who have spoken has made mention of the fact that this is not the first occasion on which the Speaker has not worn wig or gown. There have been thirteen Speakers altogether and no fewer than six have not worn the wig and gown, and all were not Labour members either. Three of them were Labour members and three were not. In the last Parliament the member for Leederville did not wear the wig; he only wore the gown, and the reason for his wearing the gown was, I think, utilitarian more than respect for tradition. I desire to congratulate the new Ministers on their elevation to office and I wish them success. I also congratulate new members. The latest additions to this side of the House have had considerable industrial experience, and I am convinced that they will add strength to the debating power of the House.

Reference has been made to the wheat industry and the deplorable position in which the farmers find themselves at the present time. No matter what we may do, I suppose it will only be a palliative, as Mr. Marshall pointed out.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FOX: I am sorry; I should have said the member for Murchison. That hon. member in an able speech declared that there would not be any relief for the farmers until there was a change in the monetary system. We all agree with him.

The Leader of the Opposition suggested that we should take from revenue, for the purpose of assisting the farmers, the sum of £1,000,000. I trust that no money will be taken from revenue by the Government. If anything of that kind were done, we would deprive 7,000 people, who are dependent on the Government for relief work, of that form of employment to which they were entitled. I should like to know who is to blame for the present condition of affairs, not only in the wheat industry but in every other industry in Australia. All the wheat-producing States in Australia, with the exception of Western Australia, have anti-Labour Governments. There is also an anti-Labour Government in the Federal Parliament. In fact, right throughout the world, with the exception perhaps of Russia, the world is being governed by anti-Labour Administrations.

Mr. Thorn: Has that anything to do with the price of wheat?

Mr. FOX: It has everything to do with the condition of a great majority of the people. By that I mean the way in which the world has been ruled in the last hundred years or so. The parlous condition in which other industries find themselves is due to the association of the Country party with the party with which it has in the past been allied and with which it is still associated.

Mr. Thorn: Now you are talking nonsense!

Mr. FOX: I am speaking the truth. At the last conference of the wheatgrowers it was suggested that the Country Party should link up with the Labour Party. That was one of the most sensible suggestions ever advanced. The hon. member's party is associated with people who have been living on that party for generations. I remember when the Bulk Handling Bill was brought down I did all I could at Fremantle to prevent its coming into operation unless the Government declared it would provide avenues of employment for the men that the measure threatened to displace. At that time we had the assistance of all the merchants in Perth; they were getting a cut from the importation of cornsacks, and of course that was the only interest they had in opposing bulk handling. The proper place for the Country Party to-day is on this side of the House.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. FOX: What I mean is, on this side of the House, with us.

Mr. J. Heguey: There is nothing to stop them joining us now.

Mr. FOX: We might have some farming-district representation in the near future. I think we have a very good chance in that direction. Reverting to the position of the wheatgrowers if any relief is given I hope farmers will not forget the men who work for them. Those men are just as entitled to enjoy a decent standard of living as are the farmers themselves.

Mr. Doney: There are very few working for farmers now.

Mr. FOX: We all agree that everyone in the community should have a decent standard of living, and as a representative of the port, I recognise how important the wheat industry is to the metropolitan area and to Fremantle and the other ports of the State.

Mr. Mann: Do you suggest that the farmer does not treat his employees properly?

Mr. FOX: Where wages are concerned they do not. Farmers are just the same as other classes of employers; if they had the money, I suppose they would pay decent wages. I attended a meeting once in connection with other primary industries where the question of organising a union was the subject of consideration, and it was agreed that the price being paid for the particular primary product would not permit the employers to pay decent wages. That is what we are talking about all the time, and that is why I say that members opposite are sitting on the wrong side of the House. They should be with us and should try to bring about better social conditions than those under which we are living at the present time.

Mr. Thorn: Could you not come over to this side of the House?

Mr. FOX: I would not feel very comfortable over there. I do not know why members opposite are so unruly. A branch of primary industry that is in urgent need of assistance—a branch that is as badly off as the wheatgrowers—is that associated with motor transport. I can see that there will have to be a restriction of market-garden produce in the not distant future. At the present time it is just as easy to carry a load of produce a distance of 60 or 70 miles to the metropolitan markets as it was 20 years ago to convey a load merely 10 or 12 miles, and it was then a very small load, too. The Minister for Agriculture, I

understand, intends to bring down a marketing Bill this session. I know that market gardeners will welcome it, but I believe that there should also be registration of growers and production as well.

There is another matter of great importance to every district of the State and that is the intention of the Workers' Homes Board to build a considerable number of new homes this year. I understand that the board purposes making provision for an additional 250 houses in the coming year. There is an acute shortage of houses in the metropolitan area and particularly at Fremantle. At Fremantle there are to be found wooden houses that are 40 or 50 years old. In many instances they have been built too close together and consequently the frontages are very narrow. Quite a number of them really should be condemned. Many of them are let at exorbitant rentals. One would not care to value them at more than £200 or £250, but the rents that are being obtained are as much as 15s. and 17s. 6d. per week, figures that are altogether out of proportion to the capital value. I had brought under my notice a day or two ago an instance where a man purchased a house carrying two mortgages. He had to pay 9 per cent. on each mortgage until the specified price at which he purchased was liquidated. Members can realise what amount that man had to pay in interest. At some time in the liquidation the interest would run into something like £70 or £80. I do not know which statute would apply in a case of this sort, but it certainly should be amended to prevent a repetition of a business deal of that description. It is nothing short of robbery. The Workers' Homes Board, by building houses for these people, will prevent their falling into the clutches of extremely undesirable persons. Most of the people who enter into those agreements have really no idea of what they are signing. They sign, and after paying for five or six years they make inquiries and discover the true position. To allow transactions of that kind is a scandal.

Now I wish to be a little parochial and to allude to two or three matters affecting the electorate I represent. I have a few words to say about school yards in my electorate, and their deplorable condition. Incidentally, the Minister for Works might take some notice of this matter. A good deal of work could be provided for unem-

ployed men in the metropolitan area adjacent to their homes if the Minister would have a survey made of metropolitan school yards and put them in order.

The Minister for Works: That has been done.

Mr. FOX: In the case of some schools. Recently I visited the South Terrace State School, and found that the heavy rains had made a complete mess of the yard. Miniature watercourses were flowing all over the school ground, and had washed several large holes in it. The school gate opens on to a main thoroughfare, and heavy rains mean that small Niagaras rush through the gates, rendering it difficult for teachers and pupils to enter and leave. Large stones protrude in the school ground, and are a source of accidents. One boy had an arm broken at the elbow—a serious injury—and another boy suffered a fracture. There is urgent need for putting that school yard in order.

There is another matter connected with schools to which I desire to call the attention of the Minister for Works, because he is interested. Recently the old Government House at Fremantle was pulled down, rendering available a piece of ground which I hope will be used to enlarge the playgrounds of the South Terrace school and the Alma street infant school. I understand the Fremantle Hospital authorities intend to obtain permission from the Minister for Works to put a road from South Terrace through the school ground to the hospital. I dare say the hospital authorities desire an imposing entrance to the institution. For that I do not blame them; but I do blame them for desiring an imposing entrance at the expense of school children, whose playground would be curtailed. If another entrance to the hospital is required, the better course would be to buy a piece of ground on the Alma street side and arrange for a road there. The first part of the hospital fence met with when proceeding up Alma street could be pulled down and the gap filled. In this way an admirable entrance to the hospital could be made. There is yet another entrance to the hospital, the approach being up the gaol hill and down Alma street; so there is no need for making an entrance through the school yards. On behalf of the local parents and of everybody else who is connected with the school, I enter a most vigorous protest against any interference with the play-

ground of that school. I observed that when in Claremont a piece of the park was taken away, no great uproar was made about the matter; but I assure the House that we Fremantle people shall make our protest more audible, and more strongly felt, than that of the Claremont people when a piece of the park was filched from them. An inspection has been made with the object of ascertaining where the road can be put. The proposal of the hospital authorities would make the playground very small, and again I make a strong protest against any interference with that playground. At present Alma street runs right along the infant school, and inspectors have commented upon the difficulty the teachers have in giving instruction while traffic is passing. If a road were put through the school ground, the Alma street school would become an island school, and there would be difficulty in teaching the children at all because of the noise of the continual traffic.

Next, I wish to bring to the notice of the Minister for Education the need for increased manual-training facilities in the Fremantle State School. In some cases additional accommodation is needed, so that the numerous boys in the sixth standard may be catered for in this respect. That many boys should leave those schools without having received any manual training is greatly to be regretted. The same remark applies to girls in the sixth standard. There the facilities for domestic training are poor. No matter what qualifications a girl may have, they should include at least some training in domestic science, so that she may take her proper place in life after leaving school.

Another matter affecting the district I represent is the need for extending electric light and power from Fremantle through to Jandakot and if possible to Armadale. In those localities there are now many residences not served with electric light. I understand the district is under the control of the Fremantle Electric Light Board, but that board does not at present feel disposed to extend the current. If the Fremantle Electric Light Board is not prepared to do it, the Government should take action. In the district there are three schools which could be served, besides a number of poultry farms, and a wool-scouring works. Further, the putting of electric light through that district would mean the opening up of a large tract of land for selection.

The Minister for Works: What would the selectors grow?

Mr. FOX: The Government will shortly have at least 7,000 men on relief. If some of them were settled under the conditions I have indicated, with electric light and other facilities, they would be able to grow at least part of their living, thus relieving the Government of some of the present expenditure. They would grow vegetables for themselves—not for sale. I hope the Minister will give the suggestion his consideration.

Another subject I desire to deal with is that of superannuation. I know that at present it applies only to men in permanent positions under the Government. However, superannuation should be available to numbers of other State employees. Men in semi-Government employ should be brought under the scheme; for instance, waterside workers employed by the Fremantle Harbour Trust. Some of those men have been employed by the Trust for upwards of 30 years; and yet, I am informed, they cannot come under the scheme simply because they are casual workers. Their wages are fixed at the casual rate, approximating the rate received by workers permanently employed in similar industries. To all intents and purposes these waterside workers are employed by the Fremantle Harbour Trust as permanent workers, and therefore should come under the superannuation scheme. Many of them wish to come under it, and those who have been employed by the trust for a number of years should be given the opportunity. Then they would be able to retire at the age of 65 years, like Government servants, thereby making room for other men. They would have no difficulty in keeping up their payments. I trust the Government will give consideration to the putting of men employed on semi-Government utilities, but not classed as permanent employees, within the scope of superannuation.

Now I come to a matter in which the Minister for Mines is interested—prospecting. I have knowledge of a number of married men who have recently expressed a desire to come under the prospecting scheme, but who, because they have family responsibilities in the metropolitan area, have been unable to take advantage of that scheme. I consider that men desirous of going out prospecting, even though married, should be given every encouragement; and I suggest that the Minister for Mines confer with the

Employment Department and ascertain whether it is not practicable to provide rations for wife and children while the husband is away prospecting. That has been done occasionally in the past, and I believe it would be productive of good if given another trial. Further, I consider that many low-grade shows on the fields might be worked on a co-operative basis if small batteries were erected. Such a scheme would give employment to a fair number of men. The shows might not be good enough for big companies, but I believe the Government would save a lot of money, at present being paid out to unemployed single men, by adopting my suggestion. The Government would also get some returns from small batteries erected adjacent to low-grade propositions, provided water was available. I know of two or three such shows where the department would not stand to lose anything. I do not suggest that the men working the shows should be put on wages; they should work on a co-operative basis. I suggest the putting-up of 5-head or 10-head batteries—5-head for a start—which would enable the men to make a decent living and perhaps to repay the State its expenditure.

The Minister for Mines: The experience to date has been that it takes a big company to work a low-grade show.

Mr. FOX: Yes, but some of these shows would not be big enough for a big company wanting to take out about 45,000 tons per month. I remember that when gold was only £3 17s. 6d. per ounce—the amount we used to receive from the banks—men made some of these low-grade shows pay.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. FOX: I was speaking on the subject of prospecting. I trust the Minister for Mines will extend a little more assistance to single men desirous of engaging in prospecting. At present, they are given £1 a week and provided with tools and transport. But men who have been out of work for a considerable period find it difficult to obtain the other equipment necessary to proceed on a prospecting tour. I suggest that the department should at least supply them with a tent. I made a vain attempt to get a tent for a couple of young men who were setting out on a prospecting trip recently, but was unable to obtain one from any of the Government departments. Eventually, I suc-

ceeded in obtaining one elsewhere. I think the least the department can do, when young men are willing to take the chance of engaging in prospecting, is to provide them with a tent and perhaps some cooking utensils. Their work may result in the finding of a gold mine and later, perhaps, the employment of a large number of men.

Another matter to which I desire to draw attention is the Workers' Compensation Act. Recently, two or three cases have come under my notice where woodcutters have been refused compensation, it being held that they were working under a contract. Another case is that of a man who was splitting posts for a farmer and erecting fences. He lost a finger as the result of an accident, but was unable to obtain compensation, it being held that he also was a contractor. I think the Act should be amended to bring workers of that description within its ambit. Clearly, a man splitting posts and erecting fences is under the direction of his employer.

Member: No. He is not.

Mr. FOX: It would be easy for the employer to insure this class of worker.

Mr. Sampson: Bring them all under the Act—employers as well as employees.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FOX: I trust the Act will be amended this session in the manner I have indicated.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Workers' compensation is a very heavy charge against industry to-day.

Mr. FOX: An industry should pay the cost of its accidents. Another point in this connection to which I desire to refer is an amendment to the Act that was introduced by the late Mr. McCallum. By that amendment, it was thought a short cut would be obtained to the medical board. Before the passing of the amendment, if no agreement could be arrived at between the worker and his employer, either party could refer the matter to a medical referee, the fee being £2. I am speaking from memory, but I think the medical referee was obliged to answer some questions put to him for decision. He was asked to certify whether the worker was fit for work and the class of work he could engage in. Either party was at liberty to dissent from the finding of the referee and appeal to the medical board. The board would decide the question submitted to the medical referee, and its decision was final. In 1934, Mr. McCallum introduced an amendment providing that the

employer and the worker could mutually agree to submit matters in difference direct to the board. Lately, however, some questions have been submitted to boards that, in my opinion, should not be asked. The medical board has given decisions that, in its opinion the worker would be fit to resume work in, say, six or 12 months. Not much notice was taken of this until recently, when a case was heard before Mr. Craig in the Fremantle local court. He held that when the medical board gave such a decision, it was binding, as the employer and the worker had agreed to submit the matter to the board. That was not the intention of the mover of the amendment made in 1934. The object was simply to save time. My desire is to see Section 14 (a) of the first schedule to the Act deleted, so that the worker will not in future be adversely affected in the way I have mentioned. The questions which the referee and the Medical Board have to answer relate to the fitness of the worker for employment and the class of work he can perform. My object is to avoid a decision of the kind to which I have referred; so the Act must be amended by striking out the provision that the worker may sign an agreement to go direct to the medical board.

Another matter I desire to bring before the House relates to probate duties. A pensioner dies; he has struggled all his life to get a home. In many cases his only asset is the house in which he has been living. When his wife takes out probate, she has to pay £5 or £6 for probate duty and transfer fees, so that the house can be put into her name. In my opinion, those charges could very well be waived. I have to thank the officers of the probate office for their courtesy and kindness in dealing with such cases. They have been of great assistance in many cases which have come under my notice, so much so that it has been unnecessary to secure the services of a legal practitioner.

I shall refer to one other matter, and then conclude. It affects the electorate represented by the Speaker. It also affects all the residents of Fremantle. I refer to the eyesore opposite the Fremantle railway station. Numerous deputations have asked the Government to clean up the block known as Ugly Land; and it is well named, I can assure members. It is overgrown with bushes and surrounded

by large hoardings. It is the first thing that meets the eyes of tourists when they disembark from the mail boats. It is high time the Government handed that land over to the City of Fremantle on lease. The city has undertaken to beautify it by planting trees and making a park. If the Government is not prepared to clean up the land, I hope it will transfer the area to the Fremantle City Council, and allow the council to do the work itself. I might refer to another piece of land, which is opposite the gaol. I do not know how long it will be before some of us go there, but much work is required to be done to that land, and the Superintendent of the gaol told me it was too much for the prisoners to do. I hope the Minister for Works will make available half a dozen men to clean up this area and so remove another eyesore.

In conclusion, I hope that the forthcoming wheat conference to be held in Melbourne will be of advantage to the wheat farmers throughout Australia and to the people of Australia generally.

MR. WARNER (Mt. Marshall) [8.43]: I desire to associate myself with other members who have tendered congratulations to you, Sir, and also to the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) and the new Ministers. I desire also to express my thanks to the former Minister for Railways for the courtesy and kindness he always extended to me while he held that office. It will be difficult for me to speak on a question that is of major importance to me, without repeating much that has already been said by other members. I refer to the wheat industry.

The Minister for Mines: You have got no amendment?

Mr. WARNER: In the course of my remarks I shall no doubt repeat, if not in exact words, the views of some previous speakers on this subject.

Mr. Sampson: The Speaker will not stop you.

Mr. WARNER: Unfortunately, there will be some repetition, because I represent many farmers in the marginal areas, which are situated in my district. If I remained silent, my silence might be misunderstood. Members are aware that a large portion of what are termed the marginal areas is in the Mt. Marshall electorate. I have followed very closely the discussions that have taken

place on the Address-in-reply on various subjects, including the wheat industry, which has been well thrashed out. I have brought to the notice of members during the past six years while I have been in Parliament the plight of the farmers in my district, and what I have said is on record. During the first two years, the farmers received very low prices for their wheat. Following on that, the major portion of my electorate has suffered from a drought which has continued for four years. Members know the sufferings that follow in the wake of a drought, more particularly if it extends over a period exceeding one year. A drought brings with it plagues such as grasshoppers and other insect pests. I have brought individual cases of suffering before responsible authorities and have obtained reasonable satisfaction for the sufferers; but I was unable to obtain complete satisfaction, because that could only be obtained by the farmers receiving such a price for their product as would enable them to secure credit to carry on their operations.

Some members have told us what the farmers could have done and should have done and what their position would have been if they had not carried on in a foolish way during the last few years. I have paid close attention to the speeches along those lines, and what a different complexion can be placed upon them! I watched the face of the Minister for Lands while the speeches were being delivered, and saw his quiet smile as he listened to some of those possibilities which theoretically seemed sound but are found to be impossible as soon as we attempt practical application. I intend to speak as a practical farmer—one who has carried on through years of hard work in managing his own property. I speak also as a farmer who has been content to use horse-drawn machinery. Members, in speaking of the sidelines in which farmers might have engaged, have given statistics with which I am just as well acquainted as are those who quoted them. I also appreciate the amount of revenue to be derived from pigs and pig products provided they can be placed on the right market.

Let me, as a practical farmer, point out that when a man is growing a 400 or 500-acre crop, the cost of putting in and taking off a crop of fair average yield, say, five bags or 15 bushels to the acre, necessitates his receiving at least 4s. a bushel for his

wheat in order to provide a reasonable living for himself and his family; that is, to enable him to live on the same standard as does the sustenance worker employed at the major rate of wages. I am bearing in mind that such a farmer would be carrying a mortgage equal to that of most farmers, and thus would have an interest account to meet. To enable him merely to remain on his block—not to progress but simply to hold his equity—and live in what I may term a miserable way, he must receive 3s. 4d. a bushel for his wheat. If he receives less than that amount, he must inevitably sink deeper into debt. Under only one condition can he avoid retrogression, and that is if he happens to be a freeholder without encumbrance on his property. This statement might be of assistance to members in enabling them to form some estimate of the arguments that have been advanced. With a price of less than 3s. 4d. a bushel, I fail to see how any farmer could keep his property in working order without falling further into debt, that is, unless his holding was unencumbered.

Regarding the change over from wheat-growing to pig-raising and other lines, members must appreciate that in order to rear, fatten and market pigs in large quantities, farmers must first have breeding stock. In consequence of the drought, farmers have not had money at command to enable them to purchase stud stock. In fact, they found it very hard during the regime of the ex-Minister for Lands to retain one or two pigs, much less a large number, because he objected to farmers feeding their wheat to the pigs instead of making it available for the benefit of the Agricultural Bank. It is quite understandable why most of the farmers have not engaged in sidelines such as sheep and pigs; they simply could not raise the money with which to purchase the stock. The banks, including the Agricultural Bank, have required the wheat to be delivered to them, and for the farmer to use additional wheat for the feeding of livestock was difficult. The farmer must have control of such livestock, but the banks were not prepared to advance the requisite money to enable farmers to make the change, though I believe there is a possibility of something along those lines being done in future in connection with the linking up of holdings.

During the last four years some of the men living in the districts to which I am

referring—and the women also—have fared far worse than a number of the people on sustenance in the metropolitan area. Other members have made that statement, and I know of my own knowledge that some of the farmers have suffered more than have some of the sustenance workers. I do not suggest that suffering should be permitted to continue; our duty is to exert every effort to obviate distress. I have witnessed the sufferings of the farmer and of those nearest and dearest to him, and I have also witnessed the sufferings of the sustenance worker. Each member has some sustenance workers in his electorate, and realises that his duty is to do as much for those men as he is doing for the farmers.

The farmers in the districts to which I am alluding were not loafers in any sense of the word. They included some of Australia's finest sons, and many of those men have been driven off their holdings. Some of them are ex-miners and ex-railway men, and a big sprinkling ex-soldiers. The returned soldiers showed their grit when they protected us during the years 1914-18, and they have shown their pluck since by holding on to their blocks as long as possible. I can assure members that the suffering on some of the wheat farms has been just as bad as, if not worse than, in the metropolitan area, and this applies to the last four years during which I have had the difficult task of representing Mount Marshall.

On various occasions remarks have been made seeking to belittle the farmer because he could not carry on, and the question has been asked why he did not undertake sidelines. Suggestions of that kind sound quite well until practical application is attempted. On one occasion before I entered Parliament, I was fighting for the wheatgrowers at a deputation to a gentleman in a big way of business. The farmers contended that they should receive a reasonable amount out of the proceeds of their crops in order to keep themselves and their families. We suggested that a certain amount should be granted irrespective of the returns from the produce of the farmers, so long as the man in question was honest and hardworking and produced a reasonable return. This gentleman said to the deputation, "You know the farmers are not too badly off. In the wheat-belt they have cows, fowls, pigs and sheep, and thereby get plenty of butter, eggs,

cream and meat. In some places they should have their own fruit trees, and might even provide for themselves dried fruits, pickles and sauces." I replied that by the same token, if the farmer was not a lazy man, he could go to the salt lake and get his own salt, whereupon the gentleman replied that I was abrupt.

The Minister for Lands: And fig-leaves for clothes?

Mr. WARNER: Some of the farmers at present would be glad to have fig leaves. That sort of talk would be swallowed by people who did not understand the position, but I might just as well argue—and I use the illustration without intending to be personal—that the member for Canning could get all his poultry, eggs, shell-fish and garden manure from the river near Como where the shag loves to work. In theory it sounds well; in practice it will not work.

Mr. Cross: Is it only at Como where they fish?

Mr. WARNER: Owing to the setback occasioned by the drought, the locust plague and the low price of produce, many meetings have been held in the marginal areas. I suggest that the Minister for Lands might note what I am about to say, because possibly he will glean some helpful information that will enable him to deal the better with the problem of the marginal areas. During the past four years the road board authorities and the business men in those areas have held meetings and fully discussed all phases of what was necessary to assist in meeting the prevailing difficulties. Many resolutions that were passed were forwarded to the Minister and to heads of departments. The arguments advanced were sound. Secretaries of road boards took notes of the data; the questions were thoroughly thrashed out and some of the decisions, not all, were considered to be practical. I suggest that much of the information is still in the possession of the road board secretaries and might be useful to the Minister in dealing with the problems that will arise when the farmers are changing over from wheatgrowing to mixed farming. The Minister should convene a conference of chairmen and secretaries of the road boards, the heads of departments and Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank to discuss the matter. From such a conference, I am sure good would result, because the local authorities are thoroughly acquainted with the problems

of their districts. Admittedly the Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank are not ignorant of the position because they are supplied with reports regularly, but when an Agricultural Bank official is travelling through the marginal areas, he must of necessity hurry and certainly would not be able to acquire the information that would be made available at the meetings.

On several occasions in this House I have expressed the view that we were passing through a cycle of bad seasons that would inevitably come to an end. We have emerged from those bad seasons, but the price of the product has fallen seriously and the industry is in a bad way. The prospects are that a bumper harvest will be reaped in the marginal areas this season, but prices are disastrously low. Still, the State cannot afford to have those properties abandoned in view of the money that has been spent on them. The land might go out of wheatgrowing, but assuredly it must be used for mixed farming such as sheep and pig raising. I believe that is the intention of the Government. No Cabinet would be likely to sanction expenditure on the provision of water supplies if the money was likely to be wasted. My belief is that the Government is looking ahead and, as it has provided funds for further water conservation in my district, I conclude that Ministers have made up their minds about the policy to be adopted in those areas. I hope from the State point of view, as well as from that of the farmers, that the work will be expedited. What I said before about the cycle of seasons undergoing a change has been borne out by the remarks of the senior Commissioner of the Agricultural Bank, Mr. Donovan. After an extensive tour of the wheat belt, he gave an interview to the "West Australian," and this appeared on the 11th of this month:—

Mr. Donovan said that everywhere he had travelled the wheat crops were magnificent, and there was stock feed in abundance. For the past four years he had travelled throughout the wheatbelt when it was quite easy to define what was termed the "marginal area" line. This season, however, it was like crossing the equator—you could not see it. He had never seen the country, generally, looking so well. It was a sight that would gladden the heart of anyone who had been associated with the responsibility of carrying the wheat industry on during the past four years of drought, which was unprecedented in the history of wheat farming in Western Australia, and particularly so to those farmers who had battled so heroically year after

year, in the hope that seasonal conditions would improve, only to be rewarded with district yields averaging from two to six bushels per acre. Provided good September rains were experienced record crops should be harvested east of Kellerberrin.

He went on to deal with the quantities of chaff the Agricultural Bank had supplied in the past, namely 19,000 tons, and told the farmers that, because of the abundance of hay that was likely to be cut this year, the Bank would not be supplying any more. What I said before was, therefore, confirmed by the Commissioner. He believes that everything will be all right in these particular areas. Of course, we have the dread, and Mr. Donovan would have it too, of an over-supply of wheat. Because the subject has been so well debated, I do not think I need say much more upon it.

I was pleased to hear the well-informed speech of the Minister for Lands last night. The member for Perth (Mr. Needham) and others, when pointing to the condition of the workers, declared they were not prepared to allow any of the money that should go to those people to be passed on to other industries. I agree that the Government employees have to be looked after, just as the settlers in the wheat belt have to be looked after. I do not desire that any money should be taken from sustenance relief funds, or funds that are used for the creation of employment, but I do see the need for a great deal of money being made available to help the wheat-growing industry. This must be new money, and must not interfere with other financial channels. I also think the whole of that money should be forthcoming from Commonwealth resources. It is a national necessity that the wheat-growing industry of Australia should be saved, and those who provide the money should be the Commonwealth authorities who have received so much all over Australia through channels created by the wheat industry.

One must be struck by the arguments advanced by the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) though we may not all accept his point of view. There is a great deal in what he said concerning man-made laws, poverty amidst plenty, and so on. Thinking over the matter as the hon. member presented it, I cannot help feeling that man-made laws and the monetary system generally have got us into our present difficulties. I have read nothing in the Press or elsewhere to turn my thoughts from the belief that nature has

something to do with the subject. What a paradox it is! Farmers are growing wheat for 1s. 3d. a bushel, or one farthing per lb. When they want to buy a loaf of bread they pay 3d. per lb. for it, and all the money in between the grower and the consumer goes to the middleman. The farmer can grow enough wheat in one season to keep himself and his family for the rest of their lives, and yet he may not be able to find enough money with which to buy a loaf of bread. Fully eleven-twelfths of the money involved as between the grower and the consumer goes to the middleman, and yet there is an outcry on behalf of people who are not getting sufficient to eat. Man-made laws are the cause of all our trouble. Whilst many of us have an abundance of all we want and Providence has supplied us with plenty, there is talk of destroying our wheat. No matter how full the larder has been, it was never intended that we should waste the surplus. If we do not take advantage of the products of our soil, those that nature has given to us, and we are wasteful, nature will play its part and we shall live to be sorry. We should not tinker with the laws of nature. We have only to carry our minds back to the days of Joseph to know how the situation was met there. Although we have had bountiful seasons from which so much has been derived, we may encounter circumstances that will bring forth a different situation, and we may not have either sufficient foodstuffs or markets to which to sell that which we would export. What I cannot forget is the amount of money involved as between the grower and the consumer, and what it costs to supply food to the unemployed. I suggest to the Premier it would be a good idea to buy a few hundred tons of wheat, and, despite vested interests, set up a State mill, crush the grain into whole meal, and feed it to the needy poor. We cannot allow such a thing as starvation in the State, but we have a lot of very poor people, who, whilst being fed, could eat more food than they get. If some arrangement could be made whereby my suggestion could be carried into effect, it might be the means of prolonging the lives of those who now get insufficient food for their needs.

With other members on this side of the House, I desire the Government to know that I will support anything that will enable us to get the unemployed back to work. When that time comes we shall have a happy and

contented people and most of our troubles will be over. It is said that some of those who are now receiving sustenance will never become workers again. There may be some such people, but I do not think that would apply generally. Some persons will always live at the expense of others, and some will refuse to work. Amongst Australians there are very few of that kind. I am sorry to think that most of us have as much as we want to eat and drink, whilst others in the community have not sufficient. The Government will have every assistance we can possibly give from this side of the House. I would go a long way to raise money that would put the workers and the people generally back into prosperity, back into full-time jobs, where they will be in a position to get ample food supplies.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [8.11]: Let me add my felicitations to you, Sir, to the Chairman of Committees, to the two new Ministers, and the new members of the House. I do not intend tonight to deal very much with parochial matters. Some members have possibly decided not to speak on this occasion, but to deal with their pet subjects by way of motions. Perhaps it is a good idea that the Government should get on with the general business of the State and have the debate on the Address-in-reply brought to a conclusion as quickly as possible. At times one may say, "I do not care whether or not I speak on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply." There are, however, certain things about which a member may desire to speak and such an opportunity as this is the only one afforded to him. I agree with the remarks of the newly elected member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat) as well as the views expressed by the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan). I was sorry the member for Nedlands, in his special references to Australia and Western Australia, did not stop there. He showed the old spirit, which had just the opposite effect, when he spoke about the endeavour of the Minister for Industries to establish secondary industries. He was not prepared to allow him or the Government any credit for that enterprise because it was something the Nationalists had thought of some years ago. That is inconsistent. I have reached the stage at which I hold the opinion that whether Labour, National, or any other

party, can do good for this State, it does not matter where the credit goes. Only a few months have elapsed since the last election. The same thing cropped up there. The Leader of the National Party was hard-pressed and made considerable use of statements concerning what Governments had done in the past. It was the duty of those Governments at that time to do something in the way of workers' compensation, arbitration, etc., because the State was then in its infancy. Western Australia was only 10 or 12 years old, legislatively speaking, and we had to introduce enactments of that description. Since then it has been for successive Governments to improve upon the position as they found it. What does it matter to the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) whether the Arbitration Act or the Workers' Compensation Act was originally fathered by a Liberal Government? What is important is how the legislation is applied.

Mr. McDonald: All that matters now is how the legislation is enforced.

Mr. WITHERS: That is so, and that is why we are here. I do not wish to delve too deeply into this phase because members know the facts. Throughout the course of the present debate, and more particularly during the speech of the Minister for Lands last night, we have had the position of the wheatgrowers clearly outlined. To-day we hear that all parties must stand together to assist the men on the land. In the course of his speech last night, the Minister dealt with quite a number of points that required clarifying. I do not know whether the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) was moved by selfish reasons when he submitted an amendment to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. I do not know whether he and his party wish to gain some credit for themselves. If that be the position, surely his action is belated. The Premier and the Minister for Lands attended a conference in Victoria where they went straight to the fountain head.

Mr. Patrick: We got a better offer to-day than the one they submitted.

Mr. WITHERS: The Minister for Lands is to proceed to Melbourne again to continue the discussions.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And he ought to finish the matter.

The Minister for Lands: Don't you threaten us!

Mr. WITHERS: The member for Pingelly and his party want some credit.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Be reasonable!

Mr. WITHERS: I always try to be reasonable, and I am convinced that someone wanted to gain a little credit out of this move.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The farmers want a lot of credit, too.

The Premier: And a lot of cash.

Mr. WITHERS: That is the position. During the past few weeks in particular and, of course, for a long time previously, I have read day by day statements that appeared in the Press and elsewhere regarding the problems of the wheatgrowers. Possibly those removed from the source of production find difficulty in thoroughly grasping the situation in all its varied phases, but I was struck by the fact that the problem is by no means new. Like the poor, if the difficulties of the farmers are not always with us, at any rate they have been with us for a long time.

The Minister for Lands: And will be with us for a still longer time.

Mr. WITHERS: I hope that will not be so. If we cast our minds back to 1930, when the Scullin Government was in power in the Federal arena, we may remember that Mr. Parker Moloney introduced a Wheat Marketing Bill to provide assistance for the wheatgrowers of Australia. A perusal of the Federal "Hansard" of those days is most interesting. We learn what Mr. Gregory, Mr. Prowse and others had to say regarding the position generally, but when we read the discussion in the Senate and note how Sir George Pearce, Sir Walter Kingsmill, Sir Hal Colebatch and Senators Carroll, Johnston and Lynch, voted on the question, the perusal becomes more interesting still.

Mr. Patrick: Who was to find the money then?

Mr. Wilson: That was the argument.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, who was to find the money?

Mr. Patrick: Well, who was to find it?

Mr. WITHERS: The Federal Labour Government.

Mr. Patrick: On a fifty-fifty basis with the States?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, that was the position.

Mr. WITHERS: What about the fiduciary issue that Mr. Theodore proposed? He was to provide £12,000,000 with which to assist the wheatgrowers, and £6,000,000 for the unemployed. Was he allowed to do anything of the sort? No section of the Country Party in Australia would agree to the fiduciary issue for the purpose of assisting the wheatgrowers, and they voted against the proposal.

The Premier: That was £18,000,000.

Mr. Patrick: And where is Mr. Theodore now?

Hon. C. G. Latham: He is not issuing fiduciary notes.

Mr. WITHERS: If he had succeeded in passing the legislation he proposed, a different complexion might have been put on the whole situation.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Western Australia would have become bankrupt. We would have had to find £2,000,000 as our share, and we would not have been able to do so.

Mr. Needham: And where is Pearce now?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WITHERS: At least, Western Australia had its revenge in that direction. I trust that at the next Federal election the people will bear these matters in mind. The wheatgrowers did not get the assistance because their representatives would not support the legislation in the Senate. Ten years have passed since then, and what has been done?

Mr. Patrick: The member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) turned the proposal down at that time.

The Premier: In 1932?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes.

The Minister for Mines: He was sitting in opposition in that year.

Mr. WITHERS: We have the Primary Producers' Association, the Country Party, the Wheat Pool, Bulk Handling, Ltd., and the Wheatgrowers' Union. All were clamouring for assistance, and what have those organisations done?

Hon. C. G. Latham: We gave assistance to the industry you represent.

Mr. WITHERS: The only assistance the hon. member's Government gave us was to open its mouth and express a pious hope. The Country Party has done nothing along the lines the hon. member suggests.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We could tell you something about that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WITHERS: It never gave us any support.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We will let Jack Smith loose on you.

Mr. WITHERS: As I have said before, the Country Party, as a party, cannot look west of the Great Southern, and has never had any outlook beyond wheat and wool.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Do not you remember the time when you and I were concerned about butter?

Mr. WITHERS: I know. The hon. member never gave us any assistance for the butter industry in the South-West.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Where did that assistance come from?

Mr. WITHERS: I know quite well.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You do not know.

Mr. WITHERS: The trouble is that throughout the whole period the Country Party has been over-organised, and cannot agree amongst themselves. One has only to read the reports in the "West Australian" day by day regarding the condition of the wheat industry to appreciate the greatest diversity of opinion. Mr. T. H. Bath is an authority and so are Mr. Hunt and other people. They all fly to the Press and endeavour to advise the wheatgrowers and the Country Party what to do.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We have a fellow named Barker running around and telling people what to do.

The Minister for Mines: And the farmers seem to believe him.

Mr. WITHERS: In these days we should see that no spanner is hurled into the machinery of the State. Some progress has been made in providing assistance for the wheatgrowers at the present juncture, and I trust that when the Minister for Lands returns to the Eastern States, he will secure from those in authority the consideration we seek.

Mr. Cross: They will never be satisfied.

Mr. WITHERS: God help people who are satisfied! They will never get anywhere if they are in that condition.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You have never been satisfied with what you had throughout your life.

Mr. WITHERS: I have never got what I wanted.

The Premier: Out of dissatisfaction comes progress.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You should have made a lot of progress on your side.

The Premier: And we have.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WITHERS: The member for Mt. Marshall (Mr. Warner) mentioned the responsibilities of the Federal Parliament. I do not know exactly what are the respective responsibilities of the Federal and State Parliaments. I know that when we are in dire distress, responsibility seems to rest with the Federal Government. A year or two ago we were talking about secession. We wanted to get away from the octopus, and to cut adrift from the Federal regime. To-day we regard the Federal Government as being wholly responsible for financing the wheatgrowing industry. How can we explain such a volte face? When the wheatgrowers' representatives want something from the Federal Government, they go for it. When they think they are in a satisfactory position, then they talk about secession and want to carry on by themselves. I have come to the conclusion that it must be one thing or the other; we must have secession or else unification. If we are to flounder along as we have been doing year by year under our present form of government, with so many different Governments in a small country like Australia, I do not know where we shall find ourselves in the future.

The Minister for Mines: We have the latest Country Party policy dictated from the Eastern States.

Mr. WITHERS: I do not object to the Minister for Lands proceeding to the Eastern States with the Premier on his mission.

Mr. Doney: What effect would it have if you did object?

Mr. WITHERS: I do not object to the Minister for Industrial Development going on the mission he undertook. On the other hand, I have come to the conclusion that there are too many missions, most of which are not nearly as important as those I have mentioned. Apparently we cannot do anything without conferring with someone in the Eastern States. The Minister for Works cannot do anything without going to the Eastern States to confer with the Ministers for Works there, and the Minister for Lands must go across for a similar purpose; otherwise he cannot do anything here.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Yes, he can. That does not apply to the Minister for Lands.

Mr. WITHERS: What annoys me is that every time a conference is held, those representing Western Australia have to journey to that conference. Apparently Western Australia is too far away for anyone in the Eastern States to come here, and we have to undertake the expense every time so that our representatives may attend conferences in the East. Perhaps I am wrong and may find that the expenses of these conferences are pooled. If that is not so, and we do not receive some recoup under that heading, then I consider Western Australia suffers from a special disability in that respect. We should do something to relieve ourselves of that burden, or else hand over the country to the natives, of whom there are still a few.

Mr. Marshall: Yes, and apologise to them for the state in which they will find their country!

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, perhaps it would not be doing them a service, and they might not appreciate our action.

The Premier: Where would we put King Billy? In the Speaker's Chair?

The Minister for Mines: Yes, and he could have the wig, too.

Mr. WITHERS: The wheat problem is all-important at the present time. I do not wish to be looked upon as a wiseacre.

Mr. Cross: Only as a broadacre!

Mr. WITHERS: I was approached by a friend in 1926 and told that that was the time to take up a farm in the wheat belt, for the return was then about 8s. a bushel. I asked, "What is the good of that?" My friend replied, "It is the best thing available in the country; it is the only industry that is paying."

Mr. Doney: What year was that?

Mr. WITHERS: It was 1926. That man said to me, "It is the only industry in Western Australia to-day." I said, "It will not be for very long."

The Minister for Mines: It is the only industry in Western Australia to-day, too.

Mr. WITHERS: The man said, "There is a great future for wheat. We must have Western Australian wheat overseas to produce white flour to make white bread." I said, "If I were on the wheat belt to-day and had established a wheat farm, I think I would be able to remain there provided I could go in for something else, say sheep. If ever Russia comes back into the wheat markets of the world, God help us in Aus-

tralia." He said, "Who would buy from Russia? England would never do that." I replied that England, as a financial country, would buy from China or any place that sold cheaply. We are supposed to pay an interest bill with the products of this country, but when England can buy a cheaper commodity from some other foreign land it does not matter to the English investor about the money we owe in interest. We have a very stark object lesson before us in the attitude adopted by Russia to-day. The other day I read remarks attributed to our old friend, Sir Hal Colebatch, made at a time when Mr. Chamberlain was attempting to negotiate a British-French-Soviet non-aggression agreement. The ex-Agent General for Western Australia, as a result of his social shoulder rubbing with the people of England, has apparently come to be of the same opinion as those people. He said in effect, "I hope that England will not enter into a pact with Russia." Why? Political ideology is the explanation I suppose.

Mr. Cross: He knew something about the Communists.

Mr. WITHERS: The political ideologies do not agree. But while England has been peddling, what has Germany done?

Mr. Patrick: We do not know yet.

Mr. WITHERS: If war occurs, England at least will be deterred from keeping her promise to Poland.

Member: Don't you worry about that.

Mr. WITHERS: Hitler will be there while others are sleeping. One hears the old dogma reiterated that we must buy from certain countries and that if we do not buy from them they will not buy from us; but on picking up our papers we find that we are buying from them but they are not reciprocating. Can we make them buy products they do not require? We are going on from day to day and becoming a breeding ground for discontent. We have to be careful about the spread of Communism, and fears are expressed that unless we are cautious there will eventually be a dictatorship in this country.

Member: You had better be careful yourself.

Mr. WITHERS: No one could ever say that I was a revolutionist. I have not made a study of that side of the question; but when we observe that the people of the world are not getting a fair deal under our present democratic system—a system of

which we are proud and of which we boast—we begin to realise the possibility of its slipping through our fingers overnight. We have a much larger task on our hands than we imagine. Another question that has been to the forefront for a considerable time is that of unemployment. As I said when I was discussing the wheat problem, the poor are always with us. I have been reading a little in such spare time as is available to me in this job, something about the refugee problem and migration and I have taken a few extracts from the books I have read. In this connection I join with those who declare that we must populate the northern parts of Australia and that we should populate them with white people. I have never been amongst those who have suggested the possibility of a Japanese invasion. I have taken rather the reverse attitude. I have had a different outlook on the question from quite a number of people; but that is beside the point. We have people to-day who are clamouring for a peaceful spot whereon to settle. They have been hunted from the country of their birth. I refer to the German-Jewish refugees. We know that a good deal has been said about the Jewish race right down through history.

Member: For and against.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, but I do not know that we can say the Jews are not as respectable and as good living a class of people as any of us. Wherever they have settled many of them have established palatial homes and they have given the best possible education to their children. The race has provided some of the world's greatest scientists and doctors and it has traditions to which its people faithfully adhere. I advocate the settlement of these people in our country because wherever the Jews have established themselves, the place of their adoption has become their homeland. The Jew in Russia is a Jew first and a Russian next. The Jew in Germany has been a Jew first and a German next. If a Jewish colony were established in the North of Western Australia, the members would be, in the first instance, Jews and in the next, true Australians.

Mr. Warner: Australian Jews.

Mr. WITHERS: Men like our friend Mr. Rufus Underwood who has spent a considerable time in the North and is aware of the difficulties as well as the potentialities of that vast territory, and men like

Mr. Angelo in another place and different people who know the country well, advocate the establishment of a refugee settlement there. When such people take this stand I think their advice might be accepted. It is better to have a definite colony of these people established, for they would take upon themselves the whole responsibility of financing the project and of looking after themselves. They should be allowed to populate certain areas of the country and could be precluded from coming down here. I admit that the infiltration process of migration may constitute a danger. We have in Western Australia to-day foreigners who have been admitted into the country and have spread here, there and everywhere, but it must be said to their credit that none of them is on the unemployed list. We can find Italians and Jugo-Slavs driving their own trucks, catering for themselves and living good, honest lives, and members of the second generation of these people are holding down good positions in our schools and banks to-day. They are fine Australian citizens. I realise the danger of the Jewish people coming in and taking away the jobs of certain individuals in certain industries.

Mr. Fox: Foreigners are doing that now.

Mr. WITHERS: I realise that such is likely to be the case. But if they could form a community in the North, they would be able to harness the rivers of that territory. Doubtless they would start some of the huge industries essential to cater for their own people in the North. Where would be the harm in that? It has been said, and I expect hon. members on this side of the House will subscribe to the idea, that the result of an influx of migrants would be more unemployment. That has not been the case throughout history. When a land becomes populated up to its full extent we know that there is considerable unemployment. We in Western Australia growl about the treatment we receive from the more largely populated States of Australia. Why are they more powerful than Western Australia? Have they any greater resources than we? Or is it because of their greater population that they have that power over us? I think the latter is the explanation.

The Minister for Mines: If we had had gold rushes like Victoria we would have had a large population too.

Mr. WITHERS: That is possible, too. The point I want to make is that we ought not to adopt a dog-in-the-manger attitude. If we are not prepared to do what we can to develop this country, we should allow other people to come here and exploit the mining, pastoral and agricultural possibilities of the north to the full. Consider the trouble we have had with respect to Yampi Sound. Had the Jewish people been here during the last 20 or 30 years they would have exploited that part of the State and we would be in a position to compete with Broken Hill and other centres. Instead of exporting iron we would now be sending away finished products. If we place these people in the North by the thousand, what will happen? They must be fed by someone if not by themselves, then by the people in the South.

Following on what I have said, I should like to give some further information on unemployment and immigration. The leather bag industry established in England in 1931 was built up largely by German Jews, who created an enormous amount of work for other German Jews and for British workmen as well. In Lancashire there is one leather bag industry that is employing 750 British subjects. Previously this work had been carried on in Germany by Germans. Again, an Italian Jew, along with some Germans, started a mass furnishing fabric factory with 175 workers. Shortly these people expect to be employing over two thousand British workers. We know very well that if we can get 20 people to come in and employ, say, another hundred, that will be beneficial to the State. Is that not one way of overcoming the problem of unemployment?

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Members must keep order.

Mr. WITHERS: A London department store had been in the habit of importing costumes from Germany. Now that store is responsible for the employment of over a thousand British workers. We know that work begets work, and we know also that in instances such as I have quoted good will is taken by foreigners wherever they establish themselves. The German Jews to whom I referred were well connected where they were established in Germany, and they traded with Switzerland, Holland, Denmark and other countries. Then when they established themselves somewhere else they car-

ried the goodwill of the other nations with them, and so maintained their trading associations. Let us go back to the early days of American settlement.

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask members to keep order. I have allowed a good deal of latitude to members, but one cannot hear half what is going on. If members do not keep order I shall have to take action.

Mr. WITHERS: Look at America with its natural wealth that could only support 100,000 famine-wrecked Indians. After its discovery America became populated by different races. What do we find there to-day? Instead of the 100,000 Indians there is a population of considerably over a hundred million of all nationalities. Originally most of them were refugees and migrated there through force of circumstances. They continued to go to America practically until 1910, and most of them had nothing with them except bundles on their shoulders. Those are the people who built up the American nation to what it is to-day. What was done in America by those people it should surely be possible to do here. We have neglected our vacant spaces for too long a time. The vast change in the Hudson Valley has taken place since the year 1400, and it is not the result of some miraculous change of climate or soil; it is due to the change in character of the population.

If the centre of learning could be transferred from Vienna to England, what an effect it would have on industry, and how much more would it affect Australia if it could be transferred here. I have mentioned all this because I really believe that while we are appealing to the Commonwealth for bounties for our primary industries, we should in our own territory act in a statesmanlike manner. I do not know whether we have any statesmen or whether we are going to get them. The Commonwealth needs statesmen badly. All the same, we must solve the problem of peopling our territory, not in what is called the orthodox way, but in a different manner. Why should we stick to the old business and never attempt to get out of the ruck? Eminent authorities like Professor Carr Saunders, Dr. Enid Charles and Mr. Henderson, as well as others, have gone deeply into the population question and the consensus of opinion is that a decline in population will worsen unemployment. If we study the

position of foreign countries, we find that France only a few years ago had a population that was much larger than that of Italy. To-day Italy has a population that is a hundred thousand greater than that of France. Italy has been building up all the time. The Russian population has increased to an enormous extent, and in a very few years that country alone will boast of a population larger than that of the whole of Europe put together. I am quoting this information from statistics of natural increases in other parts of the world. If we do not see to it that the population of Australia increases, we shall find ourselves in the not distant future in a very sorry plight. In our wisdom or otherwise, we have been saying in the past that the best immigrant is the Australian-born. At the present rate of progress, however, how long will it take us to increase the population to such an extent that it will consume all our own products. Let us remember what it costs to raise a child. It is recognised that the figure is in the vicinity of £300 to raise a child from infancy to adolescence. If we could populate the north of Australia with people who had reached the stage of manhood, we would not be saddled with the responsibility of the cost to which I have just referred.

How easy it is to govern when people are clamouring for all that we can produce, and vice versa. We all know we are subject to trade cycles; from boom to depression and from depression to boom. A depression once started feeds itself.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Do you think it is disappearing?

Mr. WITHERS: To say that a depression feeds upon itself may be to say something that is paradoxical; but a depression will live upon itself. If plenty of work is to be provided for everyone, we must alter the situation. Work begets work. To create work should be the motive of every Government in Australia to-day. I trust my remarks on this subject will achieve some results.

I have now to deal with one or two grievances. I should not be doing my duty by the people of this State if I did not once more criticise the railway service. With dismay I read the figures in the Speech and in the Press during the last day or two regarding the continual losses sustained by the railways. Are we doing anything to stem

the tide, and have we anyone in the Railway Department capable of doing anything?

Mr. Warner: No.

Mr. WITHERS: I am inclined to believe that.

Mr. Styants: Have we the money with which to do more than we are doing?

Mr. WITHERS: The public will not pay to travel by the service if they do not get an adequate return for their outlay. The railways have lost revenue in the last 10 years through their neglect to give a proper service to the people. Some time ago I objected to the appointment of a Commissioner of Railways. It was a sad day for this State when that officer was appointed. He had no incentive to make good and was retired at the age of 65. What did it matter to him whether people travelled by the railways or by any other means? We have slipped badly with that service.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Do you say the present Commissioner is not doing his job?

Mr. WITHERS: I do not say that, but he is well away from here now, and has been for several months, whilst the railways continue to run without him.

Mr. J. H. Smith: He has only three months' long service leave, as is given to other officers.

Mr. WITHERS: If some of the officers were given long-service leave for 10 years, they would not be greatly missed. Our transport facilities must be conducted in a different manner. Not long ago six Diesel electric coaches were purchased, and at the time I applauded the Government for its action. The intention was to regain the confidence of the people, make them train-minded once more, and encourage them to come back to steam trains and then push the Diesel coaches aside. It is questionable whether this new form of transport has functioned in the right places. A Diesel coach was placed on the Bridgetown-Pemberton service because of the slow rate at which the existing service was being run. It did a wonderful job and brought numbers of people back to the railways. A trailer was then put on and that, too, was filled. During the summer the coach did so well that it was sent ahead of the steam train. That was progress. The steam train now runs as fast as does the Diesel coach; why, then, use the latter? Steam trains have been running in this State since I was a boy, and before that time, but they were

never utilised to the advantage of the people. If the railways had used the class of engine that is on the run to-day, and a steam train made up of three or four coaches can be sent to its destination as fast as the Diesel coach can run, why was that not done before we lost the traffic?

Mr. J. H. Smith: You know the reason.

Mr. WITHERS: The hon. member can tell us the reason later on. Before we can get revenue from the public, we must give an adequate service. During the busy period the Diesel coach would, at Picton Junction, pick up passengers from Perth and take them along the line towards Pemberton. They would be in a hurry to get home and would therefore take the Diesel coach. The coach was sent to Bridgetown and the steam train came on behind. The train must follow a section behind the coach, and in heavy country it is perhaps a little slower than is the coach. The steam train to travel from Greenbushes to Bridgetown, a distance of 15 miles, takes three-quarters of an hour. Meanwhile the Diesel coach has reached Bridgetown, after depositing passengers along the route. It then remains there for three-quarters of an hour until the steam train has caught up with it, and then is allowed to proceed on its journey. That is not the way to give service to the public. If the heads of the department and the Minister himself know about this, something should be done to alter it. I was on the railways for many years. However, I was on the wrong end. Nevertheless one had time to look around and see something. When one travels through the area of Victoria Park week by week, as I did, one notices the lack of advancement in this, one of the first localities to be established as a suburb of Perth. In days gone by developments took place there, but the people were never encouraged to build near the Victoria Park railway station. The Government then instituted a tram service. They wanted the people to use that service. Since then the tramway service has been extended for miles from the city. As a consequence Victoria Park is to-day practically as it was years ago. The same remarks apply to Perth, Fremantle and Midland Junction east of the railway line. Road transport came in opposition to the railways; and the State Transport Co-ordination Act played its part, as we know, though it was not allowed to play its full part. If

the Commissioner of Railways has done anything he has made a reasonable statement of his intentions for the future. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) may not agree. The Commissioner says the Government should control all transport.

Mr. Seward: I certainly will not agree with that.

Mr. WITHERS: If I had my way, I would take the control of transport away from the Commissioner of Railways and place it with the Government of the day, making Ministers responsible to the people for efficient transport. Then we would have to stand up to the job. In place of a Minister for Railways, I would have a Minister for Transport. The Government Railways Act should be amended so as to enable the Minister to go over the fence and out into the roads and streets and on the water and up into the air. To have tramways for the development of districts and then have motor buses coming in to compete is wrong. The Commissioner of Railways should have foreseen this. He should have said, "I was able to feed my railways and my ferries until the advent of trolley buses." Only a year ago trolley buses were introduced, and five more trolley buses have been put on. The use of trolley buses is not new; England has had them in use for years. We have waited all these years to get them. The member for Canning (Mr. Cross) at least will agree with me that the South Perth district is definitely in need of a trolley bus service. Another 30 or 40 trolley buses would be of wonderful use to the railway and tramway services of Western Australia. Trolley buses could pick up what the State has lost.

A few years ago I saw here in Perth one of the "March of Time" pictures, showing the railways of the post-Civil War period in the United States, when those railways had a monopoly and were booming. As a result their managements became indifferent about the whole position, and the same thing happened in America as has happened here. Motor buses came in, and carried people hundreds of miles along the American roads. Then a board of railway commissioners was appointed. They said, "We have to do something." So streamlined trains were introduced. That was a system of transport acceptable to the American people; and hundreds of carriages, instead of being heaped up in railway yards as useless, were

put back into traffic. And the same thing applied afterwards. Needless to say, Western Australia has nothing like the population of the United States; but we can get additional population. Our railways could to-day get sufficient people to make the train services profitable, except perhaps in country areas. I know of people who in days gone by took the utmost pleasure in travelling in any old kind of "tin Lizzie." Those people to-day could derive the same pleasure from travelling in up-to-date trains. In fact, many people owning motor cars would rather come to Perth by train, if they could make the journey in something like the same time as by car. The train journey would be cheaper, and would involve less risk. There is potential danger as soon as one gets into a motor car. Train travel does not involve nearly the same amount of risk. Moreover, one gets more comfort in a train. Nevertheless, at present the train journey takes too long; there are too many stops, too many refreshment stations, and so forth.

The member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) last session moved a motion for an inquiry into the railway service. I regard such an inquiry as long overdue. I would have supported the hon. member's motion had it been proceeded with.

Almost anywhere in the remoter country districts, a person who has a few pounds to finance the purchase of a motor bus can establish himself and make the service pay. Why? Because he gives service. In Bunbury a man runs a motor bus $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the cemetery every Sunday afternoon. Last Sunday afternoon he transported 35 passengers. There was no other way of getting to the cemetery, and this man conceived the idea of transporting people by motor bus. Now, the people generally are asking the Government for transport service, and it is up to us to give them the service they ask for.

The forecast of legislation in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech makes no mention of an amendment of the State Transport Act. That Act has now lost some of its punch. People have been making discoveries. Whereas a year or two ago they were afraid to carry sixpence worth of anything in their cars, for fear of committing an offence against the Transport Act, to-day they convey by motor truck all sorts of materials parallel with the railways.

Mr. Seward: We cannot do that.

Mr. WITHERS: The people I have in mind get away with it. Still, a man cannot take a box of fish by car from Mandurah, because that is an interference with the Act, though the amount involved may be only eightence. And yet motor trucks transport poles and timber and building material along the roads. When the practice is mentioned, the reply given is, "I am doing it for myself, and the Act permits it." The Minister for Railways should wake up to the fact that his railways are losing large sums because of that motor transport. It is definitely unfair, and should be stopped. I do not want those people to get away with it.

Now just one matter relating to education. I shall not refer to a puddle in a yard, but to something important. People who find a puddle in a school-yard should fill it up, instead of having such a matter brought up here. The people of Bunbury have been promised a couple of extra class-rooms in the local high school. So urgent is the matter that we approached the department about it last year and the year before. The school is intended for about 270 pupils, and it is obliged to accommodate 340. Two classes are being held continuously in the gymnasium, a big open room really unfit for teaching. In another room, called the wash-room, yet another class is constantly being conducted.

Mr. Cross: We have had the same sort of thing in South Perth for years.

Mr. WITHERS: That is all right.

Mr. Cross: And on a verandah, too.

Mr. WITHERS: The Minister for Education definitely told me that this work was listed as urgent, and I trust that it is so. I have been in communication with the headmaster of the Geraldton High School and he informs me that the building is the last word in educational construction. I am proud to know that, and I am pleased indeed that the Government has given consideration to the requirements of that part of the State. I am convinced that the Education Vote must be increased and that funds will have to be raised for the construction of buildings from a source other than that usually resorted to. The fact that the Geraldton High School commenced with an attendance of 180 students affords an indication of how long the facilities there have been required. The boys and girls of that part of the State have definitely been neglected through the lack of provision of proper educational facilities.

At Bunbury we have experienced the benefits of the higher educational facilities over a period of years. The boys and girls there are able to secure a higher standard of education than was previously possible. Those students have gone on to the University and have graduated in various courses. Where are they to-day? Are they in Western Australia?

Mr. Patrick: By whom was that provision made?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Was that provided by a Labour Government?

Mr. WITHERS: Where are those students now? They were attracted to distant fields. More money was available for them there. What are we to do about it? We go to the expense of educating our young people to a high standard of efficiency, and then we find they leave this State because of the pittance we offer to men of ability. That is the position in Government departments. We know what has happened from the time when Mr. Trigg left the railways. Since then men of calibre have joined the Commonwealth staff or have taken positions elsewhere because their ability enabled them to gain greater recognition outside the State. We could not afford to keep them here because we did not have the money to enable us to pay them a reasonable remuneration. We never did have sufficient money for that purpose, and are not likely to under existing conditions. If we can produce the best, let us use every endeavour to keep the best as far as we can. I think we can do so.

On this occasion I shall leave the question of the Bunbury harbour almost, if not entirely, alone. For 15 years I have never failed to advocate attention being paid to that harbour.

Mr. Styants: Has the harbour silted up again?

Mr. WITHERS: I am forced to a realisation that for all the notice taken in the past, I have spoken to myself for 15 years. I have not been speaking to my electorate because when one speaks with sincerity on such a subject, it cannot be said one addresses the electors. I have been in communication with the Premier during the last couple of months with a view to his visiting Bunbury in order to meet one of the largest deputations representative of the producers he has ever been asked to receive. On this occasion I shall leave it to the people to

tell the Premier what I have been saying for years past. The work is so urgent that I realise the necessity for something being done in the immediate future.

Mr. Cross: Will you get the naval base there?

Mr. WITHERS: We do not want the naval base at Bunbury.

Mr. Styants: It should never have been made a port.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WITHERS: I would not resent that remark if nothing had ever been done to establish a harbour at Bunbury. As it is, the port and the hinterland have been developed to a marked degree, and it would be difficult to dispense with the harbour now. If the hon. member wished to get rid of Bunbury and its harbour, he would have to shift the railways and the people as well. However, it is all a question of providing the facilities that are necessary. For that reason, I want the Premier to meet the producers themselves so that he can hear from them at first hand what is required.

When the Minister for Lands spoke last night he dwelt upon the all-important question of wool production. The decrease in the production of marketable fine wool has been emphasised and may be affected by the attention paid to the fat lamb industry. In fact, that gives rise to the question of what effect the fat lamb industry will have upon our merino wool production. The Minister pointed out that the type of sheep necessary for the fat lamb trade could be produced in the South-West, while the sheep there could also produce wool of excellent quality. I trust we shall not have the same experience regarding fat lambs as we have had with wheat and other commodities. For a time the production seems most attractive and more and more people go in for the particular type required; but soon they find that the point of saturation is reached. I warn our producers to be careful that they do not get too far into the fat lamb business, for the type of sheep needed for that industry is not suitable for export wool.

Mr. Seward: The mothers are all right.

Mr. WITHERS: There has always been a demand for our merino wool, and we should take care not to deplete our merino stocks in our enthusiasm for the fat lamb, wheat and other industries. We must be very careful in this State regarding the

stabilisation of prices, for we know what has happened. That may not apply to wheat because it is difficult to provide a substitute. On the other hand, when butter reaches a certain price that many cannot afford to pay, margarine is substituted. So it is in other directions. When the commodities reach a price that the people cannot afford to pay, substitutes are provided. We must be careful at all times in seeing that stabilisation prices are within the reach of the people so that they will be able to purchase the articles concerned. Immediately we go beyond that point, substitutes will oust the genuine article. People cannot be blamed for purchasing the substitutes if the cost of the staple products becomes too expensive. We know what has happened regarding our wheat industry and our butter industry. We may reach the same position with our fat lambs. Western Australia depends to a great extent upon her exports of butter to maintain the dairying industry in the South-West, and I hope the time is near when we shall be able to consume enough of our product so as not to depend on the overseas market. That is a phase of importance. So much of our national wealth has been dependent upon markets overseas. To obviate that we must create a sufficient population to enable our goods to be consumed within the State.

MR. HILL (Albany) [9.23]: I wish to join with others who have extended congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, upon your election to the honourable position you now hold. I also extend my congratulations to the new Ministers and those members who have taken their seats in this House for the first time. When we notice the changes that resulted from the recent general election, I think this House is to be congratulated, because I feel sure the change in personnel will not affect the cordial relations that exist between yourself, Mr. Speaker, and the officers and members of this House. The member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers), during his speech, referred to matters relating to the railways and transport. For once he and I are in agreement. In a recent issue of the "West Australian" an article appeared under the heading "Transport Services. Five Years Survey, General Retrogression." The Government must accept much of the responsibility for the State's difficulties in that respect. You, Sir, will naturally ask how I

intend to improve matters. I realise that it will not be an easy task. I am confident, however, that we can adopt a policy that will bring about a far more healthy state of affairs. The remedy I suggest is that we study carefully, and intelligently adopt, the considered recommendations of experts who have reported upon transport in Australia. I once read that "transport is civilisation." The prosperity of our industries, both primary and secondary, depends very largely upon transport costs. What is more, the next war will, to a very large extent, be a fight to maintain our transport services. To a large extent our troubles to-day are due to the fact that what is out of sight is very often out of mind. Our railway charges are on a mileage basis. Port and other charges are indirect, and consequently out of mind. A mistaken idea prevails that if we reduce our railway mileage, we can cut down our transport costs. We are to-day overstocked with ports and railways. We are fortunate so far as our railway mileage is concerned. The three main causes of our unsatisfactory and costly services are (1) the absence of a transport administration; (2) the lack of co-ordination of our transport services; (3) the terrific interest charges against those services, due to the multiplicity of ports and railways, and the failure of adequate provision for a sinking fund.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Among the reports which I suggest our Ministers and members should study are—

(1) The annual reports of the General Manager of the South African railways and harbours.

(2) Report of transport in Australia, with special reference to port and harbour facilities, by Sir George Buchanan, and

(3) The report of the Commonwealth Committee on the co-ordination of transport, dated 1929.

I am quite aware that Sir George Buchanan was more or less anathema to the members of the Collier Government. Sir George was brought to Australia to report on our transport systems. The first statement he made to the Press in Australia was that he was extremely pleased that he had arrived at Albany, because he considered Albany to be one of the most wonderful natural harbours of the world.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. HILL: He told the truth about Bunbury. He also hit out at the way in which the Fremantle Harbour was made a political plaything. I do not know of any man who has been such a thorn in the side of any Government of the State as was Sir George Buchanan. It is not his reputation that is suffering to-day, however, but the taxpayers of Western Australia, through the failure of the Government to carry out his recommendations. Sir George's report is contained in two volumes. Volume II. deals with the various harbour schemes of Australia. Incidentally, I to-day had the privilege of meeting an Empire expert on harbours, and he assured me that he had a copy of this report. For the present, however, we can place it on one side. Volume I. deals with the administration and economics of transport. The report of the Federal Transport Committee can be taken as a summary of Sir George Buchanan's report. I suggest that the Government should get a couple of hundred copies of this latter report printed and issued to members of Parliament and various interested bodies. In Part 6, the committee deals with co-ordination within the State, and recommends the placing of transport activities under one Ministerial head, who should be responsible for the whole transport policy; and the establishment of a co-ordinating authority, to be responsible for carrying out the transport policy approved by the Government. The co-ordinating authority may take either of the forms following:—

Commissioner of transport, with an advisory committee.

A transport board, with an advisory council and representatives of interests concerned.

If we turn to South Africa we find that its railways, harbours, bulk-handling, motor services, shipping services, airways, lighthouses and, indeed, everything connected with transport is under the management of the General Manager of Railways and Harbours, who is responsible to the Minister for Railways and Harbours: but I note that in the report—which is the latest—the general manager recommends the placing of all transport under the control of the Minister for Transport. What do we find in this State? Our main transport facility is our railways, which

are administered by the Minister for Justice. Our Transport Board is under the Assistant Minister for Works. The port of Perth is under the control of the Premier. The Fremantle Harbour Trust is under the Chief Secretary. The Bunbury Harbour Board, State Shipping Service, and Harbour and Lights are controlled by the Minister for the North-West. Harbours and rivers are under the Minister for Works. Bulk-handling is under the Minister for Lands, and cool store facilities at the ports under the Minister for Agriculture. An old proverb says, "Too many cooks spoil the broth." We shall presently have the Minister for Health as Minister in charge of perambulators, and the Minister for Industries as Minister for push-bikes.

The Premier: Many hands make light work.

Mr. HILL: Yes. Obviously, without co-ordination, and under those conditions, efficiency is impossible. I suggest that in this State we should have a Ministry of Transport, with a commissioner or director of transport as permanent head of the department, together with a transport council consisting of the Commissioner, as chairman, and the following members:—Commissioner of Railways, Commissioner of Main Roads, chairman or general manager of the State Harbours Board, Chairman of the State Transport Board, and Manager of the State Shipping Service, or some other shipping man, and perhaps representatives of the producing, commercial and industrial interests.

The Minister for Lands: You should include air transport.

Mr. HILL: Yes, I have considered that point. At present, the Transport Board deals with air transport. We should have an air transport representative on the board I suggest. Members will note that I have mentioned the chairman or general manager of the State Harbours Board. I suggest placing all our ports under one administration, as is done in South Africa, South Australia and New South Wales, and as recommended by the Royal Commission on Transport in Queensland. I further suggest the establishment of local honorary advisory boards for our principal ports, as in South Africa.

I should like to say a word or two about our transport finance. The total State debt

for the year 1937-38 was £93,404,000, of which no less a sum than £38,528,000 is charged against our Government transport services. The capital charges on that sum, including interest, sinking fund and exchange, amounted to £1,716,338. The only transport facility which showed a surplus was the tramways, the amount being £11,428. The deficiency on the other services totalled £450,105, leaving a net deficiency of £438,677. The financial emergency tax for the year 1937-38 realised £1,074,000, so members will see that it required nearly half of that tax to meet the loss on our transport services for that year. For the year 1938-39 the position is a long way worse. Our transport problem is more comparable with that of South Africa than with that of any other country I know of. The South African railways charge averages 1d. per ton mile, yet the department made a profit for the year 1936-37 of £6,400,000. Our average charge is 1.76d. per ton mile, and for the same year we made a loss of £403,000. South African ports made a profit of £660,000; our ports made a loss of £28,000. I realise that South Africa's population is larger than ours and that a certain amount of black labour is employed there. As against that, however, Nature has been far more generous to us. Our railways are the biggest State undertaking, and we have a system which has simply grown into existence. It is not a co-ordinated transport system; it is a combination of the pet schemes of various parts of the State. If we could re-lay our railways as they should have been laid down in the first place, we could manage with over 1,000 miles less of track with a consequent considerable reduction in the loan liability. The Commonwealth committee recommended reducing the loan liability of our railways to a fair value. Such a step is long overdue. I further suggest fixing our railway charges on a zone and economic basis instead of a mileage basis, in order to encourage traffic to take the cheap way instead of the shorter way. If these suggestions were adopted, our railways would be in a better position to compete with motor services.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member resume his seat. I wish to direct attention to the fact that Standing Order 148 prohibits any noise or interruption while a member is addressing the Chair. I can distinctly hear certain utter-

ances and noises which cause an interruption and are highly disorderly, and I warn all members that such behaviour will not be tolerated. This is my final warning.

Mr. Lambert: Thank you.

Mr. HILL: When a transport administration is formed and starts to clean up our transport problems, one of the first things to be adopted is a sound port policy. Sir George Buchanan truly said—

Ports are the mediums or clearing houses between sea and land transport. On the ports, their efficiency and their proper location, the whole system of transport largely depends.

The Commonwealth committee referred to the fact that the improvements in land transport had increased the area that one port could serve. In Part XVII. of the report the committee points out that 80 per cent. of the trade on the mainland of Australia is done through the main ports of the capital cities. Those ports made a profit of £500,000, while the minor ports made a loss of £490,000, which was met by taxing the trade of the main ports. The committee recommended reducing the loss by closing some of the minor ports and concentrating trade by road and rail at the more suitable ports. There is one point upon which all transport experts agree, namely, that in these days of motors, railways and fast steamers, the sound port policy is to have a very limited number of big properly equipped ports. If we have too few ports we shall create points of congestion and concentration of population, and those people in outlying parts of the State will be severely handicapped by excessive railway and other charges. Too many ports will mean excessive port charges and high sea freights, and the tendency will be, as in this State, for the ships to avoid out-ports and trade only with the capital port.

The Minister for Lands: You support that?

Mr. HILL: Yes, the idea of a limited number of ports. My 40 years' residence at a port and 30 years' experience as an exporter have convinced me that co-ordination between land and sea transport is more important than co-ordination between road and rail transport. To-day the Commissioner of Railways is concerned only with the management of the railways. The Fremantle Harbour Trust and the Bunbury Harbour Board are concerned only with the management of their respective ports. It

is nobody's job to consider all means of transport—road, rail and sea—and to endeavour to provide the State with a co-ordinated, national and complete system of transport that will bring the total cost down to a minimum. The tendency is entirely to overlook the fact that ports should be run as business concerns. In this State the ports have their respective zones which are based on railway mileage only.

On one occasion I attended a meeting and suggested advocating that the experts' recommendations be adopted and that trade be concentrated at the more suitable ports. From the reception given to my suggestion, one would have thought I had preached sedition or high treason. In South Africa the authorities do not hesitate to divert trade from one port to another if, by so doing, they can effect economies, and those savings are passed on to the producers. Consider bulk handling: They have equipped only two of their ports with bulk handling facilities, but have provided first-class terminals at both, each capable of handling 1,000 tons of grain each way per hour. Had a similar policy been adopted in this State, substantial economy would have been effected. Western Australia, with a population of 460,000 people, has practically the same number of ports as has South Africa with a population of 8,000,000 people. We have spent over £7,000,000 on our ports; South Africa with seventeen times the population has spent only £18,000,000. The total expenditure on the ports of Australia is about £43,000,000, and although we have only one-fifteenth of the population, we have spent one-sixth of the amount on our ports.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What is our production as compared with South Africa's?

Mr. HILL: To compare production is difficult. The production of grain is practically the same, but South Africa exports large quantities of coal.

Mr. Doney: What about maize?

Mr. HILL: Maize is another item. During the year 1935-36 the South Australian Harbours Board made a profit of £142,000 and reduced its loan liability by £30,000. Western Australia in the same year incurred a loss of £18,000 on the ports and increased their loan liability by £330,000. To compare port charges is very difficult, but if for the year 1935-36 the revenue of the capital ports of Australia had been made a direct

charge on cargoes, the average charge per ton for the capital ports would have been—

Melbourne	..	..	2s.	6d.
Sydney	..	..	2s.	8d.
Adelaide	..	..	3s.	8d.
Fremantle	..	..	5s.	0d.

Those costs do not include the cost of handling the cargo. Now compare the loan liability and total expenditure of Fremantle and Melbourne. The total loan liability of Fremantle is £3,200,000 and the expenditure £3,400,000. At Melbourne the loan liability is now only £4,000,000, although the expenditure has exceeded £9,000,000. The Melbourne Harbour Trust has not only paid one-fifth of its total revenue to Consolidated Revenue but has paid off over £5,000,000 of its debt.

Those who advocate reduced charges at Fremantle refer to the large sum paid each year by the Fremantle Harbour Trust into Consolidated Revenue. It is essential in this State that we group our ports, that is, that we use the profits of some to meet the losses of the others. It is Government policy not to charge wharfage on wheat, flour and fruit exported, but to make up for this generosity by imposing higher charges on imported goods. Fremantle handles most of the imports of this State, so while this policy is maintained we must look to the trade of Fremantle to make good the loss at other ports. During the year 1937-38 the Fremantle Harbour Trust showed a surplus of £114,551, which was paid into Consolidated Revenue, but the other undertakings under Harbours and Rivers showed deficiencies totalling £147,207, the net deficiency being £32,656.

Now let me examine some of the babies carried by the Fremantle Harbour Trust. One undertaking is the Swan River, with a loan liability of £358,076, capital charges £16,556, net earnings debit £4,017, deficiency £20,652. Last session I asked the question "How much of this £358,076 was there due to the reclamation on the Swan?" That question has not yet been answered. I am not opposed to the reclamation work on the Swan if the people of the metropolitan area pay for the work. I am opposed to taxing the trade of the ports to pay for it.

Mr. Cross: Most of it is, too.

Mr. HILL: The North-West ports show a deficiency of £34,766. We must expect a deficiency from those ports until we can increase population and production there. Bunbury shows a loss of £26,963 and I can

see no hope of improving the financial position of that port. For the year 1923-24 it paid interest and made a profit of nearly £800. To-day the accrued unpaid interest amounts to about £270,000. The whole of the port of Fremantle is under the Fremantle Harbour Trust, and Bunbury is under a harbour board. Portions of the other ports are administered by the Railway Department which collects the bulk of the revenue. The figures that I will now submit are for harbours and rivers only. Geraldton shows a deficit of £31,411. At Geraldton a harbour improvement rate is charged. This should be abolished as we want to encourage trade to go to Geraldton, firstly to reduce the congestion at Fremantle, secondly to help the finances at Geraldton and thirdly to endeavour to get more population in the north. I can imagine some people being amazed at my suggestion to divert trade from Fremantle to Geraldton, but will it not be advisable to do this so that we need not tax the trade at Fremantle to pay for the losses at Geraldton? We should encourage the trade of Geraldton in every possible way.

Turning to Albany we find a very excellent example of what may be termed rotten port financial administration. On the 26th March, 1927, Mr. S. A. Taylor, then acting accountant, supplied statements showing the expenditure at Albany since 1860. Those figures are as follows:—Expenditure from general loan fund £196,336 15s. 11d. Revenue expenditure, £18,596 18s. 1d.; revenue repairs £1,589 14s. 7d.; total £216,523 9s. 7d. There has been no expenditure since 1927. In the returns submitted to Parliament last year the loan liability is shown as £272,269. I do not know where the extra £56,000 comes from. In 1872 the people of Albany complained because the revenue from the harbour was greater than the expenditure in the Plantagenet district. In spite of this, not only is every penny spent still shown as loan liability, but items are also included that should not be charged against the port. I have no hesitation in saying that the revenue received from Albany harbour since 1860 has been far greater than the total expenditure, and the loan liability of that port to-day should be nil instead of £272,000. A few years ago one would have thought that the existence of this State depended upon the extension, at enormous cost, of the Fremantle harbour.

If we adopt the recommendations of the Commonwealth Transport Committee we can safely leave that great expenditure for the next generation at the earliest. Fremantle is congested at times because it handles over 90 per cent. of the State's trade. It is obvious that if we reduce that percentage we will do away with the congestion. If we say all ports must handle the trade of their hinterland the shipowners will say, "Go to blazes; we are going to Fremantle." If we carry out the recommendation of experts and concentrate the trade by road and rail transport, on the more suitable ports, we will be able to adopt a true economic policy of decentralisation. Members will naturally ask: What do I consider the suitable ports?

Mr. Cross: How deep is Albany harbour?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Does not the hon. member understand that interjections are highly disorderly?

Mr. HILL: The map will answer the question. The four ports—Geraldton, Fremantle, Albany and Esperance, are almost equally spaced.

The Minister for Lands: You would not cut out the North-West ports?

Mr. HILL: No, I am excluding the North-West as that has a problem of its own. I have already referred to Geraldton and any sound proposal for encouraging that port will have my strong backing. On the east is Esperance and it is a tragedy that the Esperance-goldfields railway was not built 40 years ago. If it had been Esperance district would be prosperous to-day. I am confident of the future of that part of the State if that district is encouraged to-day. We want to encourage the goldfields markets to look to Esperance for their mutton and lamb and encourage the goldfields to trade with Esperance. We need a road to Albany and if necessary a subsidised motor service to that port.

[The Speaker took the Chair.]

I admit I never thought the State had such a wonderful asset in Albany until I saw what the engineers were up against in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. For example, in Sydney I was speaking to the Chairman of the Maritime Services Board and the chief engineer of that board. I said "Since 1924 Albany has had an expenditure on it of only

£1,259." They looked at me in surprise and asked, "Have you not any silting?" I replied, "Neither silting nor the teredo." The maintenance of dredging at Sydney costs £3,000 a year. In Melbourne the cost is about £70,000. The figure for Adelaide is unknown as the authorities there are deepening the port at the same time. At Fremantle the cost is about £15,000. At Bunbury in spite of an expenditure since 1924 of something like £260,000 the depth has decreased from 27ft. 6ins. to 26ft. or less and the Harbour Board is gravely concerned over the continual silting in the harbour generally. Nature, in spite of the enormous expenditure, is easily winning. People sometimes say "Look at the deep water at Sydney as compared with that at Albany." The deep water at Sydney is not an advantage; it is a liability. That deep water and the rocky shore make the development of Sydney extremely costly. There are 30,000 piles at Sydney and some of them are spliced and 145ft. in length. Over £12,000,000 has been spent there. A port must be more than an anchorage for ships. An ideal port would be one that could be entered in all weather and then provide safe shelter, deep water with plenty of level land alongside and an easy approach by road and rail and very little tide.

Mr. Cross: You must also have plenty of goods near the port to export.

Mr. HILL: The harbour at Albany has only a 3ft. tide compared with 6ft. at Sydney. The shallow water at Albany is an advantage. All that needs to be done there in the future is to plan the layout of the walls, put in the sheet piling, dredge on the outside and fill in on the shore side. I was very pleased to note that as a result of my persistent agitation for reclamation work at Albany, the Minister for Railways informed the recent deputation that it was not proposed to provide bulk handling facilities at Albany on the jetties, but to reclaim between the two jetties.

Hon. C. G. Latham: He is a little bit innocent yet.

Mr. HILL: Sir George Buchanan's scheme for Albany is for the progressive reclamation along the 3-fathom contour for 2½ miles and the reclamation of about 590 acres alongside. I wish now to refer to a missed opportunity between the years 1901 and 1905 when £55,000 was spent in dredging 3,500,000 cubic yards from the Albany

harbour to provide room around the old deepwater jetty. Had pipes been fitted to the dredge and the work done to provide a wharf along the 3-fathom contour, the cost of dredging would not have been greater, as, against the extra cost of plant would have been the continual pumping instead of the time lost dumping the spoil off Middleton Beach. The quantity removed was sufficient to reclaim an area 6,000ft. in length and 900ft. in width leaving about 120 acres of level land alongside the deep water frontage and the cost would have been £55,000. Had that been done, I can safely say that the land would have been worth to-day over £100,000.

The Albany Harbour does not belong to the people of Albany; it belongs to the people of Western Australia, and, incidentally, to the people of the British Empire. Last year I suggested Albany as a site for a dock. The Minister for Mines jocularly said to me, "If you go after a dock there, you will have the people of Fremantle as well as of Bunbury on your tracks."

The Minister for Lands: After to-night you will have the people of Sydney after you.

Mr. HILL: For many years I have studied naval and coastal defence. In 1918 I became a member of the Albany Chamber of Commerce for the express purpose of inducing that Chamber to endeavour to stop the criminal waste of public money on the Henderson Naval Base at Cockburn Sound. In no way am I responsible for the very sound article dealing with docks in Australia that appeared in the "West Australian" on the 18th July last nor am I responsible for the sub-leader that appeared in the same paper this morning. I wish to thank the Government for the assistance it has given to the freezing works at Albany. I sincerely trust Ministers are waking up to the importance of that wonderful asset. In King George Sound we have one of the finest anchorages in the world, and the area of water there, over 30ft. in depth, is double that of Sydney Harbour. An ideal scheme for Princess Royal Harbour would be for the naval authorities to take over the portion east of the old coal jetty. They could develop the front of the town for commercial purposes and the west and southern shores could be developed for industrial purposes. I have before me a page of the "Argus" newspaper of the

23rd May last. This provides an object lesson for the Government. In it is shown a picture of Geelong, and there is an article demonstrating how port development will help industry. At that port the International Harvester Company's works, the bulk handling terminal, the superphosphate works and the Ford motor works all have their own wharves.

I do not agree with those who would abolish the Transport Board. Whilst the golden age of railways has passed, under wise control railways still have a useful function to perform. That is a quotation from the remarks of the President of Transport in Great Britain some time ago. The world-wide railway policy of charging high rates for high-valued goods and low rates for low-valued goods is necessary for the assistance of primary production. This policy cannot continue if motors are allowed to choose the plums of transport. The regulation of motor transport is, therefore, essential.

The Minister for Lands: That helps to contribute to the railway losses.

Mr. HILL: I blame the Government for not handling the question in the beginning. In 1927, Sir George Buchanan referred to the need for co-ordinating rail and road transport. No notice was taken of his recommendations, nor of the recommendations of the Transport Committee, until many years after, by which time motor transport had obtained too big a hold upon the situation. When dealing with transport, we must realise that our first consideration is to provide export facilities at the lowest possible cost. We must also have regard for the question of road and rail haulage, port charges and overseas freight. We must consider not one item but the total charge.

We all regret the disastrous price of wheat, and hope that the necessary assistance for farmers will soon be forthcoming. They must of necessity be kept on the land. For our future development, however, we must look to the areas of assured rainfall. I sometimes think it would be a good thing for us if we could draw a line midway between Albany and Fremantle, and form another State. We would then be very well off at the southern end. That part of the State has been favoured by Nature, but has been neglected by various Governments. I do not advocate the formation of a new State. What I advocate is that the Gov-

ernment should extend to that portion of Western Australia consideration similar to that which it would like to receive from the Commonwealth Government.

The Minister for Lands: Do not be selfish!

Mr. HILL: The Government has now commenced to do something. That portion of the State will carry a large population. I have been criticised for concentrating so much upon the development of the port of Albany, criticised even amongst my own electors. The experience of this year has, however, convinced my critics that I am on sound ground. At the southern end of the State to-day the unanimous cry is, "We want Albany developed." Next week we are to have a visit from the Minister for Railways. One of the requests the people will make will be the proclamation of the Albany Harbour Board. I realise we must wait a little longer for the completion of the Pemberton-Northcliffe railway.

The Premier: Oh yes!

Mr. HILL: Our ports as well as our railways must be paid for. The money that might be lost on a railway might be picked up by savings effected at the ports. Since 1924, the money that has been spent at the ports of Fremantle and Bunbury, without providing any additional accommodation there, would have completed the railway in question three times over. Sir George Buchanan pointed out that it would be cheaper to build a railway to Albany than to develop the harbour at Bunbury. To-day I was told by a reputable engineer that in Australia money was spent at places unsuitable for ports, instead of the natural harbours that are available being utilised.

In conclusion, I make no apology for confining my remarks almost entirely to transport. The problem of transport is the most important of all for the Government to consider. When our transport is made to pay, we can think about reducing taxation. A reduction in transport charges of 10 per cent. would be equivalent to a substantial bonus to our industries, whether primary or secondary. If we could give encouragement to our industries, we could reduce unemployment, bring greater prosperity to the State, and provide a much higher standard for all concerned.

On motion by Mr. Styants, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.5 p.m.