

as high as £1 an acre. In conclusion, I desire to commend the Main Roads Department and the Commissioner for Main Roads upon the excellent work carried out in the country districts. A tremendous task had to be undertaken and the board set about it in an energetic manner. Of course, complaints are made and naturally we in our part do not consider we have had our fair share of bitumen surfacing. We think that too much has been done in the South-West and not enough in our area. Nevertheless I commend the department for the great work that has been done. It is now possible to travel from Perth to the North-West in a comparatively very short space of time. When we know that such good work has been accomplished, we should express our commendation, not only of Mr. Tindale and his officers, but of the men who actually did the work, despite the fact that some people say there have been loafers on the job.

Hon. A. Thomson: They are now practically all trained men.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes, but they were not trained to the job when they started, and they have carried out excellent work. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. H. S. W. Parker, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 25th August, 1938.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, GOLDFIELDS EXPRESS TRAINS.

Second-class Passengers, Additional Comforts.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Railways: As the Railway Department receives about three times as much revenue from second class passengers as from first class passengers in fares from Kalgoorlie, and for approximately the same outlay, will he consider providing additional comforts on all express trains for second class passengers, such as—(a) more comfortable sleeping accommodation; (b) foot warmers; (c) hot water bottles for those booking sleepers; (d) lounge car accommodation.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: The question of increasing the amenities provided for all passengers (including those travelling second class) is and has been constantly before the Commissioner of Railways. Considerable improvement has, as members are aware, been made and it is hoped to provide additional comforts as circumstances permit.

CONSTITUTIONALITY OF SPEAKER'S POSITION.

Point of Order.

MR. HUGHES (East Perth) [4.33]: I rise to a point of order. This House is not properly constituted for the conduct of business on the following grounds:—

In view of the fact that Mr. William Dartnell Johnson when last elected to the Legis-

lative Assembly of the State of Western Australia was the owner of the lands comprised in certificates of title vol. 1027, folio 445, vol. 1057, fol. 268, and vol. 1021, fol. 895, and in view of the fact that there was and is still existing thereon mortgages to the Agricultural Bank involving the aforesaid William Dartnell Johnson in a contract to repay the principal moneys with interest thereon, thus constituting a contract between the aforesaid William Dartnell Johnson and the Crown in right of the State of Western Australia, and in view of Section 32 of the Constitutions Act Amendment Act, 1839, and Section 33 thereof, the election of the aforesaid William Dartnell Johnson as a member of the Legislative Assembly was void, the aforesaid William Dartnell Johnson is not and has not been since the last general election a member of this House, and in view of the fact that Standing Order 8 prescribes that only a member of the House may be appointed Speaker thereof the election of the aforesaid William Dartnell Johnson to the office of Speaker was invalid and of no effect and therefore the aforesaid William Dartnell Johnson is not Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Western Australia, but that office has been vacant ever since the retirement of the Hon. A. H. Panton, and in view of the aforesaid premises the Legislative Assembly when presided over by Mr. William Dartnell Johnson, purporting to act as Speaker thereof, is not validly constituted for business and all business transacted under the purported speakership of the aforesaid William Dartnell Johnson is void and of no effect.

I ask for your ruling, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think it would have been better had the hon. member brought this matter under my notice previous to bringing it up in the House. It is quite clear to hon. members, including the hon. member himself, that I am not in a position immediately to decide such a point of order. The point raised is highly technical and constitutional, and will be submitted to the proper authorities so that I may be correctly and soundly advised. In the meantime, the Address-in-reply has proceeded to a certain stage, and to advance it a little further will not make matters more serious. I therefore propose to let the point raised stand over until I can obtain advice that the hon. member will respect. He can quite see that if I gave a ruling now on a matter of that description it could not be accepted as authoritative, nor can I be guided in any way by the Standing Orders. Therefore, as I say, the matter will be submitted to the advisers of the Crown for consideration.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Tenth Day.—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. RAPHAEL (Victoria Park) [4.37]: Mr. Speaker, the members on the cross-benches on this side of the House desire to give me a pat before I start, but usually I get abuse afterwards. I join with other members of the House in congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, upon your attainment of the position of Speaker; although, with several other Labour members, I certainly do not agree with the revival of the custom of wearing the wig. I do not intend to detain the House very long.

I desire to congratulate the Minister for Employment upon the selection of the magistrate of the Children's Court. When Mr. Schroeder was first appointed to the position, I had what I considered to be, in my opinion, justifiable reason for not commending the appointment. I clashed with Mr. Schroeder in a case that he heard, and I understand that from time to time many members of the legal profession have also clashed with him and have refused in consequence to appear before him again, as they think they should not be compelled to accept a layman's judgment upon the technical and legal points that are raised in the court. Mr. Schroeder has adopted the attitude of deciding each case that comes before him on its merits from a layman's point of view and doing justice. To my mind he has succeeded admirably.

I desire to speak for a few moments upon the cost of living. Since the increase in the basic wage has taken place, I am sure that every married member of the House has had additional claims made upon his income for the requirements of the home. The wife has been compelled to ask for a larger amount in order to meet the additional cost of the commodities that are required to sustain the family. Everything one purchases to-day has increased in price by 1d. or 2d. and the rise in the basic wage is not commensurate with the increased cost of commodities.

During the last session of Parliament we were lobbied in the corridors by members of the Master Bakers' Association, who were holding meetings every Sunday morning with a view to discovering how quickly they could raise the price of bread to the purchasers.

It is strange that not one single Country Party member of the Opposition has raised a protest against the price of bread to the consumers and the profit that the Master Millers' Association is making from the sale of offal to the farmers on the land.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You were not here.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I have read most of the speeches and I have not noticed any protest. As a matter of fact, the Leader of the Opposition himself was away having a good time. Three years ago the Master Millers' Association decided that it should exercise some form of control similar to that which is exercised by the Master Bakers' Association.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Assisted by you.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Not assisted by me at all.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You assisted to pass that measure last year.

Mr. RAPHAEL: If I did, I was a goat.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There is no doubt about that.

Mr. RAPHAEL: If I am a goat, you are a bigger one.

Mr. Sampson: In any case you are a goat.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I will deal with the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) later. Three years ago the millers decided to form themselves into an association. They decided that all the flour mills, wherever possible, should be brought within the scope of the association. Up to the present only two mills have resisted the wiles of those who endeavoured to persuade them to join the association, whose aim was to maintain the high price of offal and flour sold in the State. A meeting was held yesterday at which a further attempt was made to force the non-members of the association to link up. This they refused to do, and the meeting was adjourned for a further week with a view to discovering whether some means could be found whereby they might be induced to join the organisation, so that it would have a greater stranglehold upon any prospective secondary industry which might depend upon the commodities handled by the association by keeping the cost of flour and by-products at a high level. The Perth price of wheat is 3s. a bushel. Flour is £9 15s. a ton, bran is £7, and pollard is £7 5s. Purchasers of those commodities have not the opportunity of buying at the tonnage rate, but have to secure them

in truck lots. In Adelaide the price of wheat is 2s. 8½d. a bushel, flour is £8 a ton, bran £5 17s. 6d. and pollard £6 5s. I noticed that the member for Swan recently took some belated action in the matter by protesting per medium of a question to the Minister about the prices of these commodities.

Hon. C. G. Latham: He attended to the matter earlier than you did.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I have been investigating the position for the last three months. Had I in my electorate as many poultry breeders and primary producers as the member for Swan has in his electorate I would have raised an outcry long before. In Adelaide bran is £5 17s. 6d. a ton and pollard is £6 5s. a ton.

Mr. Sampson: I mentioned this matter in my speech on the Address-in-reply.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I do not know what the hon. member mentioned. I did not trouble to read his speech. There is a difference of £1 2s. 6d. per ton between the price of bran in Adelaide and Perth. The price is lower in Adelaide than it is here, but the Millers' Association is paying £1 12s. 6d. per ton freight to export bran to Adelaide, where it is sold at £1 2s. 6d. less than the local price. If that is not evidence of the existence of a combine, I should like to know what is. It is time the Government took action to afford some protection to the poultry-breeders and to the consumers of bread in this State. In Melbourne the price of wheat is 3s. 2½d.—2½d. a bushel more than in Western Australia.

Mr. Seward: Wheat is 2s. 3d. here.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The figures I have were compiled a few days ago, and I am quoting the Perth price. In the country 4d. freight has to be paid, and other charges have to be met. I am referring to the prices in the capital cities. The price of wheat in Melbourne is 3s. 2½d. a bushel. Flour is £8 2s. 6d. a ton, so that while wheat is 2½d. a bushel more in Melbourne than in Perth, flour is £1 12s. 6d. per ton less. The price of bran is £7 in Melbourne, the same as it is here. Pollard is £6 10s. in Melbourne, or 15s. less than it is here. Wheat is dearer in Sydney, being 3s. 3½d. a bushel, and the price of flour is £8 2s. 6d. a ton. To make a ton of flour, 48 bushels of wheat are required. The actual cost of raw material is £7 4s. The cost of gristing at 1s. a bushel is £2 8s., bringing the total to £9 12s. The return from offal amounts to £2 5s., which

brings the actual cost of flour to £7 7s., to which 5s. cartage has to be added. The millers in this State, therefore, receive £1 18s. more for flour than they should. After having been in existence for three years, the Millers' Association has a reserve fund of between £50,000 and £55,000. This reserve fund has been accumulated purely and simply for the protection of members of the association, each of whom agrees to produce a certain quantity of flour. One man is limited to 10 tons per week, another to 20 tons, and another to 30 tons. If any miller desires to produce more than the quantity stipulated by the association, he has to pay into the reserve fund of the association £2 per ton on the excess tonnage. If the quota is not reached, and a lesser amount of flour is milled, the miller receives £2 per ton from the funds of the association, which means that he is paid £2 a week not to produce flour.

Mr. Sampson: I brought the question of offal before the House on the 11th August.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Not much has been done since.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You do not expect it to be done by this Government.

Mr. RAPHAEL: If it does no more than your Government did, it will do nothing.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It made you kick up a noise.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I have certain friends in the poultry business, and that is one reason why I have brought this matter up. I am, however, principally concerned about the present cost of bread to the people of this State. In Victoria Park there are many large families, and bread represents the staff of life to them. Under present conditions the cost of commodities is going up, and there is no corresponding increase in the sustenance allowances. In many cases there is a decrease in the allowances made by the Child Welfare Department.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You know that bread was sold cheaper in Victoria Park than in any other portion of the metropolitan area prior to the passing of the Bread Bill.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Nothing of the sort. Only one man was selling it cheaply, and he had only one bakehouse. I have seen the Leader of the Opposition getting his bread there.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You did not. That is one thing I have never had to do. You caused the price of bread to go up.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Not at all.

Mr. Marshall: We do not want these tales out of school. You two get together afterwards.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I am surprised at the Leader of the Opposition trying to put me off the track. In October, 1935, the price of wheat was 3s. 9d., and of bran and pollard £6 5s. To-day there is a difference of over £7 with wheat at 9d. per bushel less. In November, 1934, the price of wheat was 3s., just as it is to-day. Bran and pollard were then selling at £5 10s. per ton and £6 respectively. Flour was being sold at £9 10s. In August, 1938, the price of wheat was 3s., bran £7, and pollard £7 5s. Can anyone tell me why, with wheat at its present price, bran should be sold at 30s. per ton more than in an earlier year? From statistics I find that Japan is prepared to buy our wheat, ship it to that country, and deliver its product of offal at £5 per ton in Australia. It is time the Government took action against the Millers' Association to put a stop to a combine that is robbing the poor of their food. There is no word other than "robbing" I can use to meet the case. If the Government finds it impossible, with its limited funds, to increase the sustenance allowances, it should certainly do what it can to break down the combine.

I congratulate the Government upon the introduction of the five-day week. The member for Maylands (Mr. Shearn) traversed the same subject, and sat upon the rail, like a cock sparrow, on the side of the Labour Party. He evidently did not see the glare of the Leader of the National Party. I warn him to be very careful how he congratulates a Labour Government if he wants the support of the party from which he hopes to get endorsement for the next election. The Government is to be congratulated upon giving civil servants a five-day week. I hope this is going to be the forerunner of its application, through the Arbitration Court, to railway and tramway employees, sustenance workers, and all men permanently engaged by the Government.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And to farmers and dairymen.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I do not know about them.

Mr. Mann: Why not a four-day week?

Mr. RAPHAEL: I would be quite agreeable to that. This should be the forerunner

of the adaptation of the policy to all the outside employees of the Government. Why should one section of the community that is employed by the Government be picked out for a five-day week, for preferential treatment, when others just as deserving do not get it?

Mr. Thorn: Try it in your own profession first.

Mr. RAPHAEL: If I can get a lead from the hon. member, I will follow it. I have a complaint to make about the treatment meted out to single men at Marquis-street. In this instance no blame is attachable to the Minister concerned. I have been asked on several occasions to go to Marquis-street and see for myself what happens to those men. Many of them are attending hospital. They are forced to walk from the hospital to Marquis-street, some of them being on crutches while others are very sick. That is not the worst phase of the trouble. In numerous instances the officers at Marquis-street allow the men to stand around until about half past 12 before giving them attention. A minute was put through by the Minister, and those conditions were altered for a time. Very soon, however, the single men were once more forced to hang around for half a day, thus perhaps missing an opportunity of scouting for work, and being deprived of that opportunity by the lackadaisical treatment of the officers concerned. When I first became a candidate for parliamentary honours, it did not enter my head that the time would ever come that I should have to go to the Child Welfare Department to fight civil servants for a right to which people were entitled, that is to say, fight for an amount that had been made available by the Government. The member for Canning (Mr. Cross) has voiced a protest on the same question. The departmental officers from time to time say that because of the improved circumstances of the person in receipt of relief, the payment will be reduced from 25s. to 21s. I should like to quote one particular case, that of a widow with three children under 14 years of age, who would receive 36s. per week with an added sum for her children under 14. Should there be any children over the age of 14, no provision at all is made for them. We all know that at the present time youth employment—I refer to boys and girls—is a serious problem, and a family is fortunate

if some of the children are to-day not unemployed. The widow receives 36s. per week and perhaps one of the children is able to find employment, starting at wages amounting to 12s. 6d. or 15s. a week, and later on rising perhaps to £1. When that child sets out to work, the department sends out one of its officers to make inquiries into the altered circumstances of the case. Then, almost immediately, a reduction is made in the allowance, despite the fact that there are two adult persons in that family dependent upon the amount being earned by one person. The Child Welfare Department puts in the boot straight away and decreases the amount of the allowance. My opinion is that the department has arrived at the stage when it should come under the control of a board of at least three persons. Those three persons should have the final say in respect of the amounts to be allocated to families. What I mean by that is that if a family considers that the treatment meted out by the department is not fair, the head of the family should have the right to go before the board to appeal against the decision of the department. At the present time, those in receipt of sustenance have no redress whatever: the department decides on making a reduction and that is the end of the matter. I trust the Minister will give some consideration to my suggestion and remove from the secretary of the department the power that he at present holds, and transfer it to a board. I declare definitely that there should be a board in control, and if an individual in receipt of sustenance should not be satisfied with what is being paid to him, he should have the right to appeal to the board against the reduction. A little while ago the Minister for Works asked for suggestions that might be considered by the Government for the purpose of providing work for those in need of it. I can make one suggestion now, and it is in connection with the Causeway. As a matter of fact, it has already been put before the Minister, but nothing has been done to relieve the congestion that occurs at the Causeway on race days and during peak traffic periods, when those who have occasion to use that thoroughfare are often held up for five or ten minutes.

Mr. Cross: And sometimes for three-quarters of an hour.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The Government has given the member for Canning a bridge

across the river and is now building a bridge for the member for Fremantle. It is due to the Government now to satisfy members, and particularly those representing country constituencies, whose desire it is—and it is also my desire—to see a new Causeway constructed.

Mr. Cross: I put that up the other night.

Mr. RAPHAEL: We are not worrying about what the hon. member put up the other night and so he can keep quiet.

Mr. Marshall: The member for Canning advocated a new bridge to take the place of the Causeway.

Mr. RAPHAEL: If he did, he will not receive my support. There is another important question to which I wish to draw attention, and it involves the safety of life. The Government has installed lights at the railway crossings at Rivervale and Maddington. They should also be placed at another dangerous crossing, namely, Carlisle. Buses have occasion to use that crossing, and frequently they carry 20 or 30 passengers. The risk to human life by the absence of lighting arrangements there can well be imagined. Still another subject to which I wish to refer is the regulations that have been framed under the Native Administration Act. We are all looking forward to their being placed on the Table of the House and, when they do appear, it will be our delight to put the boot into them. Some of those regulations are the most ridiculous that could ever have been framed. I trust they will see the light of day very soon, and when they do appear, we shall not have any difficulty in pointing out how absurd and impossible many of them are.

The other day I read in the newspaper a statement by the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) in which he explained his attitude towards starting-price betting. I wish to dissociate myself entirely from that statement because I contend that the poorer section of the community, those who cannot afford to go to racecourses, have an equal right with everyone else to have their shilling on a horse if they desire to indulge in a mild gamble. In a democratic country such as we are living in, a man who earns money by the sweat of his brow should be permitted to spend his money in any way he likes. If he chooses to leave some of it in the starting-price betting shops, I shall not do any-

thing to stop him. I do think, however, it is high time that something was done towards putting betting operations off the racecourse on a different footing.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What about a Royal Commission to inquire into it?

Mr. RAPHAEL: If we had a Royal Commission on the hon. member we might be able to find out something; but we do not want a Royal Commission to investigate the subject of betting, and neither is there any necessity for stupid comments to be made to bring to the light of day the conditions existing in regard to starting-price betting. On Saturday last I had occasion to go to the football match at Subiaco. I thought that Victoria Park was bad enough in respect to betting, but Subiaco beat those conditions by a mile. I saw hundreds of people on both sides of the street outside betting shops. A little while back I investigated the betting conditions in South Australia, and in no small way either. As far as maintaining order is concerned, the South Australian conditions would be ideal if they could be applied to Western Australia. If a person has goods to sell he must make provision to sell them and accommodation must be provided so that a display can be made of the wares. If the starting-price shops are to be properly conducted, provision must be made for the accommodation of betting clients. That is done in South Australia where there are large halls that are used for betting purposes, and those halls are big enough to accommodate all the people who desire to bet. In that way the people are taken off the streets. That is what should be done here. Let us conduct the business in an orderly manner instead of allowing people to hang around footpaths and roads where they congregate because of the fear that the person who is conducting the betting business may "go off" at any moment. The person who bets never knows what is going to happen next. When the Country Party-National Government was in power, all were likely to "go off"—shopkeepers and bettors as well.

Mr. Hughes: There is no danger of the punters "going off," so that you can have your bet with safety.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The position is that the starting-price betting business is in urgent need of a good cleaning up. I will not vote for the abolition of shop betting. If the mild punter wants to have a shilling on a

race, let him have his bet to that extent. He will have my support. In Queensland it is said that starting-price betting has been abolished entirely, but that is not so. It is possible to communicate with hundreds of starting-price bookmakers by telephone and in that way make a bet. The point I wish to make is that the people of this State recently got a taste of what might take place if betting were confined to race-courses. I quote as an instance what occurred at the Goodwood Racecourse the other day. The treble tote had in its bank an amount of over £500, and taking advantage of the possibility of a large attendance because of that fact, the racing club increased its admission charge to the enclosure from 7s. 6d. to 10s.

Mr. Hughes: And that course is controlled by a good Labour supporter!

Mr. RAPHAEL: I do not know about that, but I have indicated what happened. If one club can do that, it simply shows what others are likely to do. I will not cast my vote so that the racing clubs will have such a monopoly. I hope that something will be done to clean up our city streets and so get rid of the crowds that congregate outside starting-price bookmakers' premises, particularly on Saturday afternoons. The starting-price people should be allowed to have halls so that people who desire to do business with them can transact it there, and be out of the way of passers-by.

I wish to draw attention to a new traffic regulation that has been promulgated under which motorists are not permitted to pass trams on the wrong side. I do not know whether members are aware that such a regulation is in force. Trams proceeding along Albany-road stop every 50 or 100 yards, and that is necessary in order that passengers may board or alight. I claim that regulation is ridiculous, particularly when it is considered that buses as well as motor lorries engaged in the businesses conducted by the White Rock Quarries, the Blue Rock Quarries, the State Sawmills Department, and other trading concerns, operate in that district. In addition, there are ordinary motor vehicles, with the result that often there is a long line of traffic held up behind trams that stop every hundred yards or so. It is all very ridiculous and stupid.

Mr. Cross: It is slowing down the traffic in one of the most dangerous roads in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Hegney: And a good thing, too.

Mr. RAPHAEL: If the hon. member is of that opinion, he ought to pay a visit to the Eastern States and see what obtains there.

Mr. Hegney: I have just returned from the Eastern States.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Then the hon. member did not open his eyes while he was there. Another suggestion I wish to make is that constables should be stationed at the different crosswalks in the city. At present pedestrians do not know whether to cross and the motorists do not know whether to proceed. Often three or four cars are lined up and the pedestrians are to be seen dodging backwards or forwards. Until such time as the Government is prepared to spend money on a lighting system such as is installed in other parts of Australia, the difficulty will continue. Under that lighting system a certain time is allowed during which pedestrians have the right-of-way, and then another period of time elapses during which vehicular traffic is permitted to traverse the intersections. The present system in Perth is ridiculous and positively useless. I desire to bring under the notice of the Minister for Justice one matter of importance.

Mr. Thorn: He is the sole Minister left on the Treasury bench.

Mr. RAPHAEL: He is the last of the Mohicans! Evidently Ministers do not regard me as a very good supporter of the Government. Has the Minister for Justice taken into consideration whether the cash order companies operating in this State have registered as money lenders. Section 4 of the Money Lenders Act Amendment Act of 1937 reads—

Section 6 of the principal Act is repealed and the following new section enacted in its stead:—

6. (1) The registration of every money lender shall expire on the 30th June next following the date when such registration is effected. The provisions of this subsection shall apply to the registration of every money lender registered under the Money Lenders Act, 1912, whose registration is current at the commencement of the Money Lenders Act Amendment Act, 1937, and to every registration granted after the commencement of the last mentioned Act.

(2) Application for registration shall be made in the prescribed manner to any police, resident, or stipendiary magistrate sitting in petty sessions at the court of petty sessions held nearest to the place of business of the applicant or nearest to the principal place of business of the applicant,

where the applicant has more than one place of business.

Mr. Patrick: You suggest the cash order companies are not registered?

Mr. RAPHAEL: I know they are not, and they are carrying on illegally. Section 5 repeals Sections 9 and 10 of the principal Act, and substitutes new sections, of which the new Section 9 deals with the form of contracts and reads—

9. (1) No contract for the repayment by a borrower of money lent to him or to any agent on his behalf by a money lender after the commencement of the Money Lenders Act Amendment Act, 1937, or for the payment by him of interest on money so lent, and no security given by the borrower or by any such agent as aforesaid in respect of any such contract shall be enforceable unless a note or memorandum in writing of the contract is signed personally by the borrower and unless a copy thereof is delivered or sent to the borrower within seven days of the making of the contract, and no such contract or security shall be enforceable if it is proved that the note or memorandum aforesaid was not signed by the borrower before the money was lent or before the security was given, as the case may be.

The cash order companies operating in this State are not registered as money lending concerns, and every person who has borrowed money from such companies cannot be forced to pay back 2s. of the money so owed. I trust the Minister will take notice of my statement and see to it that the necessary action is taken with regard to registration, so as to bring the cash order companies into line with other money-lending concerns. In my opinion, they should be wiped out as they are a blot on our economic landscape. That concludes my short oration, and I hope that the several matters I have brought before the notice of the Government will receive due consideration along favourable lines. Before the next session commences I trust that we shall at least see the commencement of the construction of a new causeway.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [5.22]: At the outset I desire to congratulate you, Sir, on your elevation to the Speakership. I have no doubt that, with your long Parliamentary experience, you will fill the position with credit to yourself and advantage to the House. When the time comes for you to vacate your post I know you will be able to look back on your tenure with a sense of gratification. With regard to the political

and economic position of the State, Western Australia is likely to pass through a very difficult time in the immediate future. The portents are such in practically every country, that economic and political difficulties are definitely affecting trade, which is having repercussions not only in Western Australia but throughout the Commonwealth. Western Australia is confronted with difficulties principally relating to finance, which restrict the State's activities. For the financial year, 1937-38, the revenue was slightly over £10,000,000.

Mr. Hughes: That was a record for the State.

Mr. HEGNEY: The expenditure was also a little over £10,000,000. Of that expenditure £3,000,000 was set aside for the payment of interest and sinking fund, representing about 34 per cent. of the revenue collected by the Treasury. The Railways spent approximately just under £3,000,000, representing another substantial percentage of the revenue. The Education Vote absorbed £716,000, and those three items alone indicate how 68 per cent. of the revenue was spent. That left 32 per cent. only with which to carry on the other activities of the State. Several members have suggested that the Government should launch out upon certain schemes. They have pointed out that the farmers should be assisted, that a system of child endowment should be inaugurated and so on. Side by side with those suggestions there has been a demand for a reduction in taxation. It seems to me that the Government is hamstrung and cannot possibly grant any relief from taxation.

The Premier: No one seriously asked for that.

Mr. HEGNEY: The Leader of the Opposition argued that taxation should be reduced and the Leader of the National Party said that taxation in this State was severe. If we contrast the taxation imposed in this State with that levied in the other States, we find that our impost is not as severe as it is in other parts of Australia. When the Federal Grants Commission was examining the economic conditions operating in Western Australia, it contended that until the Government imposed a heavier burden of taxation upon the people the State had no substantial ground for requesting a grant from the Federal Government.

Mr. McDonald: We have altered that.

Mr. HEGNEY: But not to any great extent. However, the arguments advanced in this House, to which I have drawn attention, are inconsistent. It would be necessary to finance the schemes propounded by drawing upon revenue, and yet it was suggested that taxation should be reduced. In the circumstances, regarding the differing contentions together, I cannot regard them as sound.

The burden of the story of Opposition members had relation to the wheatgrowing industry. They urged the Government to afford the agriculturists adequate relief. We know the Government has given them substantial relief in many directions. The Minister for Lands, speaking at the recent Wheatgrowers' Conference, detailed what the Government has done during the past three years by way of giving relief to those engaged in the farming industry. Furthermore, the Government has given relief to the pastoral industry in the matter of land rents. It has tried to minimise the severity of economic conditions in the agricultural industry generally. In fact, it has done its utmost to afford relief.

Now, as regards child endowment and other proposals of that nature submitted to the Treasurer. In view of the financial position, it is not possible for the State Government to inaugurate a system of child endowment. Such a system is urgently necessary throughout Australia, and it is the bounden duty of the Commonwealth Government to inaugurate it, that being the only Government with the necessary resources and revenue. A former Prime Minister, Mr. Bruce, appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the subject. The Commission took evidence over a period of two years, and submitted a report. However, that report was pigeonholed, and nothing was done, though a Federal election had been fought on the issue of child endowment. Both Mr. Curtin and Mrs. Muscio, who were members of the Commission, recommended that a minimum weekly endowment of 5s. per child should be paid. The scheme was urgently necessary at that time, and it is still more urgently required now. In my opinion the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) should address her contentions to the Commonwealth sphere, particularly as her own party is in power there, and could implement the proposal. Certainly the State Gov-

ernment, in view of its limited resources, could not possibly sustain a system of child endowment. One Australian State has inaugurated the system, but that is the wealthiest of the Australian States. Moreover, it was introduced by a Labour Government, of which Mr. Lang was the head. In the Federal sphere the National Party has been in power for practically 20 years, but has done nothing in the matter of child endowment.

The unemployment question is of the greatest importance, affecting as it does the welfare of the State. During the year just past the Government has improved the conditions of men on relief and sustenance work. The Speech mentions that 94 per cent. of the men in question are now in employment. Men on the higher rates of sustenance receiving 35s. per week and over get full time on work as long as the work lasts.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: The work does not last long.

Mr. HEGNEY: The hon. member does not know what she is talking about. Many men have been employed on sewerage work, and that work still continues. There are similar works in progress in the country.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Don't you think that work should go round a bit, instead of men being sent out into the country for a fortnight and then being kept out of employment for three or four weeks?

Mr. HEGNEY: Employment on sewerage works is depleted. Whereas a few years ago 4,000 men were engaged on sewerage works, the number now is fewer than 900. Therefore many men have to seek employment in the country, there being no work available in the metropolitan area.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is a different story from what has already been told.

Mr. HEGNEY: No. This Government did not inaugurate the sewerage works. The Leader of the Opposition made it clear that if he was returned to power, the sewerage works would be closed down altogether and the money being spent on them would be spent in the country districts. In fact, the hon. member conveyed the same idea in his recent speech here. If the Leader of the Opposition were on the Treasury bench, there would be fewer men employed in the metropolitan area than there are now.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is a poor look-out for the men if they have to go off as soon as a job is finished.

Mr. HEGNEY: During the recess I had the opportunity to visit Eastern Australia, and I went as far as Cairns. I made investigations in both New South Wales and Queensland into the position of unemployed workers. As a result I found that in no Australian State are men on relief work, or men thrown out of private industry, receiving better or more considerate treatment than is the case in Western Australia. A Labour Government exists in Queensland, and I had the opportunity of discussing these problems with Labour members for two days. My inquiries proved that the Western Australian Government is handling the unemployed problem as well as is any other Government in Australia, and possibly better.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You should give that credit to our Government, too.

Mr. HEGNEY: I am dealing with the present position, and not with what existed years ago. In most of the Eastern States, and particularly in New South Wales, many workers are having a rough time. Certainly their conditions are much worse than are those in Western Australia. As regards the unemployment position generally, this Government, with the resources at its command, is doing a good job in trying to give relief workers employment. I know that the department over which the Minister for employment presides bends its energies towards providing as much employment as possible.

The housing problem is mentioned in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. I regard it as a most important question. It is strange that the National Party here should reiterate that the Government ought to keep out of private enterprise and have as little as possible to do with business activities. The National Party is compelled to admit, however, that private enterprise has failed to provide adequate housing for the people. Accordingly, the Government is now being appealed to for help in that direction. The Treasurer is to be congratulated on having done his best to provide as much capital as possible for the Workers' Homes Board, so that the construction of homes may continue throughout the length and breadth of the State.

Youth employment is undoubtedly one of the most important problems confronting the Government. The Government has a peculiarly difficult task in this respect, because it does not control employment. Its sphere of opera-

tions is limited. It can inaugurate certain methods of training youth, but its activities are circumscribed in regard to providing adequate employment for the young men of Western Australia. The trouble is that when a youth reaches the age of 21 years private employers dispense with his services. He is cast adrift like flotsam and jetsam—not required by the industry because he is too old at twenty-one. That is true of most of Western Australia's industries. Those who reject these workers should be censured, and not the Government. The Government is bound to co-operate as much as possible in this direction, but the position is made doubly difficult for it when private employers continually retrench youths and girls on their reaching the age of 21 years.

Another problem that has been discussed in the course of the debate relates to wheat. I do not pose as an authority on wheatgrowing, but I have read the pronouncements of various authorities on the subject. No two of them agree as to the right solution. The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan), speaking here recently, analysed the various remedies or expedients that might be adopted, and then sat down, befogged as to what should be done to ensure relief to the agricultural industry. Undoubtedly those engaged in that industry, and especially the wheatgrowers, are in difficulties; and it appears as if they may be in difficulties for years to come. There is to be a conference of State Premiers and Commonwealth Ministers in Sydney to discuss the problem, and it is to be hoped that it will find a satisfactory solution. However, other countries that export wheat are now urging limited production. The representative of this State two days before his departure urged that the wheatgrowing countries should get together for the purpose of restricting production.

Mr. Patriek: They did that some time ago.

Mr. HEGNEY: The Leader of the National party deprecated the adoption of such an expedient. As regards sugar production—

Hon. C. G. Latham: What about rice?

Mr. HEGNEY: In Northern Queensland sugar growers will not admit new men to the industry because of the surfeit of production. It seems as if the same method may have to be applied to the growing of wheat. It will be a bad day for Western

Australia when that is done, but it may become necessary because of the difficult economic conditions prevailing in Europe and Eastern countries.

During the year just passed the population of Western Australia has increased by only 4,500, representing natural increase and excess of arrivals over departures. Western Australia undoubtedly does require industries to absorb more of her people, and to induce others to come here and participate in the activities and work of this community. If a great expansion of industry could be brought about, and more people could be induced to come here and participate in the increased activity, the burden imposed upon every unit of the community would be minimised. We have a debt of just over £200 per head of the population, which represents an enormous burden on the people. Apparently the only way to secure a larger population is by developing secondary industries. We are told that the country towns are losing their population, that there is a drift to the city; and many people may be leaving the State. For a number of years, presumably, the agricultural industry will not be able to absorb any great increase of population, and so the only way to augment our numbers is by making a determined effort to establish secondary industries. I admit that that will be very difficult. When the Commonwealth, and also private enterprise, contemplate establishing secondary industries, they go to Melbourne or Sydney, and this has the effect of attracting population to those capitals and denuding States like Western Australia of many of their young men. An increased population would be beneficial to our farming community because producers then would have a larger consuming population to cater for.

Over a number of years, certain works have been submitted to the department for consideration, but many of them have not yet been started. Various members have spoken of the need for schools and for the improvement of school grounds. There are a few problems of that kind in my district. My chief complaint concerns the Bayswater State School grounds. It is high time something was done to improve those grounds. When the member for Nedlands was Minister for Education in the Mitchell Government, I introduced a deputation to him and placed the facts before him. Every Minister for Education and every Director of Education since then has agreed that the

work is necessary, but no attempt has been made to carry it out. More than 500 children are in attendance at the school, and they have practically no playground at all. If this work were put in hand, it would not only be of benefit to those children but would also provide a considerable amount of employment for local workers. The Minister for Education is absent from the State at present, but I hope he will consider the matter, and have the work put in hand as early as possible.

Local authorities are anxious to have Beaufort-street extended to Government-road. If that were done, a new arterial road would be provided that would relieve the traffic on the main Guildford-road. The necessary extension would not be great.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Where is Government-road?

Mr. HEGNEY: It passes round the golf links and swings into Bassendean. An extension of about half a mile would be all that was necessary. The matter is being considered by the Commissioner of Main Roads, and I hope the local authorities will have his support. I also urge the main road authorities to consider the proposal to straighten the Guildford-road. At the Belmont crossing, there is a turn that is quite unsatisfactory. A proposal was made to the present Premier, when he was Minister for Railways, that a subway should be constructed at the Belmont crossing, and the line straightened. This thoroughfare should have been declared a main road, because it carries the bulk of the traffic from Midland and Guildford. Some years ago a check was made on the bridges which revealed that 52 per cent. of the traffic was carried on that road. The member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael) referred to the Rivervale crossing. The Government should seriously consider constructing a subway there. I had an opportunity to travel on the highways in eastern Australia recently, and I did not see one such crossing with the accompanying warning signs. All the traffic was conducted either over or under the railway lines. As this is a main thoroughfare of importance to the city, a subway should be provided. The work of putting in the subway would provide a considerable amount of employment for workers of the metropolitan area.

Another matter I wish to urge is the provision of additional accommodation at Parliament House. When I visited Sydney and Brisbane, I was shown over the Houses

of Parliament, and was particularly interested in the accommodation provided for members. Compared with theirs, I say that we have no accommodation at all. When the Premier is considering the schedule of works, I ask him to remember the urgent need of providing adequate accommodation in this building for the various parties.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And for the public, too.

Mr. HEGNEY: Rooms should be provided for the several parties, and there should also be writing-rooms where members could do their work. Accommodation is also required for use by members when meeting their constituents. There is no place where a visitor can be taken when being interviewed by a member. Everybody in the vicinity can hear the nature of the business being discussed, which is not fair either to the visitor or to the member. If the requisite additions to the building were put in hand, a fair amount of work would be provided for tradesmen. I am pleased that the Government has under consideration the extension of the sewerage scheme to the Bas-sendean, Guildford and Midland Junction districts. I hope that before the year is out the work will be put in hand so that those suburbs, as well as the city, will have the convenience of a modern system.

Some allusion should be made to starting-price betting. I disagree with the member for Victoria Park, especially in regard to his references to the opportunities for betting in Brisbane. The hon. member said that one could go anywhere in Brisbane and make a bet. I spent 15 days in Queensland in company with three Labour members, and with them discussed the question fully. They knew Brisbane as thoroughly as I know Perth, and they conveyed the definite impression that it was now very difficult to place a bet in Queensland. I also spent some time in the company of civil servants, and gathered the same impression from them. There is no doubt that the legislation dealing with starting-price betting in Queensland has definitely stamped out the evil. From the point of view of the well-being of our community, the time has come when the Government should face this problem. The young men and women of this State should not have the many opportunities to indulge in betting that are available to them to-day. As the member for Victoria Park stated, on Saturday or any other day of

the week, one experiences difficulty in moving along the footways because of the betting crowds congregated there. The hon. member seemed anxious to have recognised places where betting might be indulged in. My view is that if starting-price betting is legalised, an extension of the evil will inevitably result. To my mind, there is no doubt that betting is an evil. As a representative of the people, I feel sure that if the Government followed the lead of Queensland, it would be doing the right thing by the men and women of this State. Some people consider it unpopular to tackle this problem. Even if such action proved unpopular, we should be prepared to do the right thing. I hope the Government will seriously consider the matter, arrive at a decision and do what is correct. That it should do so is of paramount importance to the community.

Mr. Marshall: Do you think that gambling is an evil?

Mr. HEGNEY: I do not say that gambling is necessarily an evil; I am complaining about the abuse, and the increase of gambling is definitely unlawful.

Mr. Marshall: All gambling is unlawful.

Mr. HEGNEY: The member for Victoria Park quoted the remarks of the Speaker, in which he said that we should protect people against themselves. Most of our laws are designed to protect people against themselves. In support of this, I might cite the laws relating to fire-arms and to motor vehicles. Having given owners of motor vehicles license to use the highways, we can readily imagine what damage might be done if the actions of individuals were not restrained.

Mr. Marshall: The motorist would do damage to others.

Mr. HEGNEY: I am convinced that the legalisation of starting-price betting would result in great harm to young men and women. Many of the workers spend a shilling or two on betting; possibly some of them spend more than they should, thus reducing their standard of living and depriving their families of necessities to which they are entitled.

Mr. Marshall: You want to make them pay to go to the racecourse, thus compelling them to spend more money.

Mr. HEGNEY: I appreciate the difficulty of attempting to abolish gambling, but the racecourse is the place to which betting should

be confined. The plea is made that workers cannot afford to patronise the racecourse. The workers who desire to bet should be admitted to the leger free. We all know that even boys and girls are now brought into the starting-price betting business.

Mr. Marshall: They would not be, if betting were legalised, as it is in South Australia.

Mr. HEGNEY: Boys and girls are brought into the business as touts for their parents and others. Wherever there is a hotel, there is a starting-price betting shop, conducted by a barber ostensibly as a hair-dressing establishment, but really as a starting-price betting shop. Although starting-price betting is a matter upon which each Labour man can express his own opinion—and I am expressing mine—the time has arrived when the Government should take action to stop it. If the Government does not take immediate steps to do so, no doubt the matter will become an election issue.

Mr. Marshall: I think you are wrong. It is an election issue. Show me how the evil can be lessened by legalising it on the racecourse.

Mr. HEGNEY: It is not so easy for the starting-price bettor to get on to the racecourse.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Do you want it brought to the homes of the people?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Should they have it for breakfast, dinner and tea?

Mr. HEGNEY: If betting were confined to the racecourse, it would be more difficult for the class of people to whom I refer to bet.

Mr. Cross: Abolish Labour!

Mr. HEGNEY: I am a member of the Labour Party.

Mr. Patrick: You are on the right track.

Mr. HEGNEY: Workers go to the Arbitration Court and fight for an increase in their wages. The Industrial Arbitration Act sets out how the basic wage is to be arrived at; so much of it is for rent and so much for food and clothing. Many workers are at present not even earning the basic wage; and to the extent that a worker uses 1s., 2s. or 5s. of his wages for betting, he is depriving his wife and family of something they ought not to be deprived of. He is reducing their standard of living. The Government should,

therefore, face the issue and make it much more difficult for these wage earners to bet.

Mr. Marshall: The Government should stop the workers from attending football matches and other places of amusement; they should work from daylight to dark.

Mr. HEGNEY: The workers cannot attend a football match if they stop at home; they must go to the place where the match is being held.

Member: They could listen in.

Mr. HEGNEY: There is nothing in listening in to a football match; it must be seen. The same remark applies to cricket and to racing. If one wants to enjoy racing, one must go to the course and watch it. The sooner we get back to the position that existed some 15 or 20 years ago, the better it will be for the people and for the State. To suggest that we are depriving the worker of something to which he is entitled is but a poor argument. To state the reverse is to state what is unpalatable even to the workers themselves.

Mr. Marshall: The workers will not thank you very much.

Mr. HEGNEY: A few workers may not not. I come in contact with many workers and have discussed this matter with them. Many of them have expressed the opinion that the problem should be tackled at once. Further, it is noised abroad that the police have been contaminated by starting-price betting.

Member: So they have.

Mr. HEGNEY: Many things are being done under the lap. Members will recall that some 12 months ago a police inquiry was held in New South Wales and several members of the force were dismissed from the service because of their backdoor methods in connection with starting-price betting in that State.

Member: That remark is unfair to the police of this State.

Mr. HEGNEY: I am only expressing my opinion, which is that this question should be dealt with immediately. The Government should arrive at a decision on the matter at once. It is ridiculous to let the Government go on as it is doing.

Mr. Marshall: We all say that.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. HEGNEY: Let the Government arrive at a decision one way or the other. The member for Murchison said a little while

ago that the workers would not thank me for my remarks. I can say that by far the greater portion of the workers in the Middle Swan electorate support the viewpoint I am putting forward. The percentage that indulges in starting-price betting is not great. In Queensland this matter was made a party issue. I discussed it with the member for Cairns—in those company I spent two days—and with two other Labour members. I asked them how Queensland solved the problem. The reply was that it had been made a party issue.

Mr. Hughes: In the interests of John Wren.

Mr. HEGNEY: No. The Government went to the electors and were returned.

Mr. Marshall: With three seats less.

Mr. HEGNEY: No, only one seat less. That seat was lost on quite another issue.

Hon. C. G. Latham: A secretarian issue.

Mr. HEGNEY: Yes. I have stated my views on the matter and, as I said, the sooner the Government faces the issue the better.

Mr. Hughes: You have the courage to express your opinion, anyhow.

Mr. HEGNEY: I desire to draw attention to another matter, the taking of liquor into dance halls.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. HEGNEY: I like dancing and occasionally attend a ball. I attended a ball the other night at which most of the people were from the best homes in the metropolitan area. They were men and women of good character and excellent bearing. A percentage of those attending dances, however, persists in taking liquor into the halls, and it is about time that the Licensing Act was amended to deal with the matter. The practice is becoming very prevalent in the metropolitan area.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: And in the country, too.

Mr. HEGNEY: I know that many ministers of religion of most of the denominations have been denouncing the practice and asking that something should be done to stop it. Personally, I do not support prohibition, but I do think we should consider the interests of our young people, particularly the boys and girls of 18 and 19 years of age who are making their debut in dance halls. We should use our influence to keep them away from this sort of thing. I will give an instance. I was at a party the other night. A young woman, at the request of her aunt,

invited two friends to attend it. The friends were a young man and a young woman, and great difficulty was experienced in keeping these guests away from the drink. That is deplorable. A few years ago there was no drink in dance halls in Perth. Twenty years ago, when I was a young man, there was no drink in those places. You, Mr. Speaker, know the difficulty that was experienced at the Trades Hall at Midland Junction in keeping out liquor when dances were held there. Some of the people who attended those dances would bring drink and make a nuisance of themselves. I trust the Government will give consideration to this question, with a view to stopping the practice.

I have made a few pertinent remarks on various matters that I think should receive attention. There are other matters upon which I could touch, but I will take the opportunity of dealing with them when the Estimates are brought down, because they affect the interests of my electorate.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [6.11]: I offer you my congratulations, Sir, upon your elevation to the Chair. I am pleased that you have revived the time-honoured custom of wearing the wig. This, I am sure, graces the Chair. I feel that under your guidance during your very short term of office members will get along very well indeed.

I desire to refer to a matter that was mentioned by the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson)—the extension of electric light and power to the outer suburban districts. During the last session or two we have heard much about the additions to the power house in East Perth and what the Government would do when they were completed.

Mr. Marshall: The power house is not yet in full commission.

Mr. THORN: I believe it is.

Mr. Marshall: No.

Mr. THORN: A very large amount of money has been spent on the power house, and I sincerely hope that the outlying districts will derive some benefit from the expenditure. One matter that always annoys me very much is this: the Perth City Council can always get all the supply of power it requires, while services that are depending upon power from the Government have to sit back and wait. I presented a petition to the Minister a few weeks ago from 28

settlers who were desirous of obtaining an extension of the lighting system to their district. No doubt some of the settlers would also make use of electric power. I am hopeful that the Government will comply with the request of those settlers, as the supply of electricity means a tremendous lot to the man on the land. Since I have come closer to the more populated part of the State, I often think of the time when I had to use a kerosene lamp, and of the danger of fire in our weatherboard house in the country should the lamp happen to be knocked over. The people of the metropolitan area are greatly privileged in being able to enjoy the use of electricity. I appeal to the Government to make the extension I have referred to.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. THORN: Before leaving the subject of electric light I should like to add that I am not unmindful of the extensions that have been made in my district. However, as such a large sum has been spent on increasing the supply of electricity, I feel justified in referring to the matter in the hope of inducing the Government to adopt a more vigorous policy by granting a larger vote for extension purposes.

A matter that has exercised my mind for a considerable period concerns the fertiliser that is manufactured at the different Government abattoirs. That fertiliser is most important in connection with intensive culture. I often think of part of the electorate of the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox)—I refer to Spearwood—where there is soil of a light and sandy nature, quite capable of high production if the settlers could afford to use large quantities of fertiliser. The same applies to my district. We need fertiliser in large quantities and at a reasonable rate, but we find that the Government is giving one firm a monopoly in the handling of this commodity.

Mr. Marshall: Which company is it?

Mr. THORN: Westralian Farmers Ltd. That company has a monopoly over the handling of this fertiliser.

Mr. Marshall: Over the handling of the fertiliser: not its production?

Mr. THORN: No, not over its production. The Government has given the company a monopoly over the handling of it.

Mr. Sleeman: How long has that been in existence?

Mr. THORN: For a number of years. When I returned from the war and engaged in production once again, I was able to purchase fertiliser for £6 15s. a ton. To-day I have to pay £10 15s.

Mr. Sleeman: What is the reason for that?

Mr. THORN: The reason is that there is no competition.

Mr. Sleeman: Is that the only reason?

Mr. THORN: Yes; the company has fixed its own price.

Mr. Marshall: I thought the producers fixed the price.

Mr. THORN: No, the price is fixed by the handling agent. That price was formerly £6 15s. but it has gradually increased until to-day it is £10 15s.

Mr. Marshall: I thought the company handled it only on a commission basis.

Mr. THORN: No, the Government gave the company the sole handling rights, provided it handled the lot. I have never been able to find out the Government contract price, and I do not think I would be able to do so if I asked the question.

Mr. Marshall: You should be able to find out.

Mr. THORN: That is the position, anyway, and the price is far too high. It is not an economical proposition. I hope the Government will cease to give monopolies of that sort to one firm.

Mr. Marshall: That might not cure the evil of which you speak. The price might be increased.

Mr. THORN: I think it would remedy the position. At any rate, I hope so. The one idea of firms handling certain commodities to-day seems to be to form combines and to raise the price of the goods. In the last year or two fertiliser companies have banded together. The Cresco company was supposed to be a farmers' company. The shares are supposed to be held by farmers, and the company to exist for the benefit of the farmers. In the last year or two, however, that company has joined the fertiliser ring, with the result that there is an agreement and a fixed price.

Mr. Marshall: There are only three producing firms in the State, are there not?

Mr. THORN: Yes, Cuming Smith, Cresco and Mt. Lyell. The point I want to make is that the price of bone fertiliser is too high for growers to use it economi-

cally, and my hope is that we shall be able to obtain greater supplies at a more reasonable price.

Mr. Marshall: If I were you, I would make all necessary investigations, and move a motion on the subject in this House. You would receive plenty of support.

Mr. THORN: I appreciate the fact that the Government made arrangements for the Minister for Agriculture (Hon. F. J. S. Wise) to visit the near East regarding the export of fruit from this State. I can assure the House that the export trade was definitely in danger. I was pleased to hear the Premier state that the Minister's mission was successful, because that means a great deal to growers in this State. It is all very well for different countries suddenly to realise that they have certain regulations under which they can exclude fruit from other countries, but we know perfectly well that in those eastern lands the same trouble exists as that with which we are faced. As a matter of fact, the fruit-fly has thrived in those countries in the past. Yet they proposed to keep out our fruit on the ground that it was contaminated. I feel sure the object was to provide a market for some other country. The growers in this State are greatly appreciative of the work done by the Minister.

I wish now to refer to the registration of orchards under the Plant Diseases Act. A good deal of criticism has been levelled at the department as a result of the enforcement of the provisions of the Act, but I can assure members that the enforcement has been a wonderful assistance to commercial fruitgrowers. The inspectors appointed are doing a very good job, and if they maintain their vigilance and instruct fruitgrowers and backyard gardeners in the proper control of the fruit-fly pest, it will be reduced to a minimum. There is not the slightest doubt about that. If commercial growers do the job properly, they can control the pest, but we know that if we are not whipped up to the job, we do not do it. It is a remarkable fact that although growers are aware of the ravages of the pest, and that the industry in which they are engaged provides their livelihood, commercial growers, unless the law is enforced, are inclined to be neglectful.

Another matter with which I should like to deal is that of education. Several members have discussed this subject. The lack of

educational facilities in the country cannot be stressed too often. City members can understand how we feel when we are continually reading in the Press that this and that and the other extension is being made to city and suburban schools. One frequently reads news items announcing that a particular extension will shortly be carried out.

Mr. Cross: And it is not done before it is required. More should be done.

Mr. THORN: It is not done before the hon. member wants it to be done. I did not want to mention names, but I will say now that the name of the hon. member is the one I generally see mentioned.

Mr. Cross: More should be done in my electorate.

Mr. THORN: There is such a thing as fairness and justice to all.

Mr. Cross: In fairness to my people more should be done in the district.

Mr. THORN: We in the country expect a greater proportion of the Education Vote to be spent in country areas.

Mr. Cross: Whether it is wanted or not?

Mr. THORN: There is no sense in that remark. If the hon. member knew his job he would understand that these facilities are badly wanted in the country.

Mr. Cross: They are, in some places.

Mr. THORN: I know that the hon. member is tied up in one little centre. Let him take a trip to the country where he will see the conditions under which some children are being educated. There is a siding in my electorate between Toodyay and Wooroloo, where, to make a living, numbers of people are cutting sleepers and firewood, and making charcoal. The children of those people have to go to school at Wooroloo. I have asked for a school at the siding on several occasions, and for a driving service, but cannot get either.

Mr. Cross: How many children are affected?

Mr. THORN: Twenty.

Mr. Cross: I have 200 and have nowhere to put them.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am surprised you have not more.

Mr. THORN: The children have to leave the siding by the 7.12 a.m. train from Perth. They have to play about at Wooroloo after school until their train comes through at 5 o'clock or later, and they are met by their

parents at the siding with umbrellas and hurricane lamps, and conducted through the bush to their homes. This matter has been brought under the notice of the Education Department at frequent intervals, and the officials thoroughly appreciate the situation. They know what I have said is correct, but they say there is no money for a school. I could quote many instances of that kind.

Mr. Marshall: So could we all.

Mr. THORN: We ought to do more for the education of our country children. Several requests have been made in this Chamber for marketing legislation. The subject is now being stressed more than ever. We all realise how necessary it is to have the orderly marketing of our primary products. This seems to be the order of the day. In the Old Country marketing legislation is being introduced. Even conservative old England finds it necessary to protect her producers in that way. Unionists have their rewards. Members opposite are continually fighting for better conditions for those they represent, and rightly so. Why should we on this side not fight for the men we represent in the hope of getting orderly marketing for them? As it is they have to market their goods anywhere, there is no understanding between them, and they are, in a sense, cutting each other's throats.

Mr. Marshall: Do you believe that should be a Commonwealth matter?

Mr. THORN: The Commonwealth Acts are perhaps more successful in this direction. Nevertheless, we ourselves could handle some of our industries, such as the egg industry. We talk of the rise in the cost of living and the fixation of prices. We cannot fix prices for eggs and other products of the kind. The moment we try to do so, the market will be flooded with eggs from the Eastern States. I hope there will be a change of Government next March. That is generally expected. One has only to move around the State to find that public opinion is definitely in the direction of a change of Government. When that comes about I feel sure that marketing legislation will be introduced. The farmers are in a serious position. I often wonder how they have the heart to go on. They have only just recovered from the effects of the last depression. They started the present season in good heart. Wheat was then at a good price. They purchased their super supplies and put large areas under crop.

We now find that the bottom has fallen out of the wheat market.

Mr. Cross: It could not have been very stable.

Mr. THORN: To-day wheat is really not worth 2s. sterling per bushel. It is all very discouraging. I am astonished when I hear some members ask why farmers stay on their holdings and continue to grow wheat. The question is a big one. I am afraid if the farmers do leave their properties the outlook for the workers of the State will be poor. Members opposite will find themselves in deep water and will experience great trouble in keeping matters running smoothly.

Mr. Needham: You say there will be a change of Government. We do not, therefore, need to worry about the position.

Mr. THORN: The hon. member must stand up to his responsibilities as a representative of the people, no matter on which side of the House he may be sitting. The Minister for Railways must be concerned about the carriage of wheat, super, etc., over the railway system.

The Minister for Railways: I wish people would not gamble so much with prices.

Mr. THORN: So do I. I wish that prices could be stabilised. They are tinkered with too much. Overseas probably some of the heads of finance get together and depress the market. I think we sometimes receive false reports, and that in many instances those reports are responsible for prices being depressed to a lower figure than they should be. The dried fruits industry suffers in the same way. Prices this year are lower than they have been for several years. Sales are very slow. When the world is talking war, and everything is in a disturbed condition, naturally buyers only purchase from hand-to-mouth. If war comes, prices will probably rise; but when there is uncertainty, buyers are careful to purchase only from hand to mouth. The future of the dried fruits industry does not look too good from the aspect of prices. Before long the Grecian crop will come on the London market, and the effect of that crop always is to tail off the Australian crop in the matter of prices.

With regard to the Heathcote Mental Home, I will not attempt to pass judgment on anybody; but I am glad the Government has announced its intention to appoint a

Royal Commission of inquiry. It is the Government's duty to satisfy the public mind. The most complete novice in the State must realise that with all these disputes and suspensions and reinstatements going on, something must be wrong. I am glad the Government is standing up to its job and instituting an inquiry. In mental homes, where the patients are mentally sick, these under-currents cannot be permitted, because the patients will suffer.

Mr. Hughes: Yet the parties concerned are not going to have a chance to see the reference.

Mr. Wilson: How do you know?

Mr. Hughes: By a letter from the Premier.

Mr. THORN: Now I wish to touch on the five-day week recently granted to the Public Service. I do not know what hon. members think about it, but I regard it as an election bait.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Undoubtedly it is.

Mr. THORN: This Government has been in office for nearly six years, and just as we are about to go to the electors, the Government introduces the five-day week, which could easily have been introduced six years ago. The main point is, how long can we continue with these unbalanced conditions? The member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Styants) mentioned the farmer. The farmer has to work six-and-a-half days a week, and he cannot do his work in any less time. Even on the Sabbath he has to look after the stock. Any man who has been on the land knows that stock must be attended to. On the farm the stock come first, as in the army the horses always come before the men, the reason being that the horse cannot help himself whereas the man can. Why five days a week for the Public Servants? What about the other men, the hard-working men? Surely they are entitled to some consideration. The staff is given a week of five days, but the hard-working men can continue with the five-and-a-half.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The man on the road does not get the five-day week.

Mr. Styants: Many of the men on the roads are working five days.

Mr. THORN: The railway pensioners who have reached the retiring age and have been thrown on the scrap heap are asking for some consideration in the form of superannuation. There is another in-

stance where the staff gets superannuation but the man who absolutely does the work is denied it. I notice that you, Mr. Speaker, granted the five-day week to the staff of this House. The member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson), the member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael), and the Minister for Lands (Hon. M. F. Troy) are all employers of labour. I wonder whether they will practise what they preach? Of course the member for Guildford-Midland knows that he cannot, because his labour is employed on the land. But what about the member for Victoria Park? Is he going to introduce the five-day week for his employees? Never! Here is an instance where the hon. member could prove his sincerity.

Mr. Sleeman: You cannot stop teeth from aching for two days a week.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is a good excuse!

Mr. THORN: We should be sincere about these matters. I observe that the Midland Junction Municipal Council has granted its staff a five-day week. The member for Guildford-Midland is an impressive member, and probably he went to Midland Junction and converted the municipal council. But what about the pick-and-shovel employee of the Midland Junction Municipal Council? He is not given the five-day week which the staff has got. We need to be a little fairer in bringing these changes about. If anyone is entitled to a five-day week, it is the man who swings the pick—not the man who drives the pen.

The Minister for Employment: Ninety per cent. of relief workers in the country are on the five-day week.

Mr. THORN: The Government can afford that, because it is practically paying them nothing. I dare say if they worked three days a week they would earn all that the Government is paying them.

The Minister for Employment: They work the 44-hour week.

Mr. THORN: If we keep on applying unbalanced working conditions, I warn members opposite that the man on the land will come into town. He will not stand it. If it goes on, the outlook for city workers, I fear, is bad.

Mr. Cross: What hours do you think those men should work?

Mr. THORN: If I did tell you, you would not understand me.

Mr. Cross: You are not game to tell us.

Mr. THORN: The hon. member could not understand me.

Mr. Cross: You are not game to tell us what you do think.

Mr. THORN: I would not waste the time of the House. If my memory serves me rightly, the member for Kalgoorlie mentioned the manufacture of jam.

Mr. Styants: No.

Mr. THORN: Probably it was the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall).

Mr. Styants: Have another guess.

Mr. THORN: It was the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman). That hon. member is quite right: we could manufacture jams in this State, and manufacture them successfully, if it were not for pressure from the jam-making combine in Tasmania. That combine has a remarkable grip on jam making. Every time we start that industry, the combine men can knock us off our feet as surely as if it were a game of skittles. As soon as we get a decent jam on the market they come along and say, "Use our jams and we will give you a year's supply on a bill." They have their jam sold before a penny has to be paid for it. That makes things very easy for the seller. Again, they have tremendous supplies of fruit. To keep their growers, they take all the fruit at a price, and what they cannot use they dump into the river. They are satisfied as long as they have the monopoly. They want to keep the growers producing, so as always to have a call on them.

The member for Fremantle also mentioned the State Implement Works. While I am not in favour of State trading, I consider that as those works were established, it is a pity they could not continue to operate. Machinery firms in Western Australia, because of the possibility of a war, have taken the opportunity this year to increase prices all round. For instance, I use a small machine on my property, and the firm I deal with charged £2 extra for it because, apparently, of the shortage of steel.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Because of the increased cost of steel?

Mr. THORN: That was the extra amount charged.

Mr. Sleeman: If the State Implement Works had been operating, you could have got the machinery at a cheaper rate.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They did not sell one machine at a cheaper rate than any other firm.

Mr. Mann: And they sold an inferior article.

Mr. Sleeman: Those works were deliberately closed down and men were thus put out of work.

Mr. Mann: I have a harvester from the State Implement Works—

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: And it won't harvest.

Mr. THORN: At any rate, I still use two implements I bought from the State works.

Mr. Sleeman: And I congratulated you last night.

Mr. THORN: I appreciated that because I know that when the hon. member commends me he means it. I congratulate the member for Beverley (Mr. Mann) on the courage he displayed in dealing with the subject of starting-price betting.

Mr. Hegney: Et tu, Brute!

Mr. THORN: I also commend the courage of other speakers who dealt with that subject. I was impressed by the remarks of the member for Middle Swan (Mr. Hegney), and, irrespective of the interjections of the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall). I believe he was on solid ground in his contentions. I am not foolish enough to think that people will not bet, and I do not wish to deny them that right.

Mr. Sleeman: You have a bet yourself.

Mr. THORN: I am not like the member for Murchison who said he had not had a bet in his life. I hope that satisfactorily answers the interjection. This most undesirable business is increasing. We notice shops opening up here and there, blackboards appearing all over the place and starting price bookmakers operating with impunity. All this has an exceedingly bad moral effect on the rising generation. The present condition of affairs makes it far easier for the young people to make bets, and it is most demoralising.

The Minister for Justice: It has always been easy to place a bet.

Mr. THORN: But it is easier nowadays than ever it was in the past. I am convinced that the evil could be controlled. The member for Beverley was asked how we should deal with the problem. I know one way by which we could deal with it. If a conviction were secured against a person for indulging in this practice, we should confiscate the premises. That would stop the trouble.

Mr. Styants: We do not believe in confiscation.

Mr. THORN: It would be an effective cure for the evil. If we want to tackle the problem adequately, we can do so. It is useless criticising unless we offer a solution, and that is mine. I was once a Customs officer, and as such I had the power of confiscation. If I found someone had done something that was against the law, I exercised that power. Perhaps that is where I got my idea from. I notice that the Government intends to tackle the question, and I hope it will be dealt with properly. When I was in South Australia, irrespective of what other opinions have been expressed in this Chamber, I ascertained that the action in connection with starting price betting had been definitely disastrous to the Butler Government in that State. People whom I visited in Adelaide strongly resented the registration of starting-price betting shops and, in fact, objected to starting-price betting altogether. The members of the Butler Government had their action in that regard to thank for the severe setback they received at the poll. I do not wish to appear contradictory, but I suggest to the Government of this State that if it wishes to retain its occupancy of the Treasury bench after the next general election, great care should be exercised in dealing with this problem. Several members have referred to the work of the Main Roads Department and I desire to endorse their approbation. The department has carried out wonderful work throughout the State, and the people who travel over our roads are greatly appreciative.

Mr. Cross: That reform was introduced by a Labour Government.

Mr. THORN: Well, well!

Mr. Patrick: And where did the money come from?

Mr. THORN: I must make a note of the hon. member's information. I congratulate the Commissioner of Main Roads and also the Government on the progressive policy that has been pursued. Likewise I can bear witness to the appreciation of the country people. It has made transportation a pleasure. Years ago we had to bump along ill-formed roads, but now we do not hear so much of that old tag about "getting out and getting under." We had to do a lot of that years ago, but to-day travelling is much easier and we are appreciative of the fact.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [8.6]: First of all I desire to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on the high position to which you

have been elevated, and whether your term of office be long or short, I am certain that the House will receive from you every fairness and that your decisions will be based on sound judgment. I congratulate the two newcomers—the member for Hannans (Mr. Leahy) and the member for Sussex (Mr. Willmott). Both those gentlemen, I believe, will prove acquisitions to the House and will assist greatly in our deliberations. It is not my intention to inflict a long speech upon members, but there are two matters I desire to bring under the notice of the Government. They are questions I deem worthy of consideration. Everyone will admit that the prosperity of the State depends to the extent of about 90 per cent. upon the production of wealth from the soil. The alarming fall in the price of primary products, principally wheat and wool, calls for serious attention. I am pleased that members who have addressed themselves to the debate have referred to this phase. Those members were drawn not only from this side of the House, but from the Government benches as well. What is the best remedy to provide in order that the farmers may receive a fair price for their products in return for their work, often extending from 10 to 14 hours a day all the year round? What remedy can we provide when we find that those farmers are compelled to pay whatever price the merchants and business people care to charge for machinery and other articles necessary for the production of that wealth, on top of which the men on the land are compelled to sell their output at world parity prices? Will hon. members think for a minute? It costs £2 in paper money to buy a sovereign, and if the price of wheat falls lower, its actual value will be 1s. per bushel. Now, that wheat costs from 3s. 3d. to 3s. 6d. a bushel to grow. I admit that we do not use sovereigns in business in this State; we use paper money. Let anyone put a handful of Australian notes into his pocket, fivers, tens, and fifties, and take them out of the Commonwealth and see how much he will get for them.

Recently the Government saw fit to give the civil servants the five-day week. I understand they make up the time which they would have worked on Saturday by working so many minutes longer each day. In my constituency, about 80 per cent. of the people work not five days, but seven days a week. I wonder what they would say to me if I told them to knock off work on Satur-

day and Sunday; and if they, and the other primary producers of the State, did so, I wonder how many civil servants would be holding their positions. Why should a farmer be compelled to work seven days a week? The concession granted to the civil servants may not be a bait to catch votes, but the average man in the country thinks it is and says so, and I agree with him. The present time was inopportune for the Government to grant that concession.

I ask members to believe me when I say that I hope in the legislation to be introduced this session some measures will be included that will have the effect of keeping the country people on their holdings. Every mail that comes to me from my district contains letters from sons of farmers and businessmen asking me if I can find them a job in the metropolitan area. The position is serious. I sometimes ponder upon what will be the result of this drift into the metropolitan area. Ninety per cent. of the wealth of Western Australia is produced from the soil, not in the metropolitan area. What will the Treasurer do if the farmers are forced to discontinue growing wheat? At the price at which it is being sold to-day, it certainly cannot be grown at a profit. Some critics say that Australia grows too much wheat. As a matter of fact, Australia grows only 5 per cent. of the world's production of wheat. If Western Australia were without the wheat industry, what would become of the revenue of the railways? Other industries depend upon the wheat industry. Superphosphate must be manufactured, and it has to be railed and distributed from one end of the State to the other. I should feel alarmed if there were a serious curtailment of wheat production in this State. What industry could take its place? Some people suggest sheep and wool, but the price of many classes of wool to-day is below the cost of production. I predict serious trouble for the State unless the Commonwealth and all the State Governments combine to pay the farmer for his wheat a price—not too high—which will enable him to continue, if not increase, the production. If some system can be evolved that will achieve this desirable end during the present session, then our time here will not have been spent in vain. At present farmers are topsy-turvy and in a state of unrest, and we should do all we can to assist them and make them contented to remain on their holdings.

The second matter to which I desire to make reference has already been touched upon by the speakers who have preceded me. I refer to native affairs. We have 16,340 aborigines in Western Australia, according to the report laid on the Table. Of that number, 12,000 are full-blooded aborigines, and 4,300 are half and quarter-castes. Now, the Government last year made available to the Department of Native Affairs the sum of £40,000, of which £8,000 was earned from various stations under the control of the Protector of Aborigines. By some coincidence, the £8,000 was, according to the report, received as revenue and paid direct to the Treasury.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It always is.

Mr. STUBBS: Deducting the £8,000 from the £40,000, we have £32,000 as a provision for 16,340 aborigines, or £2 per head per annum. The Protector complains that he is handicapped for want of funds. Whether the Government agrees with me or not, the fact remains that more money will have to be provided for the aborigines in the near future. I do not know much about the method of controlling the natives in the Kimberleys, where the greater number of the full-blooded aborigines live; but there are 4,000 half and quarter-castes who will become a serious problem before very long, unless a different system of control from that at present existing is put into operation. Between York and Beverley, according to a table supplied by the Commissioner, there are 1,500 or 1,600 half-castes and quarter-castes, and some of those young men and women are nearly white. If any member doubts my statement about the increase of these young people between the ages of 15 and 16 years and about their loitering in the streets, let him pay a visit some week-end to my electorate. Probably between 100 and 150 will be seen roaming about Wagin and within two or three miles of the town. Some years ago a property of 8,000 acres existed 20 miles west of Wagin, and a number of aborigines and half-castes did excellent work in improving that and many similar holdings. All the work of clearing, grubbing of poison and fencing in those areas, however, has been completed, and the only employment available to the majority of those young men is at shearing or harvesting time. For seven or eight months of the year they roam around the country and do nothing. Each year most of those men are given ra-

tions. As they are unable to obtain work handy to where they happen to be, they simply loaf, and the longer they loaf the less will they be prepared to work as time goes on, unless they are compelled to do so.

That brings me to criticism I intend to level against the Government, and I do not propose to mince matters. Thirty years ago a settlement for natives and their progeny was established at a place called Carrolup. If any hon. member has not seen Carrolup I wish he could spare a day to inspect it with me. If after doing so he does not reach the same conclusion as I, concerning the inadvisability of re-establishing the Carrolup settlement I will withdraw all I have said in this House against the Government. When Mr. Broun was Colonial Secretary some years ago he paid a visit to Carrolup and promptly closed it, and willy-nilly transferred to Moore River all the natives from the Great Southern that were willing to go. That was a tragedy. The tragedy was not that Carrolup was closed down, but that an attempt was made to persuade aborigines and half-castes who had spent all their lives in Wagin to go to Moore River.

Mr. Sleeman: Who closed down Carrolup?

Mr. STUBBS: As a consequence, 95 per cent. found their way back to Wagin. An army of policemen would have been needed to keep them at Moore River.

Mr. Marshall: They bolted from Moore River.

Mr. STUBBS: Ten thousand acres of land that had been used in connection with the settlement at Carrolup was then thrown open for selection with the exception of 23 acres that surrounded the buildings that had been used to house those unfortunate people. As time went on the land was alienated from the Crown and taken up by settlers. Since the closing of Carrolup the settlers have cleared a large number of acres and as a result the small river that ran through the centre of the property is now more salty than the ocean. The Government has decided to re-establish Carrolup and to that end has resumed between 2,000 and 3,000 acres of land from the settlers who took it up when the land was thrown open for selection 20 years ago. What the Government has paid, I do not know; probably not very much. But this I know: that more than half the buildings have been denuded of everything. Many of the windows have been re-

moved, together with floors, roofs and doors. I admit that the buildings were well and faithfully constructed, mostly of stone, and to put them into habitable order will not cost a great deal.

Time and again I have protested during the last five or six years against the proposal to re-establish Carrolup, and the present Chief Secretary was good enough to say that he would not re-open the settlement until he had seen it for himself. He has not had time to visit the place, but he has given instructions to the Commissioner of Native Affairs to proceed with the plans for re-opening the settlement. My protest is not against the department's intention to ameliorate the condition of the natives in the Great Southern. On the contrary I commend the Government for its intention to do something and not to remain asleep as it has been, and as previous Governments have been, for years past. My contention is that the locality is totally unsuitable, and I challenge anyone to contradict that statement. The Minister was questioned by a deputation I introduced to him a few weeks ago as to what was to be done with the natives when they were returned to this rotten piece of country. The land is of very poor quality.

Mr. Marshall: That is the point.

Mr. STUBBS: I would not call it even third-class country. In its natural state it would not carry a sheep to 20 acres.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Why should the Government buy it back when plenty of Crown land is available?

Mr. STUBBS: Some of it has been brought under subjection and subterranean clover has been established in patches. If the Government attempts to move aborigines and their progeny from places like Beverley and Narrogin and York to this particular spot, the attempt will fail, because the natives will go grudgingly. When they go they will take their dogs; but there is no hunting in that district. Twenty or 30 years ago kangaroos were numerous, but it is not now possible to see a kangaroo in a whole day's walk. Aborigines and their progeny will always have their dogs. The Commissioner for Native Affairs, in reply to a query I put to him, "What will the settlers who are left on this old Carrolup estate do about the dogs?" answered, "If the dogs do any injury to the sheep, they will be destroyed." One might as well try to stop the tide from coming in

as try to prevent any colony of aborigines from keeping dogs. The natives will always have dogs. In my belief the Government will be mulet in damages if these dogs destroy the sheep. Native men and women and their young folk will not stop long in any one place. They have the wanderlust ingrained in their system. Without a number of police, which would be a costly provision, no attempt to colonise a number of natives in one centre could ever be successful. Instead of public money being squandered at Carrolup, in the endeavour to ameliorate the condition of these unfortunate people, it would be better if the Government established small holdings of 200 or 300 acres—many such holdings are to be found within a mile or two of the towns in the Great Southern—where they could be settled. Far better is it to do this than to endeavour to induce them to live in a place like Carrolup, far removed from the environments to which they have been accustomed all their lives. I hope the Government will accept this appeal in the spirit in which it is made. I do not think it is too late to reconsider the site. It is only concerning the site that I have any quarrel with the Government. If the money is expended in the right direction, in the establishment of schools, and a system whereby the young people in the adolescent stage may be taught some useful employment, they will in after years be a benefit to themselves as well as to the State.

I am sorry the Minister for Health is not present, because I wish to refer to the scarcity of medical men and nurses in agricultural districts. In one town in my electorate the people have offered as much as £800 a year for the services of a doctor, but cannot get one. Medical men prefer to practise in the metropolitan area. When the chairman of the road board complained to me about the situation, and asked me to bring the matter up in Parliament, I said to him, "Why do you not advertise in the Eastern States?" He replied, "We have spent pounds in advertising but have not received a single application."

Mr. Patrick: If he advertised in Austria he might get some applications.

Mr. STUBBS: It is a serious matter that medical men should be flocking to the metropolitan area. There must be a great deal of money in the profession. I hope the Minister for Health will look into this matter. One part of my electorate is 80 miles from

the nearest doctor. I have been endeavouring to secure a nurse for the settlers, who, in turn, would provide the necessary building, but apparently £50 a year is all the Government can find. Nurses cannot be engaged under about £4 a week. They, too, prefer to practise in the metropolitan area. My grievance is that too many people are living within 25 miles of Parliament House. Nearly half the population of the State is centred in a few towns. The situation is becoming very serious. The women in the outer areas represent the backbone of the State. Most members have had the same experience that I have had when travelling about, and have seen the conditions under which many people exist. Numbers of women are so dissatisfied that they are urging their sons and daughters to leave their farms, and endeavour to find employment in Perth. There is no inducement to stay where they are, and they are endeavouring to persuade their husbands to sell out. The Government is not fully seized of the importance of keeping men on the land unless it informs the House of its intention in respect to the near future. We want to know that the producers of wealth from the soil are going to have a fair spin for the hard work they have done and for all the years they have spent in the industry. The position is so serious that I am compelled to call the attention of the House to it. Unless we, individually and collectively, recognise the responsibilities we owe to these producers, and can give them some assurance that they will receive just treatment for the work they have done, the State will receive a serious setback. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to accept my assurance that anything I and my colleagues can do to assist in bringing about stability in the agricultural industry, will surely be done. Unless we do that, we shall be sorely tried at the next elections, and will deserve to be severely criticised.

MR. WARNER (Mt. Marshall) [8.38]: I desire to associate myself with other members who have congratulated you, Mr. Speaker, on your accession to the high office you now hold. We all know how capable you are of upholding the dignity of the position, and are satisfied that at all times you will be strictly impartial. I had not intended to speak on this debate, but, seeing that practically every member has done so, it is well that I should refer to one or two matters. The needs of the primary pro-

ducers are well known to the House. One of them is water supplies. In that respect this Government has been very kind indeed to my district. My district has had quite a lot given to it by the present Government, and every request I have submitted has received reasonable consideration. Whenever money was available, my requests were granted. I suggest to the Minister for Water Supplies that he consider the extension of the Barbalin scheme into the north-eastern wheat belt. The Agricultural Bank's decision regarding settlers in that area is not yet known, but the district is not to be abandoned. It is to be converted into a mixed farming area, and to that end it must have a reasonable water supply. Every hon. member knows that money wisely spent on water supplies gives permanent assets.

Turning to the Railway Department, the Diesel car has proved a splendid unit. A Diesel car is running on one of the three looplines in my district. I hope the Minister will see his way, during this session, to try out, if only for one or two weeks, a Diesel car on the Lake Brown-Bullfinch line. I am perfectly sure that a Diesel car running there would prove profitable and would give far better service than the ordinary slow mixed train.

As regards education, I find it difficult to understand the Government's attitude in applying so small a proportion of the annual vote to country schools and so large a proportion to schools in the metropolitan area. Many of the country schools are not suited for their purpose owing to health and other reasons. The furniture in them should have been scrapped many years ago. In fact, furniture discarded by schools in the metropolitan area was sent to new schools in country districts. I am occasionally surprised at the energy of metropolitan members in demanding, as they are entitled to demand, shelter sheds and playgrounds and additions for schools in their electorates. Again, they demand the scrapping of furniture which is more modern than the furniture in some country schools. The member for a country district has to put up a great fight to get an addition to a school in his electorate, to get a shelter shed for the use of the children in summer, or to have the school warmed in winter. Many places in the country have a hard struggle to get a school at all. Undoubtedly much

of the furniture in country schools needs replacing. I trust the Government will allot a larger proportion of the Education Vote to country schools this year, even if funds are not available for the building of new schools. True, I cannot complain about the proportion given to my electorate. I understand that only ten country schools were refurnished last year, and two of them were in my district. However, complaints are being received from so many places that I do sincerely trust the Government will make larger amounts available this year.

I turn now to the subject of hospitals. I desire to know the reason why the metropolitan area is so greatly favoured, as against country districts, in respect of grants for hospitals. No man in this House, and very few outside it, but will admit that sick people should receive attention first. We all have a soft spot for a person in ill-health. What I fail to understand, however, is the rush for erecting a large hospital in the metropolitan area at this time, though I believe the institution is needed and am glad that it is to be provided. Why should the people of the metropolitan area expect the Government to find the whole of the money required for that hospital, when country people needing a hospital are invariably called upon to find one-half of the amount required? I do not overlook the fact that the Lotteries Commission plays a great part in the providing of funds for hospital accommodation. However, the people in the metropolitan area appear to think that they should get a hospital without doing anything at all themselves. In farming districts not much money can be raised for any purpose whatever. It takes all the people can get hold of to enable them to live, and in many instances they do not live well. Yet whenever they apply for a grant towards the building of a hospital, they are called upon to find a quota. The Country Women's Association and the Women's Auxiliary of the Returned Soldiers' League form committees, and fight, and so raise the quota. Seeing that this is the accepted method in country districts, the women think it is only right; and they get down to business and raise the funds required. But I do not see why that should be. It is not right to ask country residents to raise quotas while the people in the metropolitan area, who can pay more than the country people, are not required to raise quotas.

Mr. Marshall: The Perth Hospital is a community hospital. People go into it from all parts of the country.

Mr. WARNER: I say definitely, no. In my district there are five hospitals and three bush nursing homes, and many of the patients do not belong to the district at all and have never paid anything towards the cost or upkeep of these institutions. I shall point out to the hon. member that we also experience a proportion of patients who cannot pay, and in our district, too, the people have to pay their proportion of the hospital tax out of every £1 they earn.

Mr. Marshall: We pay that too, and more than you pay.

Mr. WARNER: I heard the Minister for Health point out the other night that many people who could afford to pay for their hospital treatment did not do so. We have some such people in our district. I have no quarrel with the department that attempts to force people to pay when it is known they are in a position to do so. We have heard it said that there are some people who cannot afford to pay but have been almost forced to do so. I have not yet heard of any instance of distress warrants being issued against such people, or of any harsh action of that description being taken against them. On the other hand, in conversation with the late Mr. Munsie, when he was Minister for Health, I learnt of the amounts that ought to have been paid but had not been paid. Mr. Munsie pointed out to me how much more could have been done for country hospitals if those amounts had been forthcoming. I never knew that gentleman to fail to give the full facts when he was asked for them. While on that subject, I would like to support the remarks of the Premier, when he referred, in the opening stages of the session, to the services of his late colleague. To my mind, Mr. Munsie was beloved for his kindness and his gentlemanly manner, particularly when he came in contact with those who were sick and those who were looking after the sick. He was in my district on two occasions to open hospitals, and by the manner in which he addressed the people at those gatherings, he made friends of them all. His successor will have a hard task to live up to the standard set by Mr. Munsie, but I believe that members opposite have selected the right man for the position. There are five hospitals

in my electorate, and the present Minister, although he has not been in charge of his department for very long, has already visited four of them. He is making himself acquainted with the requirements of the institutions under his control. I believe that in the Hon. A. H. Panton we have a sympathetic Minister in charge of our hospitals. I shall not detain the House much longer, but I should like to dwell a little on the conditions that obtain in my electorate. As members are aware, I have usually found it necessary to deal with that subject. On this occasion I thought I would be able to speak in a more optimistic tone than is possible at the present stage. Nevertheless, the indications are that the settlers to-day have a better chance than they had during the past six years. It needs only following rains to secure for them their first harvest in three years. I know every member of this House will join with me in expressing the hope that the farmers in the north-eastern part of my electorate will have a good season. I have had doleful tales to tell in the past, but members have tolerated my utterances because they knew I was presenting facts. First the settlers experienced three years during which low prices operated, and then followed three years of drought. We all know that a drought brings in its train diseases and vermin. Grasshoppers bring turkeys, and I do not know whether the cause arises from the good roads that have been constructed or what it is, but the turkeys have disappeared.

Mr. Marshall: People have shot them.

Mr. WARNER: I do not think that is the explanation.

The Premier: Don't you think the foxes got them?

Mr. WARNER: I do not think so. However, if the present rains continue in my district and we have following rains, I will be prepared to join with other members in any jocularly they may indulge in. I think the House will agree with me that the settlers in my electorate have suffered greatly during those six years, and are deserving of success this season. Most of the settlers in the north-east are ex-miners who settled on holdings on which they have remained ever since. They encountered bad times, and their credit was stopped. Assistance from the Agricultural Bank terminated, and they have carried on ever since without it. If they can continue

now and can hold on through next year, I know members will join with me in wishing them all success and in paying a tribute to them for having surmounted their troubles. The settlers there did their bit during the war, and while they have been on the land, experienced, in addition to the difficulties I have outlined, the misery of seeing their wives and children without adequate supplies of food and clothing. Their wives stood by and helped them, and in many instances they have reared families. Now, when the lads have grown to a stage when they could be of assistance, they have had to drift away to seek other avenues of employment because the farms do not return enough to support them all. These men deserve the commendation of the community for the manner in which they have stuck to their work, and I feel sure that their children will prove dinkum diggers, because they come from great stock. There is much else that I could say, but others desire to speak. I shall have further opportunities to address the House on other topics to which I desire to draw attention. I support the motion.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough) [8.58]: I desire to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your elevation to your high office, but those congratulations are tinged with a certain amount of regret that you are no longer sitting on the cross-benches, where, in my opinion, you exerted an almost educative influence, not only on your own side of the House but on certain members of the Opposition. You had specialised particularly on marketing and co-operation, two subjects on which a great amount of education is desirable. In fact, it has always been a wonder to me that regarding co-operation in particular, I have heard adverse criticism coming from the Government side of the House. I always considered that the co-operative movement, which originated as a working man's movement and, in the Old Country, is still such, should receive the full support of any section calling itself a Labour Party. I also desire to extend my felicitations to the two new members. I feel certain that with their general knowledge and specialised acquaintance with their own localities they will add to the collective wisdom of this House. Anyone reading the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, even if he were not possessed of the qualifications of a Sherlock Holmes, would come to the conclusion that an election was

not far distant. I wish to take the somewhat unusual course of telling a story to illustrate my point. At a certain seaside town, a clergyman was sitting at the end of the pier with a beautiful daughter on each side of him. A man wandered along and thought they were fishing. He looked at the clergyman and asked, "Well, old man, how goes the fishing?" The clergyman replied in a dignified manner, "Sir, I am a fisher of men." "Well, then," said the man, "you have got the right bait." The point I wish to make is that evidently the Government has the hook well baited for the coming elections. I admit that at previous elections the Labour Party had some very fine slogans, and among them, "Keep Collier Premier."

Mr. Sleeman: "Work for all!"

Mr. PATRICK: That was a very good slogan, too. Admittedly, the Collier slogan was a good one, because there is no doubt that the member for Boulder was one of the outstanding politicians of his time. The pilot having been dropped, the necessity arises for some substitute. The party is evidently getting into difficult water, and so we have this well-baited hook in an endeavour to catch the wily elector.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It will deceive the people.

Mr. PATRICK: I am not so sure. The bait is too obvious.

Mr. Sleeman: We will get another slogan.

Mr. PATRICK: I hope, with the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward), that we shall not have a repetition of what we had at the end of last session, when legislation was rushed through without members having the opportunity to study it. We can see one result of such rush legislation in the Bread Act. One gathers from correspondence that has been taking place in the daily Press that two rather important questions were not considered when the Bill was under discussion, namely, (1) the consumers, and (2) the officers whose duty it is to police the Act on behalf of the consumers. The position is now that we are getting a rather short-weight loaf, but we are told that our compensation is that we are getting better baked bread. I consider I am as competent to judge the quality of bread as anyone, and I cannot perceive any difference between the quality of the bread

we are now getting and the quality of the bread we got before the Aet was passed.

The Premier: Are we getting short-weight bread?

Mr. PATRICK: If the hon. member will read the report of one of the Fremantle inspectors, he will find that the inspector said he had weighed many loaves and found shortages of weight ranging up to a number of ounces.

Hon. C. G. Latham: As a matter of fact, there is no authority to-day to weigh bread.

Mr. PATRICK: The Premier seems to me to have dropped the role of restraint that he assumed last year, and developed what might be called the Micawber touch. If one looks back at last year's transactions, I admit there is ground for his optimism, but we have to look to the future. The Premier said that the Leader of the Opposition was very pessimistic.

The Premier: No. I said he took a doleful view.

Mr. PATRICK: The view of the Leader of the Opposition is only the view of the Leader of the Federal Opposition, who said that, in his opinion, regression is inevitable. I was pleased the other day to read the reference made by the Leader of the Federal Opposition to the good work done by the British Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain. I say so, because about this time last year I attended a public meeting held in Perth which was addressed by some University professors. In referring to Mr. Chamberlain, one of them used the expression "senility," and said, "It is all right to let Mr. Chamberlain carry out his policy, because he is an old man, and by the time the British Empire collapses in ruins, he will be dead, and so the question will be of no further interest to him." I think it a pity that the Australian Broadcasting Commission allows what I might term some of the solemn asses to broadcast on international affairs. I think the Commission might get men with more general knowledge; the Commission could find them. There are journalists—I will not mention their names—who are better qualified for the work than are men with the narrow university viewpoint. But all this is by the way. I agree with Mr. Curtin, the Leader of the Federal Opposition, that a very serious position lies ahead of Australia so far as our export industries are concerned. Take one

item alone, wool. Last year the export value of our wool dropped from £60,000,000 to £42,000,000. That is a big decline—£18,000,000.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It will probably drop further.

Mr. PATRICK: As regards wheat, this year the United States Government estimates that the world aggregate will be 4,200,000,000 bushels, and the total world supply, with the carry-over, will be 4,850,000,000 bushels. This, I may say, will be the largest crop in history. The United States' estimate of its own crop is 967,000,000 bushels, compared with the last five years' average of 641,000,000 bushels. Members will see, therefore, how very serious is the position of the wheat industry. Some action must be taken to ensure that the Australian wheat-grower gets a fair price for his product.

The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) mentioned the referendum recently taken by the Commonwealth. Politically, I think there is much humbug in connection with referendums. I can quite understand the position taken up by the member for Nedlands, but I cannot understand the position taken up by members on the Government benches. They opposed the referendum because they considered it went too far. Their colleagues in the Federal sphere opposed it because they considered it did not go far enough, and in that opposition they were logical, as on two previous occasions a referendum was taken to give the Commonwealth power over the whole of the trade and commerce of Australia without any limitation whatever. On the first occasion when that question was put to the people of Australia, the State of Western Australia—the so-called secession State—was the only State that voted for it. On the second occasion the referendum was defeated by a narrow majority in Australia as a whole, but carried in three States, namely, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. To indicate the competition that exists in the world's market for wheat, and how one country is trying to beat down another, I will give some quotations that are only a day or two old. Western Australian wheat in London a week or two ago was 28s. 9d. a quarter; to-day it is quoted at 27s. 3d. Canada No. 3 Northern was quoted at 32s. 6d. a week ago; to-day it is 27s. 9d. Canada's price has been reduced to practically the same as ours.

United States wheat was quoted at 25s. 9d. and is now 25s. 6d. Russia, which is doing the biggest damage of all, was quoted at 24s. 6d. and is selling to-day at 24s. That is 3s. 3d. a quarter less than the price quoted for Western Australian wheat. Various schemes have been propounded to overcome the difficulty. A Premier's conference is being held and a conference of growers' representatives is also taking place at which the whole wheat position is under consideration. At that conference there will be a considerable conflict of opinion. Our Minister for Lands, for instance, considers the Federal Government should adopt the simplest method, which is the imposition of an excise tax on flour such as we had previously; and he says that the only factor preventing that scheme being adopted is a political one. I agree with him that that is the simplest method and that the obstacle to its adoption is political. But it is all very well for the Minister for Lands to recommend this system, because he knows that the whole of his own party in the Federal Parliament is opposed to it and is trying to throw the responsibility on what might be termed the city party or the Nationalists, who are opposing the scheme for the same reason as that of the Labour Party. The impression I gained in the Eastern States, after having read leading articles in the daily papers, was that the Eastern States unanimously considered that the Commonwealth scheme having been ruled out by the referendum, the obligation was now thrown on the States to provide a home-consumption price. The onus has been thrown on the States. Western Australia is not likely to receive a great deal of sympathy from the Eastern States. I was interested to read leading articles in the different papers about Yampi Sound iron ore. Unanimously they were against this State. I talked to various politicians on both sides and they were all opposed to Western Australia on this question. I can easily understand why the Leader of the Opposition in the Federal House took no steps to move the adjournment of the House over the Yampi Sound question, and why none of the National Party members took such steps. It was because the men belonging to their parties outside of Western Australia were almost unanimously opposed to Western Australia. However, it is essential that the Western Australian Government should make some move in the matter of a

home-consumption price for wheat because that is absolutely vital to our economy. Last year wheat was the factor most responsible for the improvement in the railway finances. The freight on wheat amounted to £495,174 as against £314,465 in the previous year. Out of a total increased revenue in the Railway Department of £228,000, no less than £184,000 was derived from the carriage of wheat.

One of the dangers I foresee is that the larger States like New South Wales will take independent action. That has been done regularly in individual States in America that are working under practically the same Constitution as ours. There are many methods by which they evade the Constitution and fix their own price, and prevent goods coming in from other States, but those methods would be of no use in Western Australia. To show what can be done by a larger State, I point out that this year New South Wales will retain 21,500,000 bushels of wheat for feed and seed. Victoria will retain 15,000,000 bushels, South Australia 7,000,000 bushels, Western Australia 6,000,000 bushels (out of a total of 36,000,000), and Queensland, Tasmania and the Federal Territory, 5,177,000 bushels. Let me now give members an idea of how the flour tax operates. The tax was imposed last in 1935-36. In that year Western Australia paid only £80,000 out of a total of £1,145,000. The amount this State actually paid in flour tax was infinitesimal compared with the tremendous benefits we derived from the total money raised by the tax. The farmer cannot continue to buy as he is doing, on a protectionist basis, and sell his produce on a free-trade basis. Over the last 20 years there has been a tide of rising costs and falling prices. Either Australian costs must come down, which seems difficult to achieve, or prices must go up. The National Party considers that this question requires investigation. I beg to differ from the National Party because, while we are investigating the problem no fewer than 25 different countries in the world have fixed a minimum price of wheat for home consumption, and any of those countries that have a surplus throw it on to the world market at bargain prices, and the Australian consumer appears to think that those prices are the prices at which he should get wheat for local consumption.

The Minister for Railways: Is the minimum price the maximum in any of those countries?

Mr. PATRICK: I could not say. In New Zealand, which is under Labour control, the price has been fixed as high as 7s. a bushel, and I do not think the price of bread is any higher there on that account than it is in Western Australia. A drop in the farmer's purchasing power will react on the whole community. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) had something to say on this matter last night. He seemed to think the farmer might obtain a very large crop of wheat and although that might affect him it would not affect the rest of the community. But consider our record crop of 53,000,000 bushels in 1930. That was sold for something like 1s. 8d. a bushel. Did not that react on the whole community?

Mr. Tonkin: That is exactly what I said.

Mr. PATRICK: Was that not the position in every other country in the world where the prices of primary products collapsed? Did not President Roosevelt say that the biggest cause of the collapse was that the farmers had lost their purchasing power? Let me give an instance. In 1930, the year in which the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) went out of office, he budgeted for a surplus of £105,000. In the succeeding year, in which the Mitchell-Latham Government was in office, the collapse of purchasing power changed that surplus to a deficit of £518,000. The revenue was £742,000 less than Mr. Collier's estimate. The tremendous effect on the revenue of the State of a collapse in prices will therefore be observed. Such collapses also affect Federal revenue. If one considers the reduction in the export of wool last year and the tremendous reduction in the price of wheat, one realises that those things are bound to have a tremendous effect on importations into this country. One of the main sources of Federal revenue is the receipts from Customs collected through the tariff. Last year this amounted to about £30,000,000. If our exports are reduced enormously owing to a fall in prices, there will be a big reduction in Customs revenue through reduced imports. The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) made a rather absurd statement. He said that farmers need not worry about the tariff as it had no effect on their industry. It would not matter if a duty of 10s. a bushel was put upon wheat, as they would not be

affected. Of course, such a duty would not affect the farmers, but the tariff itself has an enormous effect in raising costs against the primary industries of Australia. I remember that the first binder I purchased was landed on the farm for £38. To-day a similar machine costs about £100. We have sent out many wheat farmers into dry areas where there are no water supplies. They were unable to use horses, and had to depend upon tractors, motor trucks, etc. We know the extent to which the price of trucks and motor vehicles has been increased as a result of the tariff. It may be said that a motor truck in Australia costs at least three times as much as it does in the country of origin. It is nonsense to say that the tariff has no effect upon our primary industries. The trouble is that against the rising costs there has been a collapse in the price of primary products. The high costs remain, and there is no method by which they can be brought down. The member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Styants) and the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) said it was not fair to impose a flour tax or raise the price of wheat as that would raise the price of bread for a particular section of the community, which would suffer in a way that would not be so noticeable with other sections of the community. I question whether a fair price for wheat would increase the price of bread. It would seem to have very little effect on the price of bread in Australia.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: In Western Australia.

Mr. PATRICK: In England during the war wheat was being imported at a cost of 11s. or 12s. a bushel, but the highest price bread touched was 9½d. per 4lb. loaf. In Australia where we had much cheaper wheat to dispose of, the lowest price bread was sold at was 7d. per 2lb. loaf. I have here some interesting figures prepared by the State Government Statistician, and I presume they are correct. I have the price of wheat per bushel, of flour, bran, pollard and bread from 1910 to 1937. I will quote some of the figures. In 1910 wheat was being sold at 4s. 0½d. per bushel, flour at £8 19s. 6d. per ton, bran £5 19s. 10d., pollard £5 19s. 4d., and bread at 3½d. per loaf. In 1920 the price of wheat was 7s. 2d. a bushel, flour £17 0s. 8d., bran £9 6s. 8d., pollard £9 6s. 8d., and bread 5½d. In 1921 wheat was sold at 7s. 4d. a

bushel, flour £19 17s. 8d., bran and pollard £10 a ton, and bread at 6d. In 1929, when wheat was 5s. 0¾d. a bushel the price of flour was £13 3s. 11d., and of bread 5¾d. In 1931 when wheat was at 2s. 3½d. per bushel f.o.b., flour was at £8 0s. 2d., bran at £5 0s. 4d., pollard at £5 4s. 11d., and bread at 4½d. In 1932 when wheat was sold at 3s. 1½d. a bushel bread was sold at 4d. The period 1934 to 1936 was that when the Commonwealth flour tax of £2 12s. 6d. per ton was in operation. In 1934 wheat was sold at 2s. 11¼d. per bushel and bread at 5d. a loaf. In 1935 wheat was sold at 3s. 2½d. per bushel and bread at 5¼d. a loaf; and in 1936 the price of wheat was 3s. 11¾d. per bushel and bread was 5¼d. per loaf. Even with the flour tax of £2 12s. 6d. per ton bread was still cheaper than it is to-day. Last year wheat was sold at 5s. 6¼d., flour at £14 3s. 8d., bran at £6 15s., pollard at £6 17s. 2d., and bread at 6d. The price of wheat, therefore, had very little effect on the price of bread. I did not hear any complaints about the price of bread in this State from the other side of the House last year when wheat averaged throughout the year something like 5s. 6d. a bushel f.o.b. We are not asking for anything like such a price as 5s. 6d. per bushel for wheat for home consumption. I have some other figures that are made up on the basis of the price of wheat on 2nd August of this year. At 4d. per bushel sidings the price of wheat on that date was 2s. 10d. a bushel. The price of flour (cash) was £11 10s., bran £7, and pollard £7 5s. The farmers sold 2,000 lbs. of wheat valued at £4 15s.; and freight at 4d. a bushel and handling charges at 3d. came to 19s. From that 2,000 lbs. of wheat came 60 per cent. of flour valued at £6 12s., and 40 per cent. of bran and pollard valued at £2 15s., a total of £9 7s. The wheat-grower received £4 15s. for his 2,000 lbs., the railway freights and handling charges came to 19s., and the miller's charge for gristing came to £3 13s. Taking the price of bread at 5d. a loaf—evidently a special cash price—the baker from this 2,000 lbs. of wheat was able to make 1,350 2lb. loaves and sell them for £28 2s. 6d. For that the baker actually paid £11 10s., that is the cost of the flour. He received as his share £16 12s. 6d. The wheat, therefore, was worth £4 15s. to the grower, the railway and handling charges came to 19s., the miller received £3 13s., and the baker £16 12s.

6d. If members will work this out at 5d. a loaf they will find that if the wheat-grower had delivered that 2,000 lbs. of wheat to the miller absolutely free of charge, the price of bread would still have been 4d. a loaf. They will then see what little effect the price of wheat has had on the price of bread. There are other methods by which the price of bread can be brought down in the metropolitan area. In respect to milk, Melbourne has adopted the zone system. Six or seven milkmen would not be found delivering milk in one street; all would be allotted a different zone. If something of this nature were done in regard to bread, a fair reduction could be made in the price. A select committee of some years ago, of which I was a member, had it in evidence that the cost of delivering bread in Perth was 1½d. per loaf. That is just about double the value of the wheat in the loaf. As I said before, when the Minister for Lands was speaking about the great amounts that had been written off the indebtedness of Western Australian farmers, if we did not do something to put the price of wheat in the same position as it had been, we would in a few years revert to the same debt basis on which we had been writing down. Admittedly we are living in a mad world. Both Italy and Germany want wheat. They could do with millions of bushels of wheat, but under the policy they have adopted they will not allow wheat to enter their country. Australia is the greatest producer of high-class wool in the world, and yet there is a proposal to put a high bonus on cotton, to build it up into another industry similar to the sugar industry of Queensland. Meanwhile the United States has millions of bales of cotton on hand with which the Government does not know what to do. Millions of bales were purchased by the United States Government last year, and it is still holding them because there is no market for them.

Getting on to another subject, last session the Minister for Lands ridiculed the idea of basing revaluation of farming properties on prices and profits. While I was in Victoria a report came out from what is known as the Closer Settlement Board, and all the newspapers there were acclaiming the magnificent work done by that board. Last year the board based its valuations on the 20-years average prices of primary products. The averages adopted for wheat and wool

were—wheat 3s. 8d. per bushel, wool 1s. per lb. I may mention that in the other Australian States wheat is taken on the f.o.b. price. Western Australia is the only State that takes wheat on the basis of 4d. railway freight, and takes butter at 1s. 2d. per lb. The readjustments in Victoria reduced the settlers' payments to the State during the last five years from £8,716,000 to £4,475,000. Thus the annual payments made by the settlers to the State were written down by practically 50 per cent. When the board took over in 1932, £12,000,000 had already been written off; and the whole loss is estimated at no less than £33,000,000.

It is, of course, one of the penalties of pushing out land settlement too rapidly. That has been the experience not only of Victoria and Western Australia but of all new countries. When Professor Lowrie was Director of Agriculture here, he warned the then Government of the danger of pushing out land settlement too rapidly, especially on to the eastern fringe of settlement, into the doubtful rainfall areas. A Royal Commission of which I was a member found recently that not only had farmers been pushed out—in some parts of my own electorate too, I may say—into doubtful rainfall country, but also into very poor quality of land. There is no doubt that as the result of re-classification and revaluation severe writing-down will have to take place in relation to many of these properties.

The subject of education has been mentioned by several members—for instance, the member for Forrest (Miss Holman). The need for improvements in the education system in country districts has been stressed. While there was a little criticism from some metropolitan members, I was pleased to learn that a high school was at last to be established in Geraldton. Geraldton serves a huge territory, and should have had a high school years ago. While we have what is called a system of free secondary education and free University education, it is not free education for the country child. A metropolitan child living in its parents' home can attend a secondary school or the University at very little cost; but the country children have to be boarded out, and, as the member for Forrest mentioned, that means an expenditure of 22s. 6d. to 25s. per week.

I am glad also that the Government has decided to adopt something that I have been

advocating for the last three or four years—the collection of income tax at the source. From the experience of New South Wales I feel sure that we shall catch a lot of income tax which has previously been evaded, although probably we shall lose a considerable amount—an amount that the extra income caught will largely make up for. We are going to lose revenue because the financial emergency tax is at present on the gross income, no exemptions being allowed, while, on the other hand, there are considerable exemptions in connection with income tax. Again, under the present income tax the exemption of single men starts at £100. I do not know whether under the reconstructed method the Government intends to depart from that principle. My own view is that while the State contributes so much to the cost of social services, there is an overwhelming argument in favour of everyone paying something, no matter how little, towards the cost of government here.

Mr. Cross: Even a washerwoman?

Mr. PATRICK: Everyone should pay a little. The goldmining industry is undoubtedly one of Western Australia's main industries, although in the economy of Australia it does not bulk so large. For instance, last year Australia exported £157,000,000 in Australian currency, and the value of the whole of the gold exported was only £11,000,000. But in the economy of Western Australia goldmining is undoubtedly a big factor. The Premier seemed to think that one of the big factors in the industry itself was the help granted by his Government. That help represents a factor, but the main factor in the prosperity of our goldmining industry is without doubt the high price of gold. In this House we passed unanimously a Bill for the construction of a railway to the Big Bell mine; but there would not have been any Big Bell mine if gold had not reached its present price. Indeed, many of the big mines in this State could not carry on with gold at a sterling price of £7 per ounce. They depend absolutely on the extra 35s. per ounce which they gain by way of exchange. Goldmining is a very bright spot, as the member for Hannans (Mr. Leahy) said; but it is not altogether as bright as he would indicate. For instance, the "London Economist" recently commented on the disappointing results of Western Australian goldmining companies. It said—

Shareholders have experienced every sort of rebuff. Excesses on the part of profes-

sional operators, combined with thoroughly bad mining results, have so depressed values that confidence will not quickly be restored.

The Premier: A million pounds was paid in dividends last year.

Mr. PATRICK: Yes, but the Premier will admit that there has been very little new capital coming into the goldmining industry of Western Australia, and that there is little prospect of obtaining additional capital from London. I referred to this question a year or two ago, pointing out that certain classes of promoters of mining companies were damaging the industry. For instance, one notorious promoter told the British public that the investment of British capital for the mass production of gold—that is a good term, “mass production”—was in every way warranted, as it presented every reasonable guarantee of large profits combined with financial security. The results of that gentleman’s promotions up to date are, of course, the theme of the article in the “London Economist.” This promoter raised millions, but up to date the only person who has benefited is himself. We had, of course, huge flotations; and, as I pointed out at the time, there were two or three gold mines—say, the Yellowdine or the Comet—which, if they had been promoted as local companies, would have made very profitable small companies and would have returned good dividends. But what is the position? One of those big firms, the Anglo-Australian company, has shares in the Yellowdine company and the Comet company. To show how that works out, in those two concerns there are no fewer than 6,000,000 shares in each, making 12,000,000 shares in all. The other company I mentioned has 2,000,000 shares. If it is decided to distribute the profits made by the Yellowdine and Comet companies, members will see how much the British investors will get out of this mass production of gold. Taking the long view of it, this type of promoter has been a curse to goldmining in this State.

Mr. Marshall: Unfortunately encouragement has been extended to that type of promoter.

Mr. PATRICK: In the particular instance I have referred to, not only does the promoter secure a rake-off in large blocks of shares as well as cash, but he is able to get practical control of the company. A person holding a few shares never bothers to record his vote at company meetings, so that the

man with a big block of shares is actually in control. To-day the position is that that individual has a grip, like the “Old Man of the Sea” in “Sinbad the Sailor,” on the goldmining industry of Western Australia. There is another phase of interest. I do not know whether it is regarded as mining, but at any rate it represents a big gamble. I refer to the proposal to assist in the finding of oil in this State. There is no doubt that it is a gamble. At a picture show a week or two ago, I saw screened a picture of a bore being pulled up. Presumably the site was in an oil basin because there were scores of derricks to be seen. The bore was being pulled up from a depth of 15,000 ft., and still the promoters had not struck oil. That goes to show what a tremendous gamble it is. Nevertheless, the proposal is worth while. We can afford to take the risk, because if we do discover oil in this State it will be more valuable to us than the goldmining industry. Although the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) may not like it, such a discovery would be a wonderful check on what can be termed the coal monopoly, and remove an objection so often voiced by the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) to the use of imported oil in Western Australia.

With regard to the proposed establishment of a bureau of industry and economic research, I would like, with other members, to see an expansion of secondary industries in this State, but I realise that there are difficulties in the way. I think the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) referred to the institution of a 40-hour week, and said Western Australia should adopt that principle. In Queensland where a Labour Government is in absolute power, the Premier, Mr. Forgan Smith, refused to institute that system until it was adopted throughout Australia, because otherwise, he said, it would place his State at a considerable disadvantage. The same argument applies to the basic wage in Western Australia as compared with those operating in other States. Personally, I think there should be Australia-wide basic wage and standard hours. It has been suggested, and I think the suggestion admirable, that this could be determined by a Commonwealth arbitration judge, and an arbitration judge from each State, sitting together as a court, to recommend the basic wage and standard hours to be fixed, and that legislation should be introduced to make them apply to all Federal

and State awards. At the present time it seems to me that it will be very difficult to increase the number of factory employees in this State, unless we adopt the method proposed by the Minister for Employment a year or two ago when he suggested constituting every single person a factory. Such a process would for statistical purposes, add considerably to the number of employees. Certainly no sane man and no large manufacturer, after examining the conditions operating in the various States, would choose Western Australia in which to start manufacturing. It may be of interest to know that the late Mr. McCallum, who was Minister for Works in the Collier Government, when introducing the Industrial Arbitration Bill in 1924, had this aspect of the question in mind. To quote his own words, he advocated "supreme Commonwealth jurisdiction with subsidiary State courts, leaving the State courts to declare that, owing to interstate competition in industry, a Federal award was desirable." Therefore, in slightly different words, the late Mr. McCallum expressed the same idea as I have advocated to-night.

The Premier, with his usual look of bland innocence, protested against a statement that political appointments have been made in this State during the last few years. The fact is that we can quote numerous instances. It is merely necessary to mention the Fremantle Harbour Trust. A former Labour Government increased the personnel of the Trust so as to appoint a primary producers' representative, and when that gentleman died, Mr. Angwin was first appointed in his stead, and he was succeeded by a representative of the lumpers. If that was not an absolutely political appointment, I do not know what would be considered in that category. Then we have what I consider a supreme joke as a judicial body—the present superfluous Licensing Court. Last year I quoted a resolution passed by the Trades Hall urging the Government to remove the present Lieut.-Governor and Agent-General and to replace them by good Labour men.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Was that done?

Mr. PATRICK: No. There are probably very good reasons why it was not done. Possibly that is the only instance in which the present Government has not been able to carry out such a recommendation. Per-

sonally, I hope that when a new Agent-General is appointed it will not be a political appointment, but one along the lines adopted by the South Australian Government which appointed Mr. McCann, a good commercial agent. All we want in London is a man with an adequate knowledge of the marketing requirements with regard to our commodities. That is really the only excuse for retaining the position. To-day the Agent-General has nothing to do with the raising of money, even if we were able to float a loan in London. The main object of such a position in London to-day is to push the sale of our export commodities.

Mr. Marshall: Don't you think the present Agent-General is any good?

Mr. PATRICK: Naturally he would not be required there at all if the views of the member for Roebourne (Mr. Rodoreda) were adopted. I do not know if he spoke in seriousness or was trying to be humorous when he said we should wipe out our exports altogether. There seemed to be some confused thinking on the Government side of the House, because when the member for Roebourne sat down, the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) rose, and pointed out how necessary it was that we should expand the export markets for our timber. I commend to the Premier in connection with any new appointment the example of Abraham Lincoln, one of the greatest Presidents of the United States, who, despite the protests of his friends, appointed one of his bitterest enemies to the command of all his armies, because he considered that person was the best man for the position.

Mr. Marshall: That is not what your Government did. We have always appointed the best man for the position.

Mr. PATRICK: As far as I am concerned, that has nothing to do with what was done by other Governments. That is my own idea of the question.

Mr. Marshall: Your Government never did that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PATRICK: I intend to draw attention, as I did last session, to the failure of the Government to uphold the laws of the State. I suggest, as I did then, that as this is a democratic country, the Government should, if it is not prepared to enforce the law, take a referendum of the people on such matters as starting-price betting and the hour for closing hotels on the goldfields.

In the Eastern States, where there are mining districts, there does not seem to be any trouble in regard to the hour for closing hotels, and there is no differential policy with regard to that matter. In this State, however, there is. The other important question is whether the people want the arbitration law and, if they do, whether they want it enforced. If the people want the arbitration law, then the Government should throw the whole force of the law behind the people's verdict. I desire to quote some remarks made by Mr. President Dwyer of the State Arbitration Court, remarks which are a distinct rebuke to the present Government. After the goldfields strike Mr. President Dwyer said—

When and so soon as an offence against arbitration law is regarded the same as an offence against other laws of the community, arbitration will be the full success that we hope it to be. The time may come, I believe and am hopeful, when people will look upon a strike against an award, or a serious stoppage of work, as being just as grave an offence against the community as other offences that are punished with all the forces of the community behind the punishment.

In this State the Government is assisting to wreck, instead of uphold, the Arbitration Act. I desire to refer to the deplorable remarks made by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox), who practically said he would be prepared to break any law of the State if, in his opinion or in the opinion of his followers, that law was wrong. It was interesting to note that the hon. member delved back into history to support his remarks. In all the instances he gave, the people who at that time rebelled against the laws had absolutely no say in making them; they had no vote for the governing institutions of the time and, of course, were justified in rebelling against laws in the making of which they took no part. But there is no excuse for such action in a democratic country, where every person can vote and take part in the making of the laws. I repeat, it was a most deplorable statement for the hon. member to make. A few months ago, one of the big unions in this State asked its members to take a referendum on the question whether they would observe an arbitration award of the State. The leaders of the union advised the members to vote against observance, yet I did not notice at the time that the Government even rebuked that open defiance of one of the laws of the

State. Here I would like to quote from a speech made by the late Mr. McCallum when he was introducing the Industrial Arbitration Bill. He said ("Hansard" 1924, page 513)—

We set up at the head of the machinery a court. Then we provide for industrial magistrates, industrial boards, boards of reference, demarcation boards, compulsory conferences and conciliation committees; but all these tribunals will be under the control and authority of the court itself.

Mr. McCallum also said (page 510 of the same volume)—

I want to emphasise the point that in the selection of the chairman, we do not propose to leave the appointment to the Minister. It may suit us as a party while we are in power to appoint our own chairman; but we do not propose that party politics shall be brought into the working of these tribunals at all.

Dealing with this phase, that is, appointments by the Minister, Mr. McCallum reminded the House that Australia lost the services of Mr. Justice Higgins as President of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, owing to this very principle. Mr. Justice Higgins objected to the setting up by a political head of independent tribunals that might give decisions merely to meet the exigencies of the moment. To call public attention to it, he made that statement and retired from his post. I do not desire longer to weary the House; members can make their own deductions from a recent decision of the Minister for Employment.

Dealing with another phase of this matter, we know that the trade union movement in Australia strongly supports the League of Nations and collective security. A conference is to be held in this State either this or next year at which it will be stated that the movement will have nothing to do with assisting the defence programme of Australia unless Australia supports the League of Nations and collective security. Of course, the decisions of the League depend upon nations accepting arbitration in disputes, and how is it possible in this world sphere to carry out a decision by arbitration if in a single industry a union cannot be made to obey the law? To my mind, the position would be amusing if it were not tragic. In fact, strikers against law are the real and unthinking enemies of democracy; and so with Governments who palter with laws to save the hour. They are enemies of democracy. In Fascist

countries like Italy, liberty as developed by Mazzini and Garibaldi is dead. New generations taught and educated in the belief that the State is the supreme object of worship, are arising. They are being taught that democracy is something of no value, that the only thing they must look to is the State. They have no individual liberty. If such a doctrine be instilled into the minds of the younger generation, many years will be required before the liberty it has lost can be restored. Mazzini told the young men of Italy to love their country, obey its laws, love humanity, and, above all, to love the ideal. The ideal in his mind was the religion that had been handed down to his people. In democratic countries children should be taught the same doctrine. To avoid the dangers of Fascism, there should be inculcated on their minds the duty of observing their country's laws: they should be taught to love liberty, but to love liberty within and protected by the law.

HON. P. D. FERGUSON (Irwin-Moore) [5.59]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: After having listened to 42 speeches, and very patiently too, you will not, I am sure, Mr. Speaker, condemn me if I make my remarks very brief.

Labour members: Hear, hear!

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: If it would not be wearisome to you I should like to say how pleased I am that you have been elevated to the highest office to which this House can elect one of its members. As a result of my long acquaintance with you, I have no doubt of your ability to discharge with credit to yourself and satisfaction to the members of this House the duties attaching to the important position you now occupy. I should also like to offer my congratulations to my friend the new Minister for Mines and Health (**Hon. A. H. Panton**). I do not think the Labour Party could have chosen from its ranks a man more suitable to carry out the duties attaching to those important portfolios. I further desire to congratulate the new members for Hannaus (**Mr. Leahy**) and Sussex (**Mr. Willmott**) upon their election to this Chamber. Those members will be following in the footsteps of two men who

rendered signal service to Western Australia, namely the former Minister for Mines (the late **Hon. S. W. Munsie**) and the late **Mr. Brockman**, both of whom were men who, with singleness of purpose, devoted themselves to the task entrusted to them by their respective electors and who, during the time they spent in this Chamber, earned the respect and esteem of members on both sides of the House.

A glance at the **Lieut.-Governor's Speech** does not afford much inspiration to one desiring to refer to it. It is a matter of very great regret to me—and I believe also to many other members in this Chamber—that no mention was made of any legislation to be introduced dealing with the marketing of primary products. Never was there a time in the history of the State when such a genuine and widespread demand existed for that type of legislation. On account of the sure and steady decline in the value of our primary commodities, it should have been apparent to the Government that some assistance in that direction was essential in the interests of primary producers generally. Attempts have been made by private members to introduce legislation dealing with the marketing of individual commodities such as eggs, milk, dried fruits and so on.

Mr. Warner: And onions.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Yes, we have just had notice of the intention of a member to introduce a measure to deal with the marketing of onions. The realisation by some members of the necessity for legislation to deal with the marketing of individual products such as those I have indicated, ought surely to be a proof of the necessity for placing on the statute-book a comprehensive measure under which the marketing of any primary commodity could be undertaken.

The Premier interjected.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Yes, I am sorry that the Speaker, during the time he was on the floor of the House, did not achieve greater success in the direction I have indicated.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Premier will succeed in making this a long speech if he is not careful.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: A question of vital importance to primary producers is the demand for a home consumption price for various primary products and, particularly at this stage, for wheat. At the present moment a conference is being held in the

Eastern States to consider this matter, and I understand that shortly there is to be a meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council, when any decisions reached by the present conference may be further implemented. It is rather a pity that Western Australia is represented at that conference by a Minister who is not vitally concerned in this matter. The Minister for Lands has never been interested in it and I am afraid he never will be. I would have preferred to see this State represented by the Minister for Agriculture, had he been here, or the Premier. The matter is of such vital importance that I think the Premier would have been justified in attending the gathering and would have earned the gratitude of the members of this House and of Western Australia as a whole had he done so. I hope that in the discussion of the multiplicity of proposals that have been mooted to bring about a reasonably profitable price for wheat, sweet reasonableness will prevail and that as a result of the deliberations some scheme will be evolved that will meet with the approval of the Parliaments of all the States. There is no doubt that the world price for wheat to-day is absolutely unremunerative to those engaged in its production. The other night the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) made some remarks in this connection and his opinion may be regarded as typical of the opinion of those members of the community that are interested in the marketing of wheat rather than in its production. I observe that the member for Nedlands said "the farmer members might as well cease their parrot cry that if the farmers had the protection that the tariff affords those engaged in secondary industries, all would be well." He went on to indicate that in his opinion a tariff of 2s. a bushel might help. I can tell the hon. member that a tariff of £2 a bushel would not help. No tariff can possibly help the grower of wheat at the present time.

Mr. McDonald: That is what the member for Nedlands said.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not interject when he is out of his seat.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The hon. member is highly disorderly in interjecting at all. What the members on these benches say—and we were misrepresented by the member for Nedlands—is that the Arbitration Court protects the employees in the secondary industries and determines their

standard of living and that the tariff protects the manufacturer in the secondary industries, and what is more, the actual cost of imported manufactured articles plus the tariff—probably the highest tariff in the world—is the price of the manufactured article that has to be paid by the consumer in Australia. The producers of Western Australia and Australia generally only seek the same protection. They do not want more or less. Too long has the producer of this country paid the price of manufactured articles which has been bolstered up by high tariffs and the operations of the Arbitration Court. He has not been privileged to get any shelter from either of these protective measures, which have done so much in the interests of the manufacturer and the employees of the manufacturer. When the opportunity was given to us some little time ago, by means of the Federal Referendum which, had it been carried, would have enabled this country to pass legislation to give the producer some of the benefits the tariff and the Arbitration Court have bestowed upon other sections of the community, the present Government and the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) successfully did their utmost to defeat the proposals put before the people by the Federal Government. The hon. member, in his past activities, has not helped very much to assist those engaged in primary production to bring about constitutional legislation that would be of tremendous benefit to the primary producer. Unfortunately, in Australia there never has been any sort of alignment between the price charged for secondary commodities manufactured in Australia or imported, and those from primary production. I have never been able to understand the reason for that. We have one or two instances of where an alignment between the home consumption price and the orderly marketing of that percentage of our commodities which is marketed overseas has been brought about. Although this has been declared unconstitutional by the highest legal tribunal in the Empire, nevertheless, until the James case was tried and the verdict delivered, the legislation which controlled the marketing of dried fruits and dairy products was extremely beneficial to those engaged in the production of those two commodities. There is no reason why that legislation should not have been extended to include other commodities. When the Privy Council decided this

was unconstitutional, and the Federal Government desired to rectify the position, the Labour Party, and at least some members of the National Party, endeavoured to persuade the people of Western Australia against giving our people the opportunity to secure some of the benefits that the sections of the community they represent had possessed for years.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They misrepresented the position.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I hope there will be a successful outcome of the conference of Premiers and others that is being held at the moment, and that the unfortunate position into which the wheatgrowers have fallen will in some way be alleviated. Some years ago legislation was placed on the statute-book to deal with the marketing of wholemilk in the metropolitan area, and considerable benefits have been derived from it by the sections of the community engaged in the production of milk. Recently the board of control deemed it wise, after careful consideration, to increase the price of milk to the producers by 1d. per gallon. As a result of that decision, those who were engaged in the distribution of milk in the metropolitan area have carried a motion that they will not comply with the decision of the board. They intend to adopt a course of direct action. They may have been tempted to take this step by the example afforded by the State Government in one or two directions. It would be a very good thing if the distributors of milk in the metropolitan area persisted in their decision to take direct action. The distribution of milk in Perth is not carried on along economic lines. A great deal of money is wasted through half a dozen milk carts delivering in practically every street in Perth. It would be a good plan if the distributors decided not to pay this price to the producers, and if the board cancelled all their licenses and gave them to the producers. I believe that within a week the producers could formulate a plan for the distribution of milk in the metropolitan area at half the cost now incurred by those engaged in the work of distribution. That would give the consumers of milk in the metropolitan area an opportunity to buy the commodity at a reduced price as a result of the more economic methods that would be adopted if the present conservative body of distributors ceased

to operate. The board has the matter entirely in its hands. If the distributors persist in their decision to disobey the lawful demands of the board, the board can readily cancel the licenses, and hand them to others who are prepared to distribute the milk more economically. In my opinion, the producers could carry out the work far more economically than is being done at the present time.

The state of affairs that exists at the Heathcote Mental Home is causing much concern throughout the State. I regret that immediately the position that is alleged to exist in that institution was brought under the notice of the Government, steps were not taken to hold an inquiry. The Government has stated its intention to do something, but why did it not do something immediately? The Government has at its command judges of the Supreme Court, and recently an additional judge was appointed. Surely it would have been possible to obtain the services of one of the judges, so that the inquiry might have been held without delay.

Mr. Hughes: One of the judges would be very undesirable.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I do not think the Government would appoint anyone who was undesirable. Surely the Government would have enough concern for public opinion to choose a man who was suitable to conduct the investigation. In the interests of those who are mentally sick and are inmates of the institution, it is not right that the present state of affairs should be allowed to continue. The sooner an investigation is held, and everything at the institution placed on a basis satisfactory to the inmates and the community generally, the better will it be for the Government and the State.

There has been a good deal of controversy in the Press in connection with the delayed distribution of what is known as rabbit virus. The C.S.I.R., at the request of the Commonwealth Government, has conducted numerous experiments at Wardang Island in connection with the virus. To anyone who reads between the lines it must be apparent that the C.S.I.R. is fairly satisfied with the results of those experiments. For some unexplained reason, however, there is delay in making the virus available to the States. I would suggest to the Premier that he might immediately take up with the Federal Government the question of allow-

ing the virus to be imported into Australia for use in Western Australia, if the other States are not anxious to utilise it themselves. There has been delay, I believe, on account of representations made by vested interests in the skin industry. Surely the rabbit's skin and carcase are of infinitely small value to Australia compared with the damage the rabbit pest has caused and is causing. There should be no unnecessary delay in the distribution of the virus.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Have not we a representative there?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I do not know.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I cannot believe that any vested interests would influence him.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Of course, vested interests would not influence him; but they may have influenced the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Would the Commonwealth Government be so influenced?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The larger section of the Commonwealth Government is elected and influenced by commercial interests, and commercial interests are largely concerned with the export of rabbit carcases and rabbit skins. It does appear to me that those commercial interests—and not only those associated with skins and carcases, but the commercial interests generally of the Eastern States—have considerable influence on the United Australia Party, which is the dominant party in the Federal Parliament.

Country schools and their equipment are giving concern to the residents of country districts. There is a general belief that much of the furniture in country schools is derelict furniture from metropolitan schools. Whether that is so I am not in a position to say, but I do know that a great deal of the furniture and equipment generally in country schools is entirely unsuitable for any child to receive its education among. In more than one school in my electorate I have seen the children's desks split from one end to the other and tied up with string and wire. I know of one instance where parents would not allow their children to sit on the forms unless they took cushions to sit on. I have seen desks falling to pieces. I have seen them tied up with wire and string from one end to the other. That is not a proper state of affairs, and something should be done to improve the

position. It would be preferable if more money had been spent on the equipment of country schools, instead of such a huge sum being spent on one metropolitan school.

At East Perth there is a school which has been erected at a cost of about £78,000. According to figures furnished recently, the school cost something like £117 for every child it is capable of accommodating. It has accommodation for 669 girls, and its cost was £78,000 odd, equal to £117 per child; whereas the cost of the Merredin school—one of the best of our country schools, well above the average—the cost is £15 per child. That is £15 compared with £117. Many other country schools have cost less than 50 per cent. of what the Merredin school cost. Yet in the metropolitan area we can have a school that cost £117 per child. While country schools are being starved for equipment, the equipment in the East Perth Girls' School would make the mouth of any country child water that had the privilege of seeing it.

The fat lamb industry is assuming considerable proportions in Western Australia. I wish to pay a tribute to the Treasurer for seeing the wisdom of complying with the request of the Meat Export Company to provide something in the nature of a guarantee, or else the necessary finance, to enable the company to increase the capacity of its Fremantle works. I believe the company will extend very considerably. Our lambs on the markets of the Old Country have a very good name, and it is due to our producers to see that that good name is maintained. I believe it will be maintained. In this connection I wish to pay a tribute to what is known as the Lamb Committee at the Department of Agriculture. Although the members of the committee have not received much commendation for the work they have done, nevertheless I believe that as the result of their advice a very sound foundation was laid for our fat lamb industry. It is fitting, in my opinion, to be recorded that the work of the committee has been of great benefit to the State.

Quite recently the Department of Agriculture has lost the services of two of its foremost men—Dr. Sutton and Mr. Pittman. Those two gentlemen have done most useful work in the Department of Agriculture, and Western Australia owes them a very considerable debt. I greatly regret

that their services have been lost to the State.

I notice that since the appointment of the new Minister for Health considerable energy and great enthusiasm have been put into the proposal to erect a new hospital for Perth. There is ample justification for improvement and expansion in that direction; but I do consider that the people of the metropolitan area, the people who are to be served by the hospital, should contribute something toward its support. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall)—and I want the hon. member to listen to this—says that it is a State hospital and that people come from all over Western Australia to get attention there.

Mr. Marshall: So they do.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: And so they do in the case of every other hospital in the State. Perhaps the figures I am about to quote will convey something to the hon. member. With regard to Perth Hospital, of patients treated for the year ended on the 30th June, 1938, 14 per cent. came from outside the districts which are served by the local governing bodies of the metropolitan area. So of course the institution is entitled to some consideration from that aspect. But now let us take a few typical country hospitals. In the case of Busselton, for the same period, 22 per cent. of the patients treated came from without that area. In the case of Albany, for the same period, 38 per cent. of the patients treated came from outside that area; and I do not mean only from outside the town of Albany, but from outside the districts of the local governing bodies surrounding Albany. At Katanning, for the same period, the percentage was 39, and, similarly, for Merredin it was 29 per cent. These figures serve to indicate that in the case of every hospital in Western Australia a considerable percentage of the patients treated comes from outside the area that would ordinarily, and should ordinarily, be served by the institution.

Mr. Sampson: Your figures regarding the country hospitals swamp the percentage for the Perth Hospital.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: They indicate, for instance, that at Katanning, where 39 per cent. of the patients were from outside districts, the local people had to contribute towards the foundation of their hospital before they could get any assistance from the Government.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They had to contribute 50 per cent.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Yes. Those contributions were backed up by assistance from the hospital tax and from the Lotteries Commission. If there is justification for assistance from the Government in the provision of a hospital for Perth, where 14 per cent. only of the patients came from districts outside the metropolitan-suburban area, how much more justification is there for Government assistance to country hospitals?

Mr. Cross: Are there not many metropolitan people who visit country centres?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Yes.

Mr. Patrick: They meet with motor accidents and require treatment.

Member: They kill city people in the country districts.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The only other question I wish to touch upon briefly relates to starting-price betting. My views coincide with your own, Mr. Speaker. You recently rendered a service to the State when you made a public statement in the Press, and I commend you for the manner in which you tackled this problem. I pay a tribute to the member for Middle Swan (Mr. Hegney) for the manner in which he supported your proposals. I hope that in any legislation contemplated by the Government, provision will be made to cope with the evil, so that it will not have an opportunity to expand in any shape or form. To-day it constitutes almost a cancer in the life of the people of the metropolitan area and to a limited extent in the smaller towns of the rural areas. The best way to deal with it is to take some drastic action somewhat along the lines adopted in Queensland, but certainly not along those followed in at least one State where there has been no check upon the evil. Rather has there been a tendency for it to increase.

Question put and passed: the Address adopted.

BILLS (14)—FIRST READING.

1, Fair Rents.

Introduced by the Minister for Justice.

2, Workers' Compensation Act Amendment.

3, State Government Insurance Office.

4, Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Labour.

5, University Building.

Introduced by the Premier.

6, Bureau of Industry and Economic Research.

Introduced by the Minister for Employment.

7, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.

8, Local Courts Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Cross.

9, Companies Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Sampson.

10, Fisheries Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Watts.

11, Road Districts Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Marshall.

12, Alsation Dog Act Amendment.

Introduced by Hon. P. D. Ferguson.

13, Marketing of Onions.

Introduced by Mr. Marshall (for Mr. Fox).

14, Jury Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mrs. Cardell-Oliver.

House adjourned at 10.48 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 30th August, 1938.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1), £2,500,000.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURE, WRITING-OFF.

Group Settlement, I.A.B. and Agricultural Bank.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: What was the total amount written off by the following authorities during each of the last six years:—(a) Group Settlement Scheme, (b) Industries Assistance Board, (c) Agricultural Bank?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:—

(a) Group Settlement:				Amount written off.		
Year ended.				£	s.	d.
30/6/33	9,543	15	11
30/6/34	11,836	13	5
30/6/35	42,431	8	5
30/6/36	57,628	19	2
30/6/37	1,708,374	18	3
30/6/38	5,238	14	4
				£1,835,054	9	6

(b) Industries Assistance Board:

30/6/33	27,176	6	4
30/6/34	46,734	13	3
30/6/35	62,089	14	6
30/6/36	60,099	13	2
30/6/37	431,693	16	11
30/6/38	654,404	7	9

£1,282,198 11 11

(c) Agricultural Bank:

30/6/33	18,574	14	0
30/6/34	22,513	8	8
30/6/35	28,445	3	7
30/6/36	31,226	18	1
30/6/37	403,634	18	8
30/6/38	1,123,002	17	3

£1,627,398 0 3

Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Scheme:

30/6/33	28,051	9	9
30/6/34	27,430	6	11
30/6/35	36,818	17	1
30/6/36	33,552	15	11
30/6/37	331,367	0	11
30/6/38	419,456	2	7

£876,676 18 2

Grand Total: £5,621,327 14s. 10d.

MOTION—TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT.

To Disallow By-laws.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.39]: I move—

That the by-laws (Nos. 1 to 7 inclusive) made under the Town Planning and Development Act, 1928, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 8th April, 1938, and laid