

toral districts and provinces. While the elections were in progress, these men came forward and said, "The Mitchell Government gave us a 44-hour week. What will the Labour Government do when they come into power? The Arbitration Court has taken away the 44-hour week which the Mitchell Government gave us. The Labour Government can by administrative act restore the 44-hour week." Candidates for election pledged themselves to restore the 44-hour week accordingly, to use their influence to secure the restoration by administrative act. In this connection the Labour Government have simply carried out promises and pledges given during the elections. The country knew exactly what would occur if a Labour Government came into power. There has been no deception: the matter was spoken plainly, so that everybody could understand.

Hon. J. Ewing: Why not bring in a Bill for 44 hours all round so as to carry out your policy?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is no objection to that; possibly it may occur.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think questions should be asked now.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In restoring the 44-hour week, the Government increased the wages by only 1s. 2d. per week in excess of what the Mitchell Government had paid; that is to say, in the vast majority of cases the increase was not greater, though in a few cases it was larger. The 1s. 2d. increase was necessary in order to make the pay harmonise with certain awards of the Arbitration Court.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and passed.

*House adjourned at 8.18 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 30th July, 1924.*

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

### SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS.

Mr. A. Thomson (Katanning) and Mr. G. Taylor (Mount Margaret) took and subscribed the oath, and signed the roll.

### QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE SITE.

Mr. LATHAM asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Have the Government decided on a site for an agricultural college? 2, If so, where is the selected site? 3, If no such site has been selected, will consideration be given to the report of the committee which was appointed to inquire into a suitable site, giving preference to Sermon's property at Burges' Siding?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, No; but the question is receiving earnest consideration, and the decision will be announced shortly. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, The committee's report has received attention and the property mentioned has been considered.

### QUESTION—HERDSMAN'S LAKE DRAINAGE, COST.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Works: 1, What was the original estimate of the cost of draining Herdsman's Lake? 2, What is the total amount of money spent on this work to date? 3, Is there to be any further money spent on this work? 4, If so, how much, approximately?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM, for the Minister for Works, replied: 1, A preliminary estimate of £25,000 was made, but the work was authorised on an estimate of £40,000. 2, Expenditure to date, £92,000. 3, Yes. 4, Approximately £5,000.

### QUESTION—RAILWAY STATIONS, COST.

*Mt. Barker and Daglish.*

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Railways: What was the cost of the new railway stations at (a) Mt. Barker, (b) Daglish?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: (a) £6,957, (b) £5,722.

### QUESTIONS (2)—MINING.

*Peak Hill State Battery.*

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Mines: 1, What was the total tonnage of tailings treated by the Peak Hill State battery on the last occasion of its working? 2, What was the value per ton?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, 302 tons. 2, 5 dwts. 2 grs. per ton.

*Peak Hill Geological Survey.*

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Was the geological survey of the Peak Hill district, promised three years to the residents of Peak Hill, ever commenced? 2, If it has been, on what date was it commenced, and who was the geologist? 3, On what date is the survey likely to be completed and the report likely to be available to the public?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, Geological survey work on the Peak Hill Goldfield was commenced as part of the departmental policy, some years ago, by Mr. Talbot, the results being contained in Bulletin 85, not yet published. Mr. Gibb Maitland, the Government Geologist, devoted the period between the 25th October and the 30th November, 1923, to a reconnaissance survey of part of the field. 3, There has been apparently very considerable delay in regard to this survey. I am having further inquiries made, and will advise the hon. member as soon as possible of the probable date of completion.

### QUESTION—WOOROLOO SANATOR- IUM, FOOD.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Honorary Minister (Hon. S. W. Munsie): 1, Is he aware of the general dissatisfaction of Wooroloo Sanatorium inmates with the food supplies? 2, Did he issue instructions for an ample supply of fresh milk to the institution? 3, If so, will he make immediate and close inquiry to ascertain if the instructions were immediately and faithfully executed?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: 1, Complaint has been made regarding a shortage of milk, but the complaint did not amount to general dissatisfaction. 2, Yes. 3, Those instructions are being carried out; ten additional cows have been purchased, the last batch arriving at the institution a few days ago.

### QUESTION—RAILWAYS, TIMBER TRAFFIC.

Mr. HOLMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: Will he lay upon the Table of the House a return on the lines of that appearing in the report of the Railway Department for the year 1918-19, giving particulars of the department's timber traffic for the last three years?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: If the information is available in the department it will be made available to the hon. member.

### COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motion by the Premier, ordered:—That Sessional Committees be appointed as follows:—

*Library Committee*—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Corboy, and Mr. Angelo.

*Standing Orders Committee*—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Holman, Mr. E. B. Johnston, and Mr. George.

*House Committee*—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lambert, Mr. Chcsaon, Mr. Stubbs, and Mr. Thomson.

*Printing Committee*—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Panton, and Mr. MacCallum Smith.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Second Day.*

Debate resumed from the 24th July.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.42]: Since last we sat, there has been a general election; and it will be observed that considerable changes have taken place in the House. We have already congratulated you, Mr. Speaker, upon your elevation to the Chair. I wish to congratulate Ministers too, and particularly the Premier, on their accession to high office. I hope their term of office will be marked by success. I know they are not going to have a pleasant or an easy time, but I trust they will succeed in carrying on the affairs of the country in such a manner as to maintain the prosperity they found upon assuming office. I wish to mention to the House, and particularly to new members, that the life of a Minister is extremely strenuous and hard. The life of a private member, too, is hard and strenuous, but it is almost easy as compared with the work a Minister has to do. I think I can say of the Ministers in the last Government that we were six hard-working Ministers. In fact, there is too much to do for six Ministers in the development of this country.

Mr. Corboy: Quite right.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I notice the Premier has taken into his Cabinet three Honorary Ministers. I myself was an Honorary Minister for some time, and I know that such a position is hardly satisfactory. If additional Ministers are required to carry

on the work of government, then they ought to be statutory Ministers. I shall say no more on that point now, but the House will realise that if Ministers with many years' experience found the work most strenuous, it must take a good deal more than the ordinary working hours of the day to perform the duties of Ministerial office. In fact, Ministers are called upon to detach themselves from their home life altogether, and moreover are prevented from seeing as much of the country as they would like to see and ought to see; and to those features of Ministerial office I have always strenuously objected and do now strongly object. Years ago the functions of government were few, and the work was very different from what it has now become. Ministers have about 350,000 people to care for, and the work of governing such a number, scattered from Wyndham to Eucla, and engaged, as they are, in so many industries, involves the expenditure of a great deal of time, if justice is to be done to all sections of the people and every part of the State. Then we have an unfortunate habit of adding to our responsibilities by doing things, some of which I object to; as for instance the State trading concerns, all of which mean extra work for Ministers. Then of course the development of the country means extra work for Ministers, but that should be their chief object. In regard to the elections, I am delighted to see our old friend, the ex-Speaker, member for Mt. Margaret, back with us to-day. He is not well; he is suffering from illness; nevertheless we are very glad to see him. I am sorry that so many of our old members fell by the way at the elections. I am very sorry that my late colleague, Mr. Maley, was defeated, also Mr. Money, and I am sorry that Mr. Scaddan has gone out of politics.

Mr. Holman: You are awfully sorry to lose Money!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: However, I congratulate the new members upon their election to the House. They will gain some experience here, and I hope will be able to do something for their electorates and the State generally. What I have now to say about the elections cannot be resented by the present Government, because of course they had nothing to do with the conduct of those elections; but I hope the Premier will see to it that the things that went wrong, small things, at the elections will not be repeated next time. I refer to the stuffing of rolls and to the work of postal vote officers, which in many cases was not all it ought to have been. There was nothing very serious to draw attention to, but there ought to be none of it. I know it is the desire of every member that elections should be fought fairly and squarely. These things I suppose are unavoidable, but we ought

to make the punishment fit the crime. If a man casts a vote that he ought not to cast, there should be some adequate penalty for him. Apparently under our Act a man who goes to the poll has to answer certain questions very different from those put to him when recording a postal vote. Some of the postal vote officers actually went to electors and recorded their votes for them. Probably that was due to ignorance. The duties of a postal vote officer should be made very clear, and any departure from instructions should be noted.

Mr. Hughes: Why, you won the Perth seat on postal votes!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not complaining of that. I am sure we all wish to see elections properly conducted. Something has been said about the division of parties sitting on this side of the House. All political parties are divided. If not in this State, at all events in the other States parties representing Labour are very well divided indeed; and I venture to say that here, notwithstanding that we have been told by the Minister for Railways that there is but one voice on that side, many voices will be heard before very long.

Mr. Corboy: But all will speak in the one way.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suggest that it will not be so. I think the Minister for Railways spoke out of his turn when he said what he did, and was unduly optimistic. Of course unity in the party makes for stable government, which is necessary to the welfare of the country. The opposition we shall have to put up would be very much more effective and better for the country if we on this side were united. There should be but two sides to the House. We are here to do our duty by the country, and see to it that if possible the people live happy and contented lives, and that the Government of the country is such as will make to that end. I wish to tell the Premier that for my part and on behalf of the party immediately connected with me, we are ready to help him in every possible way. I know what his difficulties will be, and if I can be of assistance I shall be very glad. I am here to help my country, whether I sit to the right or to the left of the Speaker. We wish to be of use. I should like to remind the Premier that the great thing for a Government is to be right. Whenever the Premier is right he shall have my whole-hearted support. I cannot expect, of course, that every stone thrown will be thrown the right distance. Whenever I think the Premier is wrong I shall oppose him to the best of my ability. During my five years of office I was fairly assisted in the government of the country by my friend the present Premier, but he never failed to

criticise when he thought it his duty to do so. He helped me when he thought it was his duty to the country to do so, and he opposed me in the same way; and let me say that although he did not make much fuss about it, no man ever put up more effective opposition when the occasion demanded than did the present Premier as Leader of the Opposition. I have no complaints against the Governor's Speech. Still, it does not give us much information as to the Government's proposals. I do not know what there is to be in the State Insurance Bill and in the Fair Rents Bill, nor do I know anything about the proposed amendments to the other Bills. But so far as we approve of the Government's proposals we shall support them. Railways under construction are mentioned in the Speech, but other railways authorised are not referred to. I hope the Premier will be able to make a start with that long overdue railway from Yarramony to North Baandee. It was promised many years ago by the Wilson Government; still further back by the Scaddan Government; and by every Government since that time. It is now authorised, and if a start can be made, as I had hoped it would be made, just now, we shall be doing only justice to the people in that district.

The Premier: We must not forget that long overdue national work, the Narragin-Dwarda railway.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know that it has ever been overlooked or ever will be. I think the member for Williams-Narragin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) put in the latest word for it on the first day of the session.

The Premier: In the first hour.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope this Yarramony line will be built, for the people have waited long for it.

Mr. Griffiths: Only 16 years.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. member is not 16 years of age. How can he remember?

The Premier: With him, a few years is neither here nor there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is about 14 years since the country there was settled.

Mr. Griffiths: It is 15 years.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then there is the Esperance Northwards railway. I had the land classified, and I have no doubt the classification justifies the construction of the line. Apart from that, the linking up of the line will be of great advantage to the country between Salmon Gum and Norseman, which can now be used. A few years ago I was denounced for opening up country just beyond Kellerberrin. It was wrong, it was a mistake. So, too, at Korrelocking. Trayning also was wrong a few years ago, but now we find we can go much farther east than was then thought advisable. You, Sir, will be delighted to have the Esperance line completed, but I venture to say there are some goldfields representatives—not in this House—who will be somewhat embarrassed when they have

no Esperance railway to dangle before the electors. I feel very thankful that the Premier and his party have adopted the policy of the late Government, plus of course, a few little things of their own. I hope they will actively carry out the work of developing the country. I would remind the House that the difference between prosperity and adversity is no thicker than a sheet of paper. We can easily drift from prosperity to adversity, although it is more difficult to get back; so no matter what the troubles of the Government may be, they must keep the progress of the country well before them and develop the State as fast as they can. In these times of financial stress we should avoid all the small things that are used only to please somebody. Sometimes, although we succeed in satisfying people with these small things, they serve to take attention from the greater issues that mean so much to the State. Let us avoid these small things; let us tell the people fairly and squarely that if we can only bring to the worker work at good wages we shall bring to all other people prosperity by that act. I have asked the House to look the position squarely in the face. The prosperity and happiness of our people demand big and progressive ideas and ideals. We know that money is the first essential, but courage comes next. Second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth comes courage, and the rest ought to be fairly easy. There is in this country so much to do and so little done. When I attended conferences in the Eastern States I saw something of the development in Victoria. Let me say here I am sorry the Premier did not attend the latest conference. I think he ought to have been there, but of course he could not leave his work here. When I have looked on the development of Victoria and the other States, and have thought of the development of this State, small as it is, I have wondered what the people in the early days were thinking about. If the people of Victoria could do so much, how was it that the people of Western Australia did so little?

Mr. Marshall: Do you ever think how they fleece us?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Western Australia is a very rich country and would have been the greatest of the Australian States if all the work that might have been done in the last hundred years had been done. Going to Victoria by train one wakes up in the early morning and runs along until 1 p.m. through mostly occupied land. In Melbourne one sees the great smoke stacks and the activity of the people engaged in manufacturing, partly for us. We have waited too long. We must not listen to the croakers. Yesterday a member in another place said we had not had a government for years. I maintain that we have had a bit of sanity in the government of late, but it was the work of years ago that was more at fault. I do not know exactly what that member meant, but there are some men born into this world to oppose everything. They find it pleasanter to oppose than to help,

simply because they are constituted that way. But it sometimes happens that the only fool is the man that believes others are as he says they are. We could say that enough has been done for the agricultural industry, for the mining industry, and for our secondary industries, but if we adopted that attitude prosperity would desert us, and some of the population would be compelled to leave the State. This is a new and undeveloped country, and we have to go on doing things in order to keep the people employed. A few years ago there was unemployment, but as soon as the people realised that the Government intended to go on with development work, they, too, started, and men were employed. We cannot stop; if we do, the whole country will stop. In a new country, too much depends upon the work of the government; but it is so, and we have to recognise that fact. Now, Sir, I am an optimist. I believe in the country. I know the country as few people know it. Thanks to my 18 years or more of public life and many years of office I have had an opportunity to see the country. I know a great deal of it, and knowing it I believe in it. If to know the country and believe in it is tantamount to being an optimist, then I am an optimist. I am not a fatalist. I realise that everything depends upon the work that is done. I am an unrepentant advocate of land settlement and of assistance to men on the land sufficient to enable them to live in comfort and carry on this work of development. To further such work, cheaper money is required. Cheaper transport will come with the greater volume of trade. We want cheaper tools of trade and cheaper fertilisers for the land. Later on I shall deal with the effect of the high tariff upon the man engaged in primary production. For the moment we must assist the man on the land. I heard someone say in the presence of the Minister for Lands that the farmers had been spoon-fed. Well, it is easy to say that. The member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) would want a refresher every morning before he started in the courts, and the refresher would not take the form of a whisky and soda; he would require something more substantial. The man on the land is no more spoon-fed than is the hon. member. The man is worthy of his hire. All we have done is to give the man on the land a fair chance to live in comfort and to do something for himself. By enabling him to do something for himself he does a very great deal for the State, far more for the State than he does for himself. I was told years ago that I gave the farmers a £1 note for 5s. As a matter of fact for every 5s. the farmer has had, he has given the State £1. That could be very easily proved. But we do want value for our money. We want our people doing this national work of development to live in some degree of comfort. Our limit to land settlement would be every acre of good land settled. We should move forward steadily, developing one part of the

country to-day, and another part to-morrow. North, south and east, all parts must receive attention, but they can receive the attention they deserve only when the Premier of the day has enough money to carry on the work, and can get the people to do it. The cry in this country has always been, "There is no land." The country has always been damaged by croakers. When I became Minister for Lands in 1909 the Surveyor General, one of the best officers that ever occupied that position, said, "You know there is no more land." Yet we sold 7,000,000 acres of land in less than three years, but it was eastern wheat belt land, and the settlement of that was a matter of policy. When I returned to office as Minister for Lands in 1919 I was met by the same cry of "no land." Yet in five years we sold rather more than 8,000,000 acres. There are a great many more acres still to be sold and settled. It would be strange indeed if we had reached the limit of 30,000,000 acres. Of course there is plenty of land, but it is very easy to raise doubts about the land to be settled. If I made a statement that all the land between Esperance and Norseman should not be settled and that to settle it would be criminal, some people would take notice of it. Instinctively we listen to the tale "against" more readily than to the tale "for," so it is easy to get people to follow if you raise the cry that there is no land. I do not suggest it is a political cry; I hope it is not, but it has been in the past. There is the land, and it ought to be settled. The wheat belt was settled in the face of considerable opposition. There were a great many men who claimed to know all about that country, and they knew where it would grow wheat and where it would not. So there was opposition. Although I felt impatient at the time, I confess now that, with the limited knowledge they possessed, they were justified in raising doubts. With them it was an experiment. But the settlement of the wheat areas proved to be right, and to-day we have a great and prosperous territory. During the last four years an additional 2,000,000 acres have been cleared—nearly one-third of the whole of the land cleared in the State. I hope that in the next four years another 2,000,000 acres will be cleared, for then the Minister will have little trouble with his railways. But there was more justification for opposing the settlement of the wheat belt than there is for opposing the settlement of the South-West. We know of what the wheat belt is capable, and we know what work and development have still to be done. Within the settled area there is not much wheat land to sell, and such as there is will be taken up by sons of our own farmers. I hope, however, that we shall be able to extend settlement. It is flattering to know that people who once opposed now support the settlement of the land in the Southern Cross district. This extension was good for

the country, and we shall extend our settlement still further afield. In the early days of the State someone wrote about the rainfall of Australia, and said that on the western coast it was much better than on the other side of the continent. So events have proved. Group settlements represent merely a form of assistance equivalent to what would be given to wheat farmers. In the wheat belt the areas were large, and the man who took up a block was not asked to show a penny. In thousands of cases he hadn't a penny to show, but in nearly every instance he was an enterprising man, a good solid worker, not afraid to tackle hard graft. From my experience I would rather have an able, willing, intelligent working man without a penny, than a less able man with £300 or £400 when it comes to making a farm. The man in the wheat belt did his own work, employed his own labour, and drew the money for the work. Often he made far more than 10s. per day, which is the amount paid by way of sustenance to group settlers. We found the money for the making of wheat farms. We found the money to enable the man to live and keep his family; we found the money for his house, fences, machinery, and horses, and it was said that we had done right. What we are doing in the South-West is no more. True, the men in the South-West work under supervision; they receive 10s. per day sustenance, and they certainly have more in the way of transport done for them. They also devote the whole of their time to the work of clearing the land. It is the same thing, only it is being carried out in different territory, but there is less experiment about the South-West than there was about the wheat belt. There is nothing experimental about the development of the South-West, because crops grown here and there in that area have shown the capabilities of the land as regards rainfall, climate, and productivity. It is not an experiment. No Government can, of course, guarantee the land. What we have to do is to see that the land is good against which we are advancing our money, and that we are justified in clearing it. If our officials say the land is good, and that the work of development has not cost more than it should, then we have something to sell if the original settler goes off and another comes along to buy. In America whole settlements have disappeared, and other people have come along and made a success of the deserted localities. There were many instances of that in our wheat belt. Men did a certain amount of pioneering, and some of them sold their properties for a few hundred pounds thinking they had done enough pioneering. Other men who wanted land and had a little money then came along and took it up. The same thing may happen in the South-West. When the man there has made his farm he can do as the man in the wheat belt did. It is not an experiment. With the knowledge we have of fodder crops we can foresee a speedy change in the

South-West. I have seen subterranean clover growing, not only on cleared and cultivated land, but on uncleared land amongst growing timber, and it has been doing well. When these group settlers get 100 acres of subterranean clover they will do well, and the benefits to the State will be enormous.

Mr. Sampson: They will be in clover.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and the State will also be in clover. Where would the city be but for the work that has been done in our agricultural lands?

Mr. Marshall: What about the prospector and the miner?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course the miner plays his part. I am coming to him.

Mr. Marshall: You should make a comprehensive statement.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. member is very impatient. This work has to be done and the settlement has to be paid for. Are members prepared to allow this great and rich territory to remain idle, and to go on buying their bacon and butter from the Eastern States at a cost of a million and a-half a year? When the goldfields were producing  $8\frac{1}{2}$  million pounds worth of gold per annum we could afford to pay out this sum, but we cannot afford it now. When the Treasurer wants a loan he knows that all the money is in the Eastern States, where the rich men are to be found.

Mr. Marshall: We are good friends of Mr. Bruce.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Money that has gone there ought to have remained here. If there is an acre of land between here and Albany worth settling it should be settled. A Royal Commission is to be appointed to inquire into the group settlements. It is a simple work. The records completely disclose the position. The Minister for Lands has been in close touch with group settlement from the beginning. I have always kept him informed of what has been happening, and have taken him to see the people on the groups and to inspect the land. He has talked frankly with the officials all the time. He interested himself in the work because he has a profound belief that land settlement is good for the people. He is keen on men being taken away from the ranks of the unemployed and put on the land. It is no compliment to him that four months after he is made Minister for Lands he is faced with a Royal Commission. I have no objection to it; but I do not know that Royal Commissions ever do any good, or that anyone is interested in their reports. I do not think the Minister has said he wants a Royal Commission; and he has known all about group settlements from the very beginning. We saw what the Minister for Mines said after his return from the Eastern States. People there stated they did not want us to develop the South-West, because it would cost too much, and they did not know how we could finance it. Many years ago they said that to me about potatoes. They claimed that we

could not grow potatoes in Western Australia. I replied that I came from that State, and did not want to listen to anything they had to say about it. We know what our country is, and it is not for them to tell us what to do, particularly those who are bleeding us white by their exports to us. I am surprised that the Minister should have mentioned this. Whatever our troubles may be, we have to finance necessary work. Government is finance, and finance is government. I acknowledge the great good the mining industry has done for this country. More than 150 million pounds worth of gold has been produced here. If agriculture had been developed at the time when mining was at its height Western Australia would be a big State to-day. Unfortunately, we allowed the Eastern States to feed and manufacture for our people so that we might develop our mines. We lost a wonderful opportunity and a wonderful market. The people on the fields had to pay more for their food than they would otherwise have done. There are now 13 direct mining representatives in this Chamber. Are they not capable of advising on mining questions? They have all had long association with the goldfields, and ought to know a great deal about it, but we are to have a Royal Commission to inquire into the industry. The 13 members I refer to should sit over here. If they did so they would be associated with a party that would take their word for what ought to be done.

Mr. Panton: Then it would be the first time it happened.

Mr. Latham: Give us a chance.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: We gave you a chance for six years.

Mr. Latham: But we did not have your mining representatives with us.

The Premier: Do not try to steal them from us.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am afraid a few of them would be returned marked "not wanted." Are those members incapable? They came to me and said "We want you to help the mining industry." I replied, "Very well." They then said, "We will tell you what to do." I again replied, "All right," but they did not tell me what to do, for no one seems to know what ought to be done. They did not come along with their proposals, because it was a difficult matter to know what to put forward. We helped the industry in every possible way. We have financed it for the development of mines, and inevitably a good deal of money was lost. We also reduced the price of water to assist mining. The difficulty is to do something that will revive the industry, and build up the production of gold to what it was. If Ministers with their long association with the goldfields ever knew

what was wanted, they knew from the moment they took office. The thing is to know what to do. The Government now say they are going to appoint a Royal Commission. The present Government is no more anxious to help the mining industry than my Government was. If anything can be done to assist, I shall be delighted to see it done. If the Wiluna bores prove satisfactory and indicate that the gold can be recovered in that district, we shall have as big a mining centre as we are ever likely to have in Western Australia. I hope before the session closes the Minister will bring down a Bill to authorise the construction of the line to serve Wiluna. I realise the trouble there will be in Cabinet with the claims of Geraldton and Meekatharra, to say nothing of Kalgoorlie. That is a little joy the Minister will not mind.

The Premier: To say nothing about myself.

The Minister for Railways: Let justice prevail!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the Minister will tell us what has happened with regard to the bores, and will be able to show that a railway is justified. I wish to say a few words about Federation. I notice that the Loan Council met in Melbourne and discussed the matter of borrowing. I say there should be no surrender to the Federal authorities, no conceding of any right to say what we should borrow. If they do interfere it ought to be in the direction of assisting us. Australia is not made by the Federal Government or the Federal Parliament, but it is made by the States. It must be made as a result of the work of State Governments and State Parliaments. The work of development is for us and it is our responsibility. The Federal authorities have the right to tax, and there is no limitation to that right, but they cannot drive a pick into our soil without our permission. The entire work of making Australia belongs to the States. Every Federal Government has been more or less the same. If the present Government were changed we would only get a worse Government. They are all alike. I know the Premier's difficulty. I am sorry he did not attend the Council. I hope, when the Premiers are called together, he will by some means be able to go across. It is important that he should be there. I know that he would talk to them fairly and squarely when it came to a question of limiting our borrowing powers. The people who control the finances of Australia sit around the Governments of Victoria and New South Wales, and to a certain extent of South Australia. They sit well away from us. The Premier's difficulties are real when he goes on the Australian market. It is certain they will take £150,000 of his money when they put this loan on the

market. The Savings Bank depositors will naturally invest in it.

The Premier: And give it to the Eastern States?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Probably. The Premier will have to be very firm in the matter. There must be no surrender so far as loans are concerned; certainly not any agreement to take less than he wants. In London the Premier can borrow money just as easily as the Federal Government, on terms to suit us, and just as cheaply as the Federal Government can do it. They cannot help us there, but they can help us in Australia. Dr. Earle Page did help us last year, and it was the first time we have been helped in that way. The conference he presided over was a pleasure to attend, because we did come together and get what we wanted. That is always a pleasure.

The Premier: Especially when it is money.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: At any rate, the Federal Treasurer did raise money for us at that time. I admit that we should eliminate competition in borrowing in Australia. A man with money to lend on a gilt-edged security should lend reasonably and 6 per cent. is too high a rate to pay. Such a rate is bad for the country and for trade and finance generally. It must be remembered, too, that the Federal tax is taken on that 6 per cent. We cannot do anything regarding the interest that is taxed by the Federal Government, because the rates differ in all the States. If we were to issue a taxable loan, we would be at a disadvantage because our graduated rates are different from those operating in Victoria. The Federal Government should help us in Australia; it is their duty to do so, in addition to which they get the advantage arising from the elimination of competition, for which reason the Federal Government should leave the Premier a free hand in London. The exchange difficulty may be lifted at any time, and I believe the Commonwealth Government and the Commonwealth Bank could do a lot to straighten out the trouble now. The inability to transfer money from London is a serious handicap, and if we could get over that difficulty, the position would be less irksome. The Australian money market is not the best for the Government, for when they seek to renew a loan, as is necessary from time to time, there is no one to negotiate with in Australia. I remember some little time back, when a repayment of a million pounds, that had been borrowed some years ago, was due, I asked those concerned what they proposed to do, and if they required the money. The reply I received was an inquiry as to what I would pay. I told them I would pay cash. I cabled to our bankers in London, who have always been willing to assist us generously, with the result that I paid the money over. It was a very different tale six months ago when we had another million pounds' worth of an old loan to redeem in Australia. When

I asked those concerned what they intended doing, I was told that they wanted the money. They saw that we were in a hole because we could not get the money transferred readily. On that occasion we had great trouble in securing the necessary funds. If we wanted ten millions of money in London, the Premier would not have any trouble, because he could go to one firm and arrange the whole business, for it is so easily accomplished. The London money market should not be the concern of the Federal Government at all and the Premier should be left free in that quarter. I hope there will be no surrender by the Premier of the London market, because England can provide every penny we want. At present he is compelled to pay in London for some of the goods purchased, and that system might be extended considerably. The Federal disadvantage is represented by high taxation. The Federal Government has a surplus of £2,500,000 by continuing the war-imposed income taxation. At one time it was suggested that we should assume the sole right to collect income tax in exchange for the per capita payment. It was contended, quite wrongly, that the per capita payment was taken from the income tax; it was not from income tax, but from customs collections. If the Federal Government succeeded in inducing the State Governments to make the exchange, then the Federal war tax would be perpetuated, because it must be remembered that the Federal tax on incomes was imposed as a war measure, and that £2,500,000 belongs to the people who paid that income tax. When the war expenditure shrinks, as it must do, the Federal authorities should cease imposing that income tax.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The defence expenditure is increasing, not decreasing.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I referred to war expenditure.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But that has ceased.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, it has not. I am referring to the expenses due to the late war. The imposition of the Federal income tax makes the tax imposed by the State on incomes appear a very high one. Therefore the Federal Government should cease collecting that tax as speedily as possible.

Mr. Thomson: I hope that if the Federal Government do that, it will not be by way of reducing soldiers' pensions.

Mr. Sampson: Who has suggested that?

Mr. Thomson: I do not say that anyone has suggested it, but I hope that that course will not be adopted.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think the intention is rather to increase the pensions paid to the soldiers. I for one would stand by the soldiers who went to the war to fight for us, but that, however, is not the point under discussion. There would not be so much difficulty in connection with the State income tax if it were not for the Federal income tax, which is of no benefit to us.



The Premier: The Federal Government's surplus shows that they are imposing excessive taxation.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and at a time when the people can ill afford to pay. Federation has brought us so many disadvantages, for we have found money in so many ways for the Eastern States. I have procured a copy of the latest banking statistics, and there is no secret concerning the information they contain. I notice that £4,196,000 has been deposited in the Commonwealth Bank, and that the liability on account of notes and bills discounted and other debts represents £1,039,000 only. On the other hand, the other banks have deposits totalling £9,600,000 and have advanced £10,600,000. The private banks have done their duty to the country by advancing more money than they had on deposit, whereas the Commonwealth Bank has not done so, although that institution did advance £754,000 on account of Governments, municipalities and other public securities. This is a serious disadvantage, because money is so urgently needed. When the late Sir Denison Miller was Governor of the Commonwealth Bank I spoke to him about this matter, and told him that he should let the people of Western Australia have some of this money. Then, again, the Commonwealth Savings Bank takes away money that should be deposited in the State Savings Bank. I have endeavoured to make it clear to the House that the party I am associated with stands for a policy of active development. I hope there will be no easing off, and I warn Ministers that if they do ease off, there will be a danger of collapse. There can be no stoppage. In the interests of all the people, I say to the Government: "Go on with the work of development; with the settlement of people on the land, and do all the things you can for the people of this country." America is a new country. Do we realise it? Independence came to that country less than 150 years ago. At that time the population of America totalled but a few millions; to-day the population of the United States is nearly twice that of the total number of white people within the British Empire. Australia was settled more than 100 years ago: to-day it has a population of about six millions. It is impossible for such a country to be held by six million people. If America could do so much in that period, why cannot we do something more than we are doing? It is necessary that we should keep on with this work of development. The only limit to the settlement of people on the land should be the want of good land and the availability of money. In one year Victoria absorbed 100,000 people.

The Premier: But it was gold that attracted them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course it was, but we have gold here now. The fact remains that Victoria was able to add in one year 100,000 souls to her then small population. There should be no limit to

the development so long as we have the money enabling the State to settle the people and develop our industries.

The Premier: When the Coolgardie goldfields were discovered 32 years ago, we had a population of under 50,000.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have a population of only 350,000 now.

The Premier: Still, that was a great advance on the previous 50 or 60 years.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is no doubt about that, but there are only 145,000 Western Australian-born people here now.

Mr. Panton: The Victorians have not done their duty, but only the "gropers."

The Premier: But gold proved a stimulus to population.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and I would like to see more goldfields discovered here because they do attract people. It will only be when Western Australia is fairly well developed that Federation will be other than a curse to this country. Perhaps I should not call it a curse, but it is a serious load for us. The partnership is so unequal. Our manufacturers have to struggle without protection against established industries in the Eastern States, and will have to continue to do so until we are fully developed. We must make sacrifices now in order to secure the development of Western Australia. We must work harder than ever to achieve that objective, so that the partnership may be more equitable. We must remain federated, and in order to lighten the load, we must work in the interests of our children and of unborn generations. Our people do work hard to-day, and I doubt whether any other 350,000 people in the world could accomplish as much as the population of Western Australia has done. Victoria and New South Wales, which are boasted about so much, have only 5,000,000 acres under crop, despite their great population, but here, with our much smaller population, we have 2,000,000 acres under crop. I do not know how we have accomplished the work achieved in the past, and it is certainly wonderful that we have done so much. As to the finances, we have borrowed and spent wisely. We have 20s. worth of assets and more for every 20s. we have borrowed. Some people say we have borrowed too much. How can that be so if we have expended wisely? Coming generations will enjoy the advantages of this wonderful asset. A British soap manufacturer owes as much to the British public as does this country. When I was in London this soap manufacturer borrowed £8,000,000 in about eight minutes for his factory. Yet there are some people here who squirm when we talk about borrowing money for the development of our State. Our interest bill is often talked about as if the taxpayer paid it to the Treasury. The taxpayer does not pay taxes to the Treasury to cover the interest bill. In 1911, every penny of interest and sinking fund was earned by in-

vested money. The taxpayer had all the advantages of the investments and paid not a penny in taxes towards the interest. Money has been borrowed and lent to the farmers, who pay the interest. We must not forget that £20,000,000 has been put into the railways, and it is the railways that pay the interest on that money. It is the same all round, the investments providing the interest. I read a statement made in another place that the interest bill of £2,500,000 was being paid by the taxpayers. I have pointed out that the interest is found by the investments into which the money has found its way. No interest is paid from the general taxes, and it should not be so paid, seeing that we are developing our country. It is sane to borrow and to lend so long as the money is wisely spent. If there be an acre of land in this country that wants clearing, and it can be used to produce wealth, then it is a sane policy to borrow money to carry out what we have in view. We borrow money on the collective credit of the people who do the work. If the country is worth holding it is surely worth developing. We have borrowed £7,000,000 for the farmers, including the soldiers, and we have paid £125,000 for that. Public borrowing is not like private finance. When an individual sells a block of land and gets his money for it, that is the end of it. When a man lends a thousand pounds to a farmer to improve a 1,000-acre block he collects the interest and that is the end of him. When a Government lends thousands of pounds that is only the beginning. The State in return for that loan, gets freights and trade, which are of great importance to the Treasury. In fact the Treasury collects in a score of different ways as the result of the money advanced by the Government for development. The Government collects as much, if not more, indirectly, than it does directly. It is a wonderful thing, but it is so and the finances are as we find them to-day because money has been borrowed and wisely spent. The collective credit of the people can be used for the development of the State so long as the control of the expenditure is all right. All the money that has been spent on agricultural development—I admit that some of it has been lost—is paying the State handsomely, indirectly, and to a far greater extent than the rate of interest that is charged for the money. I hope the House will permit me to repeat that too much is said about the credit of the State. I know precious little of the world, but I have seen some of it, and so far as I know there is no country that can be compared with the south-western portion of our State for its climate and its productive capabilities. I doubt whether there is any place like the South-West that can produce crops all the year round.

Mr. Lamond: What about the North-West?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am referring to the South-West. There is very

little of the earth's surface that will grow crops all the year round without irrigation. We have a three-crop country there and we do not realise it or value it as we should do. We seem to prefer to listen to the tales of woe that are told, and to the statements that this and that cannot be done. We are told all this by people who ought to know better, people who seem to get into a funk without any provocation. Of course I do not for a moment attempt to minimise the difficulties the Treasurer will have to face. He is bound to experience difficulties and trouble, but he must face them boldly. Those people who spoke against development and who adversely criticised the wheat belt are now turning their attention to the South-West and to group settlements. They might be likened to—

An infant crying in the night,  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry.

The Premier: At whom are you looking now?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not referring to anyone in this House as the child who is crying in the night or the child crying for the light whose only language is a cry. I have already said that the House has for the last five years supported the policy to which I have referred to, and I have acknowledged the help that I received from members. I would like to say a few words about immigration. The Federal Government pays the cost of securing and landing the migrants. The agreement that has been entered into with this State gives us an advantage by which the State will save from £1,000,000 to £1,200,000 in interest, a sum of money that will cover the losses that may be sustained. We would never have been in the position we find ourselves in to-day but for immigration, and paying as we do so little and getting so much. When I entered into the existing agreement in London it was understood that if any of the other States subsequently secured an advantage over that obtained by us, it would be made to apply to us as well. The Agent General had an undertaking to that effect from the British Government and any advantageous clauses embodied in the agreements made with New South Wales and Victoria will also be embodied in ours. We are told that we should get men with money. I should like to point out that every Agent General we have had has tried to do that, but without success. Sir James Connolly who was the representative of this State in London for six years tried in every possible way to induce people with capital to come to this State. People with money prefer to stay at home, or perhaps they go to South Africa, where they can get cheap and more or less effective labour. I do not know that it is effective, but it is not hard to get. Sir James Connolly and other Agents General have been enthusiastic about immigration but they failed to get hold of people with capital.

The Premier: If men with money came out here they would only purchase improved farms; they would not go into virgin country.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: In any case, men with money could not be got. I would prefer to have able bodied men without means, than men not so physically fit possessing a little cash. We can do far more with physically strong men. Of course, we want men with money, too, but they are not to be had. The work of the Immigration office in London has been conducted by the Commonwealth Government quite as satisfactorily as was done by the State. I should like to acknowledge the good work that has been done at Home, and although there have been sent out some men who did not come from farming or country districts, it must not be forgotten that many of that class have paid their own fares. I have not much more to say. I hope I have made it clear to the Premier that I am willing to help if he calls upon me in any way to do so. Of course, I must oppose his proposals if I think they are wrong. At the same time we must not forget that we are all here for the good of our country, and that we must do the best we can to assist the Government in power at the present time of trouble. I may be pardoned for referring, before I conclude, to the work of the previous Government. When we took possession of the Treasury bench we found considerable unemployment. There were also many soldiers unemployed. We found that the State's duty to the soldiers was being neglected, and in addition, the finances were in a bad way. We found ever increasing difficulties owing to high costs due to an excessive tariff. We promised that there should be employment for everyone, we promised that there should be prosperity and we promised to straighten the finances. We told the people that all this could be brought about only by an active policy of settlement. We entered upon that policy, borrowed a great sum of money, and invested it wisely with the result that the deficit in the space of two years was reduced from £730,000 to £229,000, an improvement of over £500,000. This was due not so much to the increased rates of taxation, but as a result of increased trade and increased prosperity. This could have been brought about only by the policy that we followed. Our railways have done better and generally an improvement has been apparent all round. We invested 10 millions of money in the development of the land. If the country was better off then than it is with to-day's taxation, so much the better. However, the work of development must go on. During my term of office the present Premier said to me more than once, "If you get £200,000 off the deficit in a year, you will be doing well." The previous Government got £500,000 off the deficit; this year the

deficit is just about the amount of the cash contribution to the sinking fund.

Mr. Thomson: That is the statement I made during the election. I suppose you will now admit its correctness.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. member interjecting did not say that.

Mr. Thomson: I said that, and you said it was wrong.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not believe it.

Mr. Thomson: It is so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. member made no such statement at all. I am saying that the previous Government reduced the deficit by £500,000 in two years.

The Minister for Lands: You knew how to do it all right.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The editor of a Victorian Labour paper, when he first became editor, declared, "I will see no fault in my friends, and no good in my enemies." There are some people so constituted.

The Minister for Lands: What I said was that you did it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: My remark was not in reference to the Minister for Lands, but to the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson). At all events, the position of the country is highly satisfactory; and that fact is due to the farmers. The member for Katanning leads a party which is the direct representation of the farmers' organisation.

Mr. Thomson: The official party.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But the organisation is no more the direct representative of the farmers than I am.

Mr. Thomson: Anyway, you did your best to lick me.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There are some cowards in this world.

Mr. Thomson: Oh!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I went to Katanning for the purpose of replying to statements made by the member for Katanning. I did no more than that, and I was at liberty to do it as representing the farmers of this country. I wanted the farmers to get a fair deal, as well as other people. The previous Government practised economy. They paid more in wages and salaries than was ever paid before, but nevertheless they practised economy in administration. We have left the State on a sound footing, and we have left the farmers much more prosperous than they ever were before. The farmer has the right to a fair say in the government of the country, and I hope he will see that he always gets it. But I do not see that it is necessary for the farmer to have any special organisation. He should have his say in this Chamber through farmers themselves, if possible, men who can speak of farming necessities from their own experience. I have no hesitation in say-

ing that we have desired and do desire all the time the prosperity of this country, and the prosperity of this country's farmers. Further, I do not hesitate to declare that we have achieved both those desires. To-day the prosperity of Western Australia is greater than was ever known before. I regret, naturally, the existence of differences among members on this side of the House; but I am not in any way to blame for those differences. My object has been to steady the position and go on with the work of government, at the same time advancing the interests of all the people of Western Australia. I repeat that the Governor's Speech practically confirms the work of the late Government. As regards other proposals contained in the Speech, they cannot be discussed now because they are merely mentioned baldly, without any details of the Government's intentions.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [6.9]: As Leader of the Country Party—

Mr. Marshall: Which Country Party?

Mr. THOMSON: The Country Party. I have great pleasure in tendering to you, Sir, my sincere congratulations upon your having attained the high and dignified position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. From my personal knowledge of you, gained during the nine years I have spent in this Chamber, I feel quite sure that every member, irrespective of his politics, will receive from you the full measure of justice which one can reasonably expect from the Chair. I desire also to take this opportunity of congratulating Ministers upon having had thrust on their shoulders an onerous task. Unquestionably they have every reason to be proud of the result of the recent election. The Premier must be highly gratified to find that, according to the Opposition Leader's speech, everything in the garden is so lovely.

The Premier: I wish it were so.

Mr. THOMSON: I sincerely hope it is so.

Mr. Marshall: Your hope will soon be shattered.

Mr. THOMSON: I agree with the view expressed in this State, in South Australia, and in Victoria, that the Labour Party, when they come into power, should be given at least a reasonable opportunity to govern the country. The party which I have the honour to lead are not one whit behind the present Opposition Leader in the desire to ensure that prosperity shall smile upon Western Australia. My party have no reason to be ashamed of the position we occupy in this Chamber. Members who sat here last session know that, unfortunately, there were only three of this party left. The late Premier said in his speech to-day that he was sorry so many old faces had gone from the Chamber. One cannot help experiencing regret that men with whom one has worked side by side in Parliament, and some of whom contributed most ably to the

debates, should have fallen by the wayside. The Opposition Leader was good enough to say that an Opposition consisting of one united party would yield better results to the State.

The Premier: We over here derive much greater benefit from a divided Opposition, which is highly informative. From such an Opposition we get various angles of vision.

Mr. THOMSON: The Opposition Leader said he regretted the absence of Mr. Maley, Mr. Money, and Mr. Underwood. He did not mention the late member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering), whom he helped to defeat.

Mr. George: That is not correct.

Mr. THOMSON: It is quite correct. I am prepared to substantiate my statement.

Mr. George: Do so.

Mr. THOMSON: I did not wish to go into this phase, but I may give one reference. Within a week of the present Government coming into power, a deputation waited on the Minister for Works, Mr. McCallum, to ask that the Busselton jetty should be extended. Mr. Ewing, a member of the late Administration, went within one week of the formation of the present Government to ask that certain work should be done at Busselton, which work he, as a representative of the district affected, and as the holder of a seat in the late Cabinet, should have been able to get done, seeing that it was a justifiable requirement of his district.

Mr. Richardson: Do you really think that jetty should be extended?

Mr. THOMSON: The deputation waited upon the present Minister for Works, who quoted a minute which had been written by the late Premier. I had no intention of touching on this matter.

Mr. Richardson: There is nothing wrong in that.

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

Mr. THOMSON: Before tea I was remarking that the Leader of the Opposition had expressed regret at the absence of so many familiar faces from the House. I regret that, unfortunately, we have lost from the cross benches the services of Mr. Pickering, whose services are lost also to the House.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And lost to the State.

Mr. Richardson: "Harvard" will miss him.

Mr. THOMSON: There has been a general expression of opinion in Western Australia, in South Australia, and in Victoria, that the Labour Government coming into power in each of those States should have a reasonable opportunity to administer the affairs of State without any factious opposition. I wish to assure our Premier that it is the desire of the party behind me to assist him in placing the State on a sound financial basis.

Mr. Latham: Is that offer made unconditionally?

Mr. THOMSON: The Premier will recognise that, probably, occasions will arise when he must not be surprised if we of this party voice our opinions and, if necessary, vote against the Government's measures.

The Premier: I do not expect there will be any occasion on which we shall disagree.

Mr. THOMSON: I feel I cannot congratulate the late Premier on his actions during the recent elections.

The Premier: I think he is not quite satisfied himself.

Mr. THOMSON: It is remarkable that throughout the Commonwealth determined attacks have been made upon the Country Party. In this State, at election time, we had the spectacle of the then Leader of the Government devoting the whole of his energies to an attack upon those men who had loyally supported him, and assisted to keep him in power for 4½ years. He had no more loyal section than the Country Party.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Heavens! I don't know about you.

Mr. THOMSON: It is a remarkable coincidence that the ex-Premier and his Ministers concentrated on men standing in the interests of the Country Party.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is not true.

Mr. THOMSON: It is, and I will prove it. I did not wish to refer to my own electorate, but it is well known that the ex-Premier devoted two days to it. For this I now thank him publicly, because the longer he stayed there and the more he had to say, the greater number of votes did I get. But the ex-Premier could not spare time to visit an adjoining constituency in which one Labour man, two Ministerial Country Party, and a Nationalist were competing. He did not have time to go down to Albany nor to visit certain other electorates.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I merely went to answer your attacks on me. Be fair.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not want to go into anything personal.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course not!

Mr. THOMSON: But it is well known that the gentleman who was induced to oppose me came out only on the distinct understanding that the ex-Premier would devote time in my electorate. I do not blame the ex-Premier. He was perfectly justified in coming to my electorate; but when he now comes to the House and desires to impress upon people that he wishes we were all one united party, I say his actions savour of insincerity.

Mr. Angelo: I thought the elections were over.

Mr. THOMSON: We as a party have every reason to be well satisfied with the result of the elections, considering the overwhelming odds against us. We are having exactly the same experience as the Labour Party had when first it came into being. All hands were against it. In

every State of Australia to-day the Country Party is being attacked. I honestly believe that in the interests of good government, not only of the States, but of the Commonwealth, the Country Party has justified its existence. The interests of the country districts are bound up with Country Party members in the various Parliaments. We are out to look after the interests of the country districts and of the primary producers. The Leader of the Opposition claims that he has done more for the farmers than has the Country Party.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: So I have.

Mr. THOMSON: He has merely done his duty as a Premier of this State. I am confident the present Premier will equally do his duty, not only by those whom he directly represents, but also by the primary producers. It is the duty of those who accept the responsibility of administering the State to do justice by all men. Despite any differences we may have on the floor of the House, I am confident that the members of any party will be able to approach the present Ministers and receive from them courtesy and consideration. I am sorry to say we of this party have not always received that in the past.

Mr. Corboy: You have received it during the past two or three months.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so. When first I came to the House the Labour Government were in power. I could not but admire the members of that Government when I found that, no matter how we might criticise them in the House, next morning we could go to their office and be received courteously.

Mr. Latham: Has not that always been extended to you?

Mr. THOMSON: No.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: State the occasion.

Mr. THOMSON: The one cry made throughout my electorate during the election was, "How can you expect consideration for your district when your member is always opposing the Premier?"

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I did not say that.

Mr. THOMSON: Actions speak louder than words.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are not a man; you are not half a man to talk like that.

Mr. THOMSON: Judging the ex-Premier by his actions, it is difficult to reconcile his attitude as Leader of the Opposition; because during the recent elections, instead of attacking my friends now on the Treasury benches, he religiously concentrated his attacks on those who had given him loyal support.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is not true, I tell you again.

Mr. THOMSON: It is perfectly true.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Then it was ungrateful of members of the present Government to have put him out of office.

Mr. THOMSON: It was a remarkable coincidence that at the election union secretaries in Katanning were flying round in motor cars and working for the hon. gentleman.

The Premier: Oh, that was camouflage.

Mr. THOMSON: I have no desire to be unfriendly to the Leader of the Opposition. Of course the hon. gentleman was endeavouring to justify his position, which he is entitled to do. But behind it all was this: he was endeavouring to show that he was the only man out to look after the interests of the primary producers, and that he had done more for the farmers than had members of the Country Party. Those of us who sit on the cross-benches voted for principles we believed to be right, and I think the results speak for themselves. I am pleased to notice in the Speech the following:—

My Ministers regard the policy of immigration and land settlement, combined with the development of our natural resources, as of paramount importance. To the extent rendered possible by financial assistance received and by land made available for selection, our kinsmen from overseas will be warmly welcomed.

Those words, or words similar to them, have appeared in the Governor's Speech in every State of the Commonwealth. We in Western Australia are more vitally concerned with primary production than is any other State, except perhaps New South Wales and Queensland. Primary production is our stable industry. I am quite confident that the present Administration will see to it that our primary producers have reasonable consideration. Every Government in the Commonwealth have as one of their principal platform planks the opening up and development of unused lands, and the creation of wealth by production from the land, and that is ably backed up by the Commonwealth Government. It is a most remarkable fact that, while the tariff is outside the function of the State Parliaments, every State is assisting to settle men on the land. They are borrowing money and offering liberal conditions of settlement, besides making advances for clearing, fencing and dam sinking. Everything is done to assist settlers to the high road to success. Sir James Mitchell said we were suffering from the effects of the high tariff. It is the bounden duty of every State to bring pressure to bear on the Federal Government and show them that the tariff is strangling the primary producer. Duties are imposed upon implements. On a fully equipped farm the impositions of the Federal tariff would mean anything up to £400 or £500, and the farmer has to pay also the profit of the wholesaler and the retailer.

Mr. Mann: He would have to pay that in any case.

Mr. THOMSON: On the other hand, the Federal Parliament imposes a high tariff for the protection of the manufacturer. Yet 93 per cent. of the exports of the Commonwealth are primary products. The Arbitration Court stipulates the rate of wages to be paid, and after a man has produced his wheat he is told, "The world's market value of wheat is 6s. 6d. We will deduct the cost of shipping and handling at the other end, plus railway freight and handling charges at this end, and give you so much." Mark the difference in the position of the primary producer and that of the protected manufacturer in the Eastern States! The farmer has to take world's parity. He cannot be protected in the price he receives for his produce. I want our friends on the Government side to consider this matter seriously. When men go to the Arbitration Court seeking an increase in pay, the first point raised in favour of it is the high cost of living. What is responsible for the high cost of living? It is the high tariff imposed by the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Half of which at present consists of Country Party members.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so, but members of the Country Party are sincere in their desire to have the tariff reduced. In the Federal Parliament, Country Party members form a very small section. I appeal to Labour members to use their influence to get some of these high duties reduced. We are living in a fool's paradise. During the year thirty-six million pounds has been collected through the Federal customs, an average of £6 per head for every man, woman and child in the Commonwealth. Then we wonder why the cost of living is so high! It is time a combined effort was made by the State Parliaments to impress upon the Federal authorities that the tariff should be reduced. I have explained the position of the man on the land. Let us now consider the mining industry. The standard price of gold is fixed. By no act of Government, State or Federal, can the price of gold be increased. It is practically the same now as it was in pre-war days.

Mr. Panton: No.

Mr. THOMSON: Practically the same.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It is now £4 13s. an ounce.

Mr. THOMSON: Those in the mining industry are not in a position to say that the production of gold has cost so much and that they are going to charge so much for their gold. They are not in the position of manufacturers protected by a high tariff, who can say that the cost of their machinery and plant is so much, depreciation so much, profit so much, and on those figures fix the sale price of their manufactures. The mining industry is in exactly the same position as the agricultural industry, and we members of the Country Party should have the support of representatives of mining constituencies. A deputation recently waited on the

Prime Minister, who said that where an article could not be produced in Australia the Federal Government would probably admit it free of duty. There was a very generous concession. How much of the mining machinery used in this State is manufactured in Western Australia? Very little. It is brought from the Eastern States.

Mr. Lutey: We manufacture mining machinery on the goldfields and send it to Tasmania.

Mr. THOMSON: There is not too much of that being done. When machinery of the latest type is required, it has to be imported and duty has to be paid on it. Explosives also have to pay a high rate of duty. We as representatives of primary producers, and mining members as representatives of that industry, should be able to say to the Eastern States that we want the tariff duties reduced.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Suppose they did not reduce them?

Mr. THOMSON: Then we should be in no worse position than we are to-day. By continually hammering away and presenting a united front, we might achieve something. If we do not ask for anything, the Federal authorities will be justified in assuming that we are satisfied. According to the Speech it is intended to appoint a Royal Commission to consider the conditions affecting mining and to make recommendations with a view to its improvement. Owing to the high tariff and to high taxation, the mining industry is suffering severely.

Mr. Latham: You will notice what is in the Governor's Speech on that point.

Mr. THOMSON: When the Royal Commission is appointed I hope it will receive a direction from the House to carefully inquire into the disabilities from which the industry is suffering, particularly the disabilities of high taxation and high tariff. I even hope that it will be possible to consider the difficulties under which the primary producer is labouring owing to the same causes. The mining industry is going back and no one regrets it more than I do. I hope that the good reports regarding the Wiluna goldfield will be verified, and that a successful mining field will be opened up there. If we had the fortune to strike a good goldfield, there would be no difficulty in getting a large influx of population. The Speech also says—

In order to encourage a high production from vacant lands adjacent to existing railways, and to permit of closer settlement, an amendment to the Land Tax and Income Tax Act, 1923, will be sought, and to the same end a Closer Settlement Bill will be introduced.

Having no knowledge of the proposed amendments to the Land Tax and Income Tax Act, I cannot discuss them at present, nor do I wish to jump at the closer settlement fence. It will be time to do that when the measure

comes before the House. But I hope the Premier will give serious consideration to the question of reducing taxation. When one goes to the Eastern States it is appalling to meet men who have left Western Australia and taken the whole of their capital out of this State and invested it there. When these men are asked the reason why, they tell it frankly. One gentleman made the following statement to me, and it can be verified by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston), "The money I save in State taxation in Victoria as against what I would have to pay in Western Australia is sufficient to pay the whole of my household expenses and educate my children."

Mr. Latham: If he made his money here he was a very poor class of Western Australian.

Mr. THOMSON: That man was born in Western Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is he getting a pension from Western Australia?

Mr. THOMSON: No, he is quite independent. It is all very well to say that he is a poor class of man. We in Western Australia are asking people to come into the State and invest their money here.

Mr. Sampson: There are greater opportunities here.

Mr. THOMSON: There may be, but more money is taken from them by way of taxation. When we compare the rate of taxation in Victoria with that of Western Australia, it is obvious that this matter should be given serious consideration. I have given a plain statement of facts, and have no reason to doubt its correctness. It is remarkable the number of people who are transferring their money to the Eastern States.

Mr. Sampson: It is a great problem; the money is needed here.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, more than it is in Victoria. I trust the Premier will give the matter serious consideration, and will strike off the 15 per cent. super tax that was placed on the statute-book by the late Premier. This was imposed purely as a war measure and as a temporary expedient. The member for Northam told us that the Commonwealth were receiving large sums of money as a result of a war measure; just as is the case with this super tax. I hope the tax will be struck off and a measure of relief given to the taxpayers. A deputation waited on the Prime Minister in connection with our mining industry, asking for a rebate of dividend and income tax on mining companies' profits until after the amount required for the purchase of the property and working capital spent on the mine had been recovered from the profits. I commend that proposal to the earnest consideration of the Premier. He has, of course, a grave responsibility. To ask the Treasurer to relax his grasp upon any income he is receiving to-day is perhaps asking him to do something that is more than human.

Mr. Latham: Why not show how it can be done?

Mr. THOMSON: It has been proved conclusively in the Old Country by Mr. Baldwin that when he reduced taxation he increased employment. If we take away from the people money that is being used in increasing production and finding employment, it represents a distinct loss to the State. There is no doubt people are transferring their money to the Eastern States, where the taxation is lighter than it is here. The Prime Minister raised a considerable number of objections why this relief to the gold-mining industry could not be given by the Taxation Department, but he promised to give the matter consideration. I believe we could in this State evolve a scheme to assist those who are desirous of investing their money in mining. It is a different proposition to invest the money in land. One opens up and develops one's land and, as the improvements are effected, so is the value of the asset increased. In the case of a mine, the asset is being depleted as fast as ore is being taken out, until ultimately all that is left is a hole in the ground. We must use every effort to encourage people with capital to invest their money in our mines. I do not propose to go fully into the group settlement question. The Government have every right to carry out the promises they made on the hustings. I remember the Premier said that if returned to power it was the intention of his party to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into group settlement. I am in favour of that system of opening up the country. It is a sound and sensible way of opening up our heavily timbered areas, and making more congenial the lives of the settlers upon those areas. The Minister for Lands gave to the "West Australian" a number of figures, which appear to justify the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the reason why so many settlers have left the groups. As members of Parliament we have two duties to perform. One is to see that the money that is being expended is wisely spent, and more important still we have to see that the people we place on the groups have a reasonable chance of making good. The latter point is more important than the loss of a few thousand pounds. Many people have been placed on land that is unsuitable, and have been faced with such adverse seasons and conditions that after 10 or 12 years they have walked off their holdings poorer in pocket, health, and spirit, and less fit to make a fresh start in life. I see no objection to the appointment of a Royal Commission from which good must result. A Royal Commission inquired into the Peel and Bateman estates. We were told that this system of group settlement was so simple that if it were explained to us would not understand it.

The Minister for Lands: The first part is simple.

Mr. THOMSON: That was a most astounding statement to make. As it hap-

pens I am in a position to say, "I told you so."

Mr. Latham: You are one of those who would break the hearts of men by the sort of encouragement you give them.

Mr. THOMSON: I have given practical help to the settlers, just as much as the hon. member has done.

Mr. Latham: You are not doing it now.

Mr. THOMSON: Amongst the recommendations of the Peel Estate Commission is one that a group settlement board should be constituted so as to include in its personnel representatives of the agricultural, dairying, and stock departments.

The Minister for Lands: That has already been done.

Mr. THOMSON: That was not in existence when we had the temerity to criticise the administration. We were dubbed as disloyal to the Government because we endeavoured to show that the scheme was not established on a sound basis. I resent the statement made by the member for York (Mr. Latham) that I would break the hearts of men by the encouragement I give them.

The Minister for Lands: You must not take any notice of him.

Mr. THOMSON: I have fought consistently to improve the conditions of the man on the land. I say with all sincerity that my record in this House will compare more than favourably with that of the hon. member.

Mr. Latham: No one is talking about records.

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member suggests that I am out to discourage people on the land.

Mr. Latham: If you talk as much as you do about obstacles you will discourage them.

Mr. THOMSON: If it is possible to remove obstacles and give men a reasonable chance of success, it is our bounden duty to do what we can to clear them away. I say it is my duty, as a representative of the primary producers, to endeavour to do this. The hon. member can, of course, do as he thinks fit.

Mr. Latham: I intend to do so without any permission from you.

Mr. THOMSON: I will return the compliment.

Mr. Sampson: Brotherly love.

Mr. Latham: He cut that out long ago.

Mr. THOMSON: I am glad to know our finances are improving, and I hope they will continue to do so. A grave responsibility is cast upon the Premier. The financial position is serious throughout the Commonwealth, and money is very tight. I regret that through an administrative act the Government have introduced the 44-hour week. That was a mistake. We say we want more capital brought in and industries established here. How can we compete with the industries of the Eastern States that are working under the 48-hour system if we are working under the 44-hour system? It is not possible.



The Premier: I suppose you are aware this was introduced and obtained for four years by the Government you supported?

Mr. THOMSON: I thought it was introduced first by the Arbitration Court.

The Premier: No.

Mr. THOMSON: Whether that is so or not, it is wrong to introduce it now. We cannot open up and develop this country handicapped to the extent of four hours a week. The whole of our interests in this State are in primary products, and we shall be placed in a hopeless position. I trust this will not be made general. I have no objection to the shorter hours, but I do not see how we can compete with the rest of the world under the 44-hour system. It is gratifying to know that last year the average yield per acre was 11.4 bushels. Wheat and wool will take a tremendous amount of financing, and no one knows better than the Premier the serious responsibility that devolves upon him. The banks state that they are not in a position to finance a wheat pool. It is gratifying to the party to which I belong to know that the Government of this State, and that of South Australia and Victoria, are sympathetic towards the primary producer, and are prepared to assist him in respect to a wheat pool. It may be interesting to hon. members to learn that, owing to the adverse exchange at the present time, the sale of products in the Old Country has represented to the primary producers of the Commonwealth a loss of £3,500,000. That is a serious economic loss to Australia, for not only have the primary producers lost that amount, but the Commonwealth is poorer to the extent of an equal sum.

The Minister for Lands: The Commonwealth has had its share through the bank.

Mr. THOMSON: That may be so, but the producers as a whole are three and a half million pounds the poorer. I am pleased that it is the intention of the Government to give the growing of cotton a fair trial. To date that industry has not, apparently, had the assistance that has been given to other industries. It is also satisfactory to note that the present Government are prepared to give the primary producers, including those interested in mining, favourable and serious consideration. The only possible policy for Western Australia is one of land development, no matter what Government may be in power. While willing to give the ex-Premier, Sir James Mitchell, every credit for a sincere desire to increase primary production, I feel confident that the members of the Labour Administration are just as sincere, because they realise that the traffic for the railways and the money required to carry on the State must be produced from the wealth created from our soil. Side by side with the opening up and development of the country we must encourage profitable production. What on earth is the good of telling a man to

produce certain commodities if, having grown them, he is unable to get a reasonable price for his goods? Then again, they must be given reasonable marketing facilities. I look with confidence to the primary producers receiving favourable consideration from the present Government. I regret that the Government have not mentioned among the Bills to be introduced this session one to permit the handing over to the metropolitan authorities of those utilities that should be vested in them. I refer to such utilities as the tramways and the water supply and sewerage services. Those activities should be administered by a board of works comprising representatives of the various municipalities and road boards in the metropolitan area. The Leader of the Opposition stated that Ministers who had been in charge of the Treasury bench for the past three years, had been overworked.

Mr. George: I can testify to that as one of them.

Mr. THOMSON: Every Minister in the Labour Government works more than 44 hours a week.

Mr. George: And does not get overtime.

Mr. Panton: You got more than 13s. 4d. a day.

Mr. Lambert: And you were not worth it either.

Mr. THOMSON: The Leader of the Opposition said that another Minister should be appointed. If he knew that Ministers were overworked, why did not Sir James Mitchell make another Ministerial appointment when he had the opportunity to do so? What is the good of suggesting to the present Administration that another Minister should be appointed?

The Premier: He would have been peculiarly embarrassed in making a selection at that time!

Mr. THOMSON: I admit that. I congratulate the Government on the appointment of Honorary Ministers to relieve the burden on the shoulders of Ministers. If they adopt the course I have advocated for so long and hand over the administration of metropolitan utilities to the local authorities, that will further lighten the work of Cabinet.

Mr. Latham: And get rid of the State trading concerns, too.

The Premier: I am willing to consider any request from the local authorities on that question.

Mr. THOMSON: I believe the metropolitan local authorities would certainly wait upon the Premier if they thought sympathetic consideration would be given to their requests.

Mr. George: Do you think the metropolitan authorities would be able to agree?

Mr. THOMSON: The system works elsewhere, and I do not see why it should not work satisfactorily here.

Mr. George: I have seen them, and know them and their attitude; so does the Minister for Lands.

Mr. THOMSON: The Governor's Speech contains a reference to the British Special Service Squadron berthing safely in the harbour at Fremantle because it had been dredged to a depth of 36 feet. During the last Parliament I drew attention to the fact that a dredge was lying idle at Albany, and I suggested that its services should be utilised to dredge the harbour there to a depth of 36 feet. The then Minister for Works said that the people were satisfied and that the harbour had been dredged to a depth of 34 feet. In some parts I know it has a depth of only 33 feet.

Mr. George: I gave you the figures and quoted them from the file.

Mr. Sampson: It must have silted up a little.

Mr. THOMSON: In any case the dredge was there, and it is a pity that the work was not done as I suggested.

Mr. George: Funds could not be provided, and that is why it was not done.

Mr. THOMSON: I am sorry that it was not done. I regret that there is no mention in the Governor's Speech of a Bill to amend the Industries Assistance Act. I feel keenly on that question, but I recognise the Government are in a difficult position.

The Minister for Lands: I am feeling it every day.

Mr. THOMSON: I am sure of that. Many worthy settlers will be placed in an unfortunate position unless the Act is amended, for they will be pushed off the land after working hard for many years. The board, under the direction of the Minister, should have authority to write down the indebtedness of clients of the Industries Assistance Board where those clients have proved to be genuine triers. As it is, men are refused further assistance and they are passed out. A man may probably owe the board £2,000. Tenders are called for the lease of his farm, and a new man who secures the benefit of the genuine farmer's efforts may enter into possession for £1,200 or so.

The Minister for Lands: You need not be concerned about the attitude of the board regarding men who are genuine triers.

Mr. THOMSON: I have always believed that the board has given sympathetic treatment to genuine triers, but many men are financially overloaded through no fault of their own, because they have been compelled to do what is contrary to good farming. If the value of a farm on the open market is only £1,200 or £1,500, and the farmer has proved himself a trier to the satisfaction of the board, he should have the opportunity of getting his farm at that reduced figure, thus enabling him to make a fresh start

rather than be forced off the land to make another start elsewhere.

Mr. Sampson: Giving the newcomer the benefit of all his past labour.

Mr. THOMSON: That is the position. I appeal to the Minister for Lands to give this matter his sympathetic consideration. He is a man who has had to battle in the past, and I am sure he will be sympathetic with the men who have to battle today. I say it in all sorrow that when we sat on the Government side with a party of 32 members, we were unable to get what I regard as justice for the men who went on the land.

Mr. Sampson: That is carping criticism.

Mr. THOMSON: It is not; it is a simple statement of fact. It is on record in "Hansard" that I asked the then Premier if he would give this matter his consideration. During the session I will have many opportunities to discuss the various Bills brought forward. I returned this morning from the Eastern States and I have come back to Western Australia convinced that this State is one of great possibilities. I am still as loyal and strong a believer in the future prospects of Western Australia as any member of this House. No man has a right to say that he alone is an optimist or that he alone has faith in the future of Western Australia. Every man in this Chamber is imbued with a sincere desire to foster the development of Western Australia, and to make the State prosperous. While reserving the right to criticise and vote against various measures that, in my opinion, are not in the interests of the State, I will give the present Administration every assistance I can to secure for Western Australia that prosperity every member of the House desires for the State.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1) £1,836,500.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 8.31 p.m.*