

AVE.	PAIR.	NO.
Miss Holman		Mr. Teesdale

Amendment thus negatived.

On motion by Mr. Piesse, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.59 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 4th September, 1930.*

Question: Railways, employees and wages	PAGE
Address-in-reply, eighth day	261

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

### QUESTION—RAILWAYS, EMPLOYEES AND WAGES.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1. How many persons were employed by the Railway Department in the years 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, and 1930? 2. What was the amount paid in salaries and wages for each of those years?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1. The average number of staff employed was as follows:—1925, 7,949; 1926, 8,251; 1927, 8,827; 1928, 9,312; 1929, 9,613; 1930, 9,660. 2. Total salaries and wages paid (including allowances):—1925, £1,922,093; 1926, £2,086,872; 1927, £2,294,640; 1928, £2,442,997; 1929, £2,551,056; 1930, £2,587,456.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Eighth Day.*

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.35]: I desire to assure the House at the outset that it is not my intention to make a marathon effort such as that indulged in by Mr. Nicholson yesterday, nor shall I put over the House

any Scotch jokes. I do not intend to deal individually with those who were referred to by previous speakers, either to express sympathy or to pay a compliment, but will content myself with stating I endorse what they said. I was pleased when I read some time ago in the Press that the embargo placed upon manures from the North West boats had been lifted, but on making investigations I regretted to find that, owing to the departmental inspectors having discovered the presence of Buffalo flies at Fremantle, the lifting of the embargo was merely temporary. At first I thought that their efforts to cope with that pest had been successful, and that would have been of great advantage to many settlers, particularly in the Spearwood district to whom the use of the cheap manure from the boats means, to put it plainly, the difference between carrying on and closing up. Until the last two years or so, the growers had the benefit of the use of the manures, but now, because of the Buffalo fly, they have not that advantage. Owing to the discovery of the Buffalo fly at Fremantle, the department has found it impossible to lift the embargo permanently. I trust, however, that investigations will be continued and that before the summer, some means of dealing with the pest will be discovered and then the growers will be able to have the benefit again of cheap manure from the North-West boats. Earlier in the session I asked the Leader of the House questions regarding sewerage work at East Fremantle. I did not ask those questions from mere idle curiosity, but because the East Fremantle district has been surveyed for at least 12 months. Many new premises have been erected there during the past two or three years, for East Fremantle has gone ahead by leaps and bounds. Those who contemplated building have been at their wit's end to ascertain whether the department intended to proceed with the sewerage of that particular area. Some of them proposed to instal septic tanks, but did not desire to go to that expense if there was a possibility of the department proceeding with the sewerage of the area. I am sorry that the answers furnished by the Leader of the House were rather vague, for the people concerned are now in the same position as they were before I asked the question. When the Minister replies to the debate, I hope he will at least give us some information as to when

the Government are likely to proceed with the sewerage of East Fremantle. Sir Edward Wittenoom mentioned the question of wharfage charges and said that in Sydney ships did not pay any such dues. He pointed out that that gave the passengers a chance for a stay at that port during the week end. The explanation of that position is that most, if not all, of the shipping companies have their private wharves at Sydney and therefore their position is totally different from that which obtains at Fremantle.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: On a point of explanation, I mentioned that if a ship arrived on a Saturday and was tied up till Monday, during which no work was done, it would be of great advantage to Fremantle if 100, or possibly 2,000, passengers were running about and spending money.

Hon. G. FRASER: I quite understand the point raised by the hon. member, and I agree with him that if so many passengers were in our State over the week end, it would be of advantage. I was not dealing with that phase, but with the hon. member's reference to wharfage dues, and I advance an explanation as to why the difference arose at Fremantle as compared with Sydney conditions. Another matter I wish to deal with refers to a hardy annual—the Fremantle bridges.

Hon. C. B. Williams: No money! Don't waste time on that!

Hon. G. FRASER: I wish to refer to that because the question of the bridges has been discussed in recent years from the point of view of harbour extension. The Government have been endeavouring to find additional wharfage accommodation at Fremantle and I believe room has been found for another three berths. In those circumstances, I can see that it will be many years before the harbour extensions are carried out. If the bridge question rested on that relating to the harbour extensions, I would not say anything further. On the other hand, like many people in the Fremantle district and elsewhere, I have grave doubts as to whether the railway and traffic bridges will last until such time as the work of extending the harbour is undertaken. It was with that in mind that I asked questions regarding the bridges. There is a feeling of uneasiness at the port that the bridges are not in as safe a condition as they should be, and from the Minister's replies to my questions hon.

members will have ascertained that it is three years since an under-water examination was made, and no recommendations have been made by any of the engineers since 1926. I do not know how long before that it was that any other reports were received. Of course there was a recommendation from the Chairman of the Main Roads Board, but that dealt with the decking only. I am concerned with the understructure of the bridge, and the information contained in the diver's report, which has been laid on the Table, is illuminating. Even at that stage three years ago, the diver reported that approximately 30 piles were in a rotten condition. The unsatisfactory report was given over three years ago and no further inspection has been made. I was pleased to learn that immediately the water becomes clear, another inspection will be made. I have heard many comments by men who are in a position to speak authoritatively and they, as well as the people of Fremantle feel uneasy regarding the safety of the bridge. I trust there will be no delay in making an inspection, not only of the portions under water, but of the whole bridge. I am not an alarmist; I believe the bridge will stand for at least a few years more, but even if the Government decided at once to proceed with the construction of a new bridge, it could not be ready in less than five years. To add five years to the life of the present bridge, which three years ago was reported to be in an unsatisfactory condition, certainly seems risky. I hope the Government will make a definite move and have the bridge extensively overhauled. If it is in a condition to last for many more years, I would not be a party to asking the Government to expend money on a new bridge.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: The point is where is the money to come from?

Hon. G. FRASER: We realise that that is a difficulty, but if the bridge will not last, ways and means must be devised to provide a new bridge.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Did you refer to building or to maintaining the bridge?

Hon. G. FRASER: I think the bridge has reached a stage when it will be cheaper to build a new one than to maintain the old one. The figures supplied regarding

maintenance costs are illuminating. The costs are very heavy. I think that at least 90 per cent. of the money spent on the bridge has been expended on the decking, a portion about which I am not greatly concerned at the moment. This is not merely a Fremantle question. The bridge is an important link in the main artery between the city and the chief sea port, and we have to get away from the parochial idea that, because it is at Fremantle, then Fremantle members should speak of it. I believe that an underwater survey would cost £125 to £130, but a full survey of the structure would be more costly. However, I hope the Government will call for a report in order to allay the anxiety that exists. I wish to refer to the Government's application to the Arbitration Court regarding the working week for railway men and the question of district allowances. Most speakers during the debate have said that the only thing to save the State is increased production. I hope the profession to which Mr. Nicholson belongs will not work harder, as he has asked them to do, because we know that if they do, the only thing they will produce will be much larger costs to the people unfortunate enough to have to consult them. I endorse many of the remarks that have been made by previous speakers, but I regret that the Government have seen fit to attack first of all the conditions of the workers. On re-reading some of the speeches delivered during the election campaign, I find that supporters of the present Government said no attack would be made on the conditions of the workers.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You had better produce a few of the speeches because I have them all here.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have one or two newspaper cuttings.

Hon. E. H. Harris: One or two!

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. When I went to the files to get cuttings, I found that other members had forestalled me. However I managed to get one or two bearing on the matter.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Do not you think it would be cheaper to get rid of the court altogether?

Hon. G. FRASER: No, I do not.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: We do.

Hon. G. FRASER: I was surprised to learn that Sir Edward Wittenoom, Sir William Lathlain and, I think, Mr. Holmes are

in the same camp as the communists. They are the greatest advocates of abolishing the Arbitration Court, and I am sorry to find those three gentlemen in the company of the communists.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And yet the communists are allied with the Labour Party.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is not true, and the hon. member knows it.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It is pretty near the mark.

Hon. G. FRASER: The hon. member knows that no communist can be admitted as a member of the Australian Labour Party.

Hon. E. H. Harris interjected.

Hon. G. FRASER: A communist could be a member of the Nationalist Party or any other party.

Hon. E. H. Harris: A few are found there as well.

Hon. C. B. Williams: He has just cited two.

Hon. G. FRASER: The following statement was made, not by a member of Parliament, but by the secretary of the Nationalist campaign committee:—

"It is such an obviously shallow piece of election propaganda, without any foundation in fact, that it is beneath the contempt of the Nationalist Party," said the general secretary of the party, Mr. Allan McDonald, on Saturday, when questioned about the assertion by Labour candidates that the Opposition parties were aiming at a reduction of wages. "However, as some persons may be misled, we feel compelled to combat it. The Nationalists are certainly not out to reduce wages. No Government has any right to interfere in wages or conditions fixed by an Arbitration Court."

Hon. E. H. Harris: Was he a candidate?

Hon. G. FRASER: No; I explained that he was the secretary of the party, and when he speaks, we can take it that he gives the policy of the party.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The Government are asking only for a revision.

Hon. G. FRASER: What I claim is that they are making an attack on the working conditions. Whether they are successful in their application is another matter. It will not be the fault of the Government if they are not successful.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The Labour Party usually do the same thing. They are approaching the court for changes all the time.

Hon. G. FRASER: They made no attempt to reduce the worker's wages.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane; No; it is all the other way.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am sorry to find that one of the first actions of the new Government was to attempt to bring about a reduction of wages, although there are other avenues of economy to which they might have devoted attention. Speaking at Maylands during the election campaign, Mr. Scaddan was reported to have said—

At no time had he done anything not in the interests of the worker, either as a Minister or on the Perth Road Board. He had been made a life member of the Railway Employees' Union.

I do not know what the Railway Employees' Union would make him now. I think they would be more inclined to place him in oblivion.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Why, what has he done?

Hon. G. FRASER: I take it he is one of those who are attacking the working conditions of the railway men.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: You believe in arbitration?

Hon. G. FRASER: Certainly we do.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Why not obey the arbitration awards?

Hon. G. FRASER: We are prepared to do so.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: The shearers are not.

Hon. G. FRASER: The last thing we expected of the Government was that they would attack the conditions of the workers.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: They are not attacking the conditions.

Hon. G. FRASER: We have heard that moonshine before.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Then you will hear it again.

Hon. G. FRASER: Mr. Scaddan went on to say—

The first thing to be done should be to reduce interest and rent.

Is that the first thing the Government have done?

Hon. E. H. Harris: Who said that?

Hon. G. FRASER: Mr. Scaddan.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Interest on what?

Hon. G. FRASER: The hon. member had better ask Mr. Scaddan. I am merely quoting the report of his speech.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Did you say interest on rent?

Hon. G. FRASER: No, interest and rent.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: What do you mean by interest?

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not making the statement. I am reading Mr. Scaddan's remarks.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Yes, but make it clear what interest is. It is a big question.

Hon. G. FRASER: I was not present at the meeting and, according to the report, Mr. Scaddan did not explain his meaning. I am merely quoting his speech as reported.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: You should not put up anything you do not understand.

The PRESIDENT: I ask members to allow Mr. Fraser to proceed with his speech.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I only wanted it made clear. The hon. member referred to a reduction of interest, and interest is a very big thing. What does interest refer to?

The PRESIDENT: I must remind the hon. member that Mr. Fraser is not here as a witness under cross-examination. He is addressing the House.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: But he is quoting someone else.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. G. FRASER: Mr. Scaddan went on to say—

If a reduction of 12½ per cent. were made in rent charges in producing and retailing districts, he believed the depression would pass by, because the cost of living would fall so greatly.

I quote these remarks because Mr. Scaddan said this was the first thing to be done. Although the Government have been in office for three or four months, the first thing to which they are devoting attention is not what Mr. Scaddan said it would be, but the working conditions of Government employees.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do you think he suggested that the Government of the day would do that after the elections or the new Government?

Hon. G. FRASER: I take it he was speaking for himself, but what he thought or suggested, I am not in a position to say, I am merely quoting the report of what he said.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I am asking you to interpret what he said.

Hon. G. FRASER: I wish to emphasise the difference between what he said would

be the first thing to occupy attention and what has actually been the first thing.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Do you think the conditions are the same to-day as they were at election time?

Hon. G. FRASER: In what way?

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Financially and economically as regards State and Commonwealth.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not know that there is any less money in the country to-day than there was at election time.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Do you know wheat is down to 2s. 10½d. to-day?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes; I wish to refer to that. It is a question that should claim the attention of the Government before they attack the workers' conditions. We know that the price of flour has been reduced in the last few months by about £2 per ton, and now a further reduction of £1 5s. per ton has been made, but there has been no reduction in the price of bread. Yet the Government have not taken any action in that matter. Neither have they taken any action regarding rent, though Mr. Scaddan said it would be one of the first things to receive attention. We find that those people are getting the unearned increment. A meeting was held at Fremantle and protests were entered against the high rents being charged. We find even that business men are amalgamating their interests, and negotiating with those who are putting on the screw. Although Mr. Scaddan said that this would be one of the first matters to receive attention, no action has yet been taken. It looks as if the Government are not prepared to stand up to the promises made during the election campaign.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Don't you think it would have been better to establish a co-operative workers' bakery?

Hon. G. FRASER: That is a matter for those interested to decide. If they asked my advice I would tell them it was an excellent idea.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Competition can do everything.

Hon. G. FRASER: And when we have not competition and cannot do everything, we look to the Government to assist us.

Hon. A. Lovekin: What about the law of supply and demand?

Hon. G. FRASER: The law of supply and demand does not operate in respect of

the price of bread or the price of meat. There has been a reduction in the price of meat, but it has been nothing in comparison with the reduction in the price to the wholesaler. There are many other ways in which the Government could assist the workers at the present time, but they have not done so. All that the Government are trying to do is to take away from the workers certain privileges that they have enjoyed for a long time. It has been stated here that to take away from the workers their district allowances is not an interference with the conditions of the workers. Whoever said that has a very elastic mind.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Who has said that of the members who have spoken up to date?

Hon. G. FRASER: If the hon. member will cast his memory back, he will recall that it has been referred to on several occasions.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You said during the present debate.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Well, the debate has been proceeding here for two weeks and I have not heard the subject mentioned.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have heard it mentioned and perhaps I heard it in another place. Whether it was mentioned in another place or in this House, the fact remains that the statement has been made frequently. The only other matter I desire to touch upon is that of hospital finance. Anyone who has had anything to do with hospitals and has assisted to raise funds to enable the management to be carried on will know that the position of the principal institutions at the present time is serious indeed. The Perth and Fremantle Hospitals and the Children's Hospital are well and truly up against it, and I believe that is the position of almost every hospital throughout the State. Although the Government have made no reference in the Governor's Speech to hospitals legislation, I trust they will take some action during the present session to put hospital finance on a sound basis. I am not much concerned about the method that the Government may choose to adopt.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Would you support your own Bill of last session?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes.

Hon. A. Lovekin: All right.

Hon. G. FRASER: I would support a lottery, although I would prefer the Bill of last session to the lottery. At the same time I wish to see something done, and while I will not commit myself unreservedly to support any proposal that may be introduced by the Government, to assist to finance the institutions, they can rely on sympathetic assistance from me. We realise that hospitals have a difficult task to perform. Last year the Fremantle Hospital expected to go back to the extent of £5,000, but as the result of an appeal and donations that were given, that institution went behind only to the tune of £1,500 or £2,000. This year the same hospital is again faced with a serious leeway, but the outlook is gloomier. Whilst last year's appeals were successful to a certain extent, the existing position is not nearly so satisfactory and it will be extremely difficult to raise anything like a similar amount of money. As a matter of fact, I do not think anyone will be game enough to attempt to raise money in the way that was done last year. I trust the Government will realise the urgency of the matter and at the earliest opportunity introduce legislation that will enable the hospitals to finance themselves. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

**HON. C. B. WILLIAMS** (South) [5.7]: As one of the representatives of the South Province which you, Sir, also represent in this Chamber, I wish to congratulate you upon having had conferred upon you an honour by His Majesty the King, an honour which everyone will agree was well deserved. I also desire to congratulate the Leader of the House on his promotion and express the hope that he will find no difficulty in carrying out his duties satisfactorily to himself and his fellow members. I desire to say a few words about the mining industry. It seems that a representative of the goldfields must always get back to that subject. I regret that the industry has no representative in the Ministry, there being no goldfields members in the Assembly who are supporters of the Government. But we may gain some consolation from the fact that in this House the present Government have no fewer than five supporters who are direct representatives of the goldfields. This

is the first occasion for many years that a goldfields representative has not had a seat in the Cabinet. I notice that the Government, for reasons best known to themselves, have not yet appointed an Honorary Minister in this House.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You are the Honorary Minister.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I suppose I am the off-sider to the Leader of the House for the time being, seeing that I occupy a seat next to him. If the Government do decide to appoint an Honorary Minister in this House, I hope a goldfields representative will be chosen. Then perhaps we shall feel that we have not altogether been slighted. Possibly the Government may say, "This is tit for tat; you did not return direct supporters." Still, as I have already stated, the Government have five representatives in this Chamber who are their supporters. The mining industry is responsible for the only bright spot on the State's horizon and indeed that of Australia. There is no rationing of work on the goldfields; there are no 10 per cent. reductions; there is no one crying out about poverty or depression. Everyone on the goldfields speaks as he has been speaking for the last ten or 20 years.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Collie is all right, too.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, but it is no better than Kalgoorlie and Boulder today. It almost hurts one to come down here where there is so much talk about depression, where the people are going to let their whiskers and their hair grow, where they are even refraining from going to church, and are doing without many things. We hear nothing of that kind in Kalgoorlie, where people go about in nice suits of clothes and are generally well dressed and shaved. The mining industry has created optimists where a few years ago it bred pessimists of the type we come across in Perth so much at the present time, and in spite of all this we find that the Government have no direct goldfields representative in their team. I understand that it is intended to cut out the subsidy to the mining industry—that is what we can call it—under the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act. That involves an amount of £35,000 per annum. But after all said and done, it is merely the payment of that sum

by one department to another, the Treasury paying it into the State Insurance Office and then the Treasury fleching it back as they require it.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do you suggest that has been done?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I say the payments are from one department to another—

Hon. E. H. Harris: But you used the word "fleching."

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I suppose everyone will understand the exact application of the word.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Get it honestly, but get it.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am not worrying as to where they are getting it from. The profits shown by the State Insurance Office, so far as the mining industry is concerned, must be considerable. I do not know that they have had more than 10 or 12 cases under the Third Schedule. Most of the cases have been carried under the Miners' Phthisis Act and payment direct has been made from revenue. I trust that the Third Schedule will not be interfered with because the Government will not lose anything by it. One department pays another and that other department gets it back less 8 or 9 per cent. plus a little more by insuring the miners under other provisions of the Compensation Act. I understand also that the Government intend to undo a good work that was carried out some years ago when the benefit of cheaper water was given to the goldfields, and the industry was saved something like £40,000 per annum. If the industry is now to be burdened with £35,000 under the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act, and another £40,000 for water, making a total of £75,000, the position will be serious. Kalgoorlie, and we are told Collie also, are places where one can move about without being nipped, but if the Government carry out their reported intentions, both those towns will drift into the position that exists in Perth. I understand the Mitchell Government were responsible for the concession in respect of the water supply, the understanding being that more men would be employed on development work. Whether they kept a watch on that I do not know. I trust that the same Administration, now that they are in power again, will

not impose the serious handicaps on the industry to which I have referred. I have an idea of my own about the matter. Whether the Government kept them up to their promises, can be known only to the Government. But if they attack the mining industry, as I am told they propose doing, by the imposition of £70,000 odd, it may seem all right and nice to get that sum additional out of the mining industry for the revenue of the State, but it would not be so very nice if it resulted in closing up two or three of the mines and throwing another 700 or 800 men on the labour market in Kalgoorlie. I trust that due credit will be given to the mining industry for the part it has played in the building up of the State. With 2,000 odd men working on full wages, it means probably £40,000 or £60,000 per month in cash going into circulation without our having to wait for rain or for the crops to grow. It is a Godsend to the State at the present time, and I trust nothing will be done to interfere with the mining industry in the way of imposing extra costs upon it. I wish to speak for a moment on the question of check inspectors in the mining industry. I realise the position the Government and the State are in, and I realise perfectly that the Government have not brought it about. So I do not wish to harass them by unfair criticism. But we have had at Kalgoorlie two check inspectors working in the interests of the miners. Recently one of them was laid aside with miner's phthisis, and the Government, by way of effecting economy, have decided not to appoint another in his place. My brief experience in Parliament has given me an insight into the Public Service. From what I can see, when economies are to be effected, usually they are effected on the man most useful to the service and to the country. The Government have an inspector up there to whom they pay an additional £100 per annum—and they supply him with a motor car—to look after the business of the turned-down miners who are employed in various ways about the goldfields. The Government pay that man £100 per annum for this extra work. They threatened to reduce him by £50, and when he said that would be of no use to him, they cut him out altogether. I am not finding fault with them for that: it was his affair, and he refused to

accept the reduced fee. But the Government then refused to appoint another check inspector in the place of the one compulsorily retired owing to ill-health. They have a check inspector at Gwalia, in the northern district. So they decided that, in the interests of economy, they would not appoint another check inspector for Kalgoorlie, but would make the check inspector at Gwalia do the work at Kalgoorlie as well. I assume they will have to pay him some 15s. per day additional for the time he is away from Gwalia. Also there will be his railway fares, so I do not see where the economy comes in. It seems to me that at best it is economy at the cost of efficiency. The Kalgoorlie mines to-day are run largely by tributors, and in consequence they require more inspection than ever they had in the past.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Did you say the man at Gwalia was not an efficient inspector?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: No, I said that to bring him down from Gwalia to look after the Kalgoorlie work also was economy at the cost of efficiency. I did not say the man at Gwalia was not efficient. But I want to draw an analogy. The department have an inspector at Southern Cross, and they pay him his salary, whatever it may be, and they travel him around—this is where they economise on the most useful man—all the way to Coolgardie. As a matter of fact there are at Kalgoorlie three Government inspectors who could run along to Coolgardie during the day and be back home again by 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Yet the Government fetch a man all the way from Southern Cross to Coolgardie, and at other times send him 40 miles north-west of Kalgoorlie, and subsequently send him to Norseman. The department pay him, I think, 18s. per day, and send him all the way from Southern Cross to Coolgardie and to Norseman and out west of Kalgoorlie to inspect mines that could well be attended to by the three Government inspectors at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. E. H. Harris: But surely that has been going on for years.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, that is so; it has been going on for the last two or three years. I am not blaming the present Government for it.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Do you not think it would be a good thing if the Arbi-

tration Court took that man away altogether?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I will come to that. The present Government are economising in the Mines Department, and that is one phase of the question in respect of which they are not fair. If Inspector Rockett has not sufficient work in and around Southern Cross—and he has not—why not move him to another district altogether? On page 34 of the last annual report of the Mines Department it is shown that mining down at Southern Cross is very quiet, and that practically nobody is working there. There are a few men working at Westonia, and a few more five miles the other side of Bullfinch. Those few men represent the whole of the work that Inspector Rockett has to do. Yet the department keep him at Southern Cross. It is obvious that if the department want to effect economies, his place should not be there. It would be far better if he were stationed with the other three inspectors in Kalgoorlie. But no, he is kept at Southern Cross and sent all the way to Kalgoorlie and down to Norseman and 40 miles west of Kalgoorlie, although the three inspectors at Kalgoorlie are handily situated for giving attention to all those districts. So if the existing system is not a sheer waste of money, I do not know what is. I draw the attention of the Minister to that matter, and I trust it will be rectified, and that the other check inspector in Kalgoorlie will be appointed as soon as possible. Now I have to deal with another matter of vital importance to the men in the mines. It goes to show the incompetency of certain experts employed by the Mines Department. I wish to refer to a matter concerning the men working in the mines, namely, the prevalence of accidents in mines owing to the explosions of detonators. In this regard I wish to read a paragraph or two from the latest annual report of the Mines Department. Members will be amazed to learn that in the course of 11 years there have been in the mining industry 11 accidents owing to the explosion of detonator caps. During the period from 1918 to 1928 there were no fewer than 11 accidents. Let me read this from the report of the Mines Department—

In 1927 an application was received from the manufacturers to have a detonator known as the Lead Azide Detonator placed on the



list of authorised explosives to be imported or manufactured in this State.

After a thorough investigation into its chemical and physical properties as to stability and sensitiveness it was added to the authorised list.

This detonator came into general use in the mines towards the end of 1928, and during 1929 there were a number of accidents reported in connection with its use in some of the mines in Kalgoorlie, but there have been none reported from any of the other mining centres of the State. Statements made by the injured persons indicated that the detonators had exploded whilst sawdust was being removed by gentle tapping, or a fuse was being inserted. The tapping of these detonators with a view to removing the sawdust, with reasonable care, which should be used by experienced miners, or the act of inserting a fuse properly, is not sufficient to cause an explosion, and therefore there must have been some other contributing cause which was not apparent after full inquiry had been made.]

The insinuation is that those men deliberately blew their hands off. It seems strange that in 1929 there were six accidents. When the union took up the matter with Mr. Kirton in June, 1929, we demanded the withdrawal of this particular cap, which had become absolutely the only cap used in the mining industry. The miners demanded that this cap should be entirely withdrawn on the score that it was a positive danger, and that in its place they should have what is known as the old No. 8 cap. That was promised, and the then Minister for Mines (Mr. Munzie) agreed that the cap should be withdrawn and the old No. 8 cap restored. Still the accidents went on. There were six in 1929, and to my knowledge there have been three in this year already. The caps were not withdrawn, and only two months ago Mr. Kirton, the Chief Inspector of Explosives, wired us that there was an ample supply of the No. 8 cap in Kalgoorlie. But when we inquired of the people who supply explosives to the mines, there was none, despite Mr. Kirton's assertion that there was an ample supply. Apparently none had been sent to Kalgoorlie, although a shipment had arrived at Fremantle. This year one man lost three fingers of one hand through a cap exploding, and previously he had lost the other two on that hand through a similar accident. The experts say they tested the caps with wood, but could not get them to go off. It goes to show either obstinacy or incompetence on the part of somebody, when the men that have to use these dangerous caps ask that they be with-

drawn and the other caps restored. Yet nothing is done. The change-over would not mean any extra cost, for all work is done under the piece-work system.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Do you think the Workers' Compensation Act offers any explanation of these accidents?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: No, I have allowed for all that. With the exception of one man, all the victims were Britishers, and Britishers are not in the habit of blowing their fingers off or their toes either. I think one man was climbing a ladder when the cap struck a rung and went off. Probably there was some negligence there, but the other cases were accidental, due to defective material. Although the men asked for the withdrawal of these caps and the substitution of the others which cost 2s. 6d. a box more, and they were prepared to pay the difference, the old system was allowed to go on for 12 months. In 1929-30 more men lost fingers and hands than in the previous 11 years. The Workers' Compensation Act was in operation a long time prior to 1928.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: It appears they wanted to get rid of the old stock.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: In 1927 Mr. Kirton allowed these caps to be put on the market in Western Australia, and they were the only caps used in the industry. I understand the Government intend to withhold the money they have previously allocated for prospecting. I hope that information is wrong. Prospectors provide the only chance this State has of finding new goldfields. Some 300 or 400 men apply annually for sandalwood permits, and these are also prospectors. This is the only means they have of getting sustenance and keeping themselves going throughout the year. They are constantly endeavouring to discover new gold-producing shows. The men who are subsidised to the extent of £1 a week by the Mines Department get no order for sandalwood if they do not receive a subsidy from that department. I trust the matter will be gone into and that this large number of men will be allowed to go on prospecting. If the finances permit, it would be very much better to allow the prospecting to continue. Some of the men at Blackboy should be sent out to do this class of thing. They could be paid the same as the prospectors are paid, and would be doing better for the State than the clearing work which will not result in any benefit to Western Australia.

for a long time to come. There are places around Southern Cross where men could be engaged on departmental sustenance, and they could be supervised by the inspectors of mines that are stationed in those districts. I hope the prospecting grant will not be cut out. Another matter has been brought under my notice in connection with firewood. Along the Widgiemooltha and Norseman railway lines many people are cutting both household and mining timber. Last week, I understand, the Forests Department announced their intention to force these cutters on to the Kurrawang wood line. The reason given is that the Kurrawang people are cutting good mining timber for firewood, and that it would be better to spell the wood along the Government line and rescue this good timber on the Kurrawang line from being converted into firewood. The people I speak of have their own plant and siding, and are supplying household wood as well as mining timber to Kalgoorlie and Boulder. The amount of revenue which the Government are getting on the timber is in danger of being lost, and going to the Kurrawang Wood Line Company. Very little would be left for the Government. The business people of Boulder and Kalgoorlie, who are supplying these contractors with foodstuffs, chaff, etc., would lose that trade, which would also go to the Kurrawang Wood Line Company. I hope the Forests Department will not interfere with the present practice of drawing timber supplies from the Government line, and that the timber cutters will receive consideration on account of the capital they have invested in the business and plant. I have been approached by the municipal council of Boulder with regard to the loopline train. I am with the Railway Department to a large extent. Unpayable services must be reduced. So long as the people of Boulder and along the loopline can be given a train to connect with the Express on the nights when it runs, and they enjoy the same facilities as at present from the motor omnibus, I do not think they will be harshly treated. There is nothing sound or logical in spending £12,000 a year and earning only a few hundreds, as is the case with this loopline. So long as the Government carry on as they are doing, and allow these people to get to the Express each night, everything should be all right. I now represent a fair proportion of the farming areas of the State. I shall have to ask Mr. Glasheen to teach me something

about farming. About 50 per cent. of my electors are engaged in agriculture. I do not want to join the Country Party, but should like to get some information about the industry so that I may avoid doing so. The previous Government consisted almost entirely of farmers. They may be Parliament House farmers, but they are connected with the industry. We believe that wheat will not be at a high price this year, for to-day the outlook is very bad. Farmers on new land are suffering in common with others. I refer particularly to those at Newdegate, Ravensthorpe, and in the Esperance district. It is not that they have had bad seasons, but the value of their products has declined. I hope they will not be pushed off their blocks. Some are afraid that they may be forced off on account of the low returns they are likely to get for their crops.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Have you been a big farmer in your time?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I began my association with farming at a very tender age, and left it as soon as I could.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I thought so.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The people who have done all the pioneering work in these districts should be permitted to remain on their blocks. The Government should not allow the Agricultural Bank to take away the assets that have been created and sell them to someone who has had inside information from the Lands Department. We do not want strangers to step in and secure cheap farms at the expense of those who have made them. I hope the authorities will stick to these men who have worked so hard, who have not observed any particular hours in their day's existence, and have received no regular rate of pay. They should be given every opportunity to make a success of their undertaking.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: I suppose you know there are likely to be 1,200 assigned estates after the next harvest?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Half the present Government consists of farmers, so that the industry is well represented in Cabinet. I hope that early in the piece they will protect the interests of the pioneers and obviate the necessity for their relinquishing their holdings. Trade unions look to the Labour Government to protect their interests because they support the Labour movement in a practical way. The farmers are the direct supporters of the farmers' Govern-

ment, which should in turn look after the interests of their supporters.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: You do not suggest they are neglected?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I trust they will not be neglected. I do not wish to have to join the farmers' party in order to put a little sting into it, but I trust the present Government will give the farmers every encouragement. We are passing through a time of depression. Everyone is talking about cutting down wages. I understand the Government propose to bring down a Bill for a reduction in Parliamentary salaries. I trust it is not so. Many members are either farmers or are following some other class of business. Those of us who belong to the Labour Party do not believe in entering into competition with other people. We could get farms of our own if we were in the humour to do so. We do not engage in outside work. We sacrifice other things. When all is said and done, £600 a year does not go so very far. If a man represents a large constituency he has to spend a great deal in travelling over it. That income may be all right for a man representing a district such as Boulder or another within easy reach of the city. My province constitutes about one-third of the State and extends from Burracoppin to the South Australian border. It is very expensive to travel over that large area, and I do not know that there is much in the salary already paid. It is said that we must set a good example and reduce our own salaries. We are told that the only way to effect economies is to cut down wages and set the example ourselves. I do not agree with that. I do not agree with reducing wages in any way. The less money there is in circulation, the worse it is for everyone.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Where are you to get the money with which to pay these wages?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: We must reduce our cost of living which is too high, and we are not getting value for our money. How are we going to get it: by reducing wages?

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: But are we getting value for our money from the worker?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: We are. He is producing, and is doing his share. Sir Otto Niemeyer says of the workers of Aus-

tralia that the increase in production is only one per cent. since the war. He states that he got that information from the Government Statistician. The Government Statistician gave evidence in Adelaide before the South Australian Commission in 1926 on the manufacturing industries. He stated then that from 1911 to the present time there had been a big and continuous increase in the output per employee.

Hon. H. Seddon: Was that value in pounds sterling?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: In both value and work. The increase in output from 1911 to 1923 was  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and the Commonwealth Year Book shows that this increase has been continued.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: How much of that was due to science and invention?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am not prepared to say. I have pointed out the contradiction between Sir Otto Niemeyer and the Commonwealth Statistician. In 1924-25, 439,949 men were employed in manufacturing industries, and in 1928-29 the number was 461,191. I quote these figures to prove the argument I am advancing. The progress of Australian industry between the years 1924-25 and 1928-29 is illustrated by the following figures, compiled by the Commonwealth Statistician—

	1924-25.	1928-29.
Number of employees in factories	439,949	461,191
	£	£
Total wages paid to all employees	81,360,021	90,936,908
Value of material used ...	221,993,978	238,038,566
Cost of fuel and light ...	11,713,250	13,883,406
Margin for profit, miscellaneous expenses and charges ...	65,776,737	76,638,408
Total value of manufactured production ...	£380,843,986	£420,447,288
Value of land and buildings ...	91,241,007	114,655,181
Value of plant and machinery ...	109,242,900	123,603,478
Value added in process of manufacture ...	147,136,758	167,625,316
Value added in process of manufacture, per employee ...	334	363
Production output, per employee	865	911
Average wage per employee, per annum ...	192	197
Average amount per employee, per annum, for profit, miscellaneous expenses and charges	149	166

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: What has become of all the State Savings Bank money, amounting to eight millions sterling?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I do not know. I was not aware that the bank ever had so much money. It is interesting to me to hear members of this Chamber run down the workers as the section of the commun-

ity that is going slow. In Mr. Nicholson's profession, the greater the number of mistakes made the more expensive the work is to the client. Not so with the worker. Let him make a mistake, and he gets the sack. If Mr. Nicholson makes a mistake, he charges his client another 6s. 8d. for putting it right. I do not like to hear this cheap talk about workers who are supposed to be going slow. I do not know of any workers going slow. In the industry I know most about there is no going slow, because everyone is on piece work and so must earn his money.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is the system we want all through the piece.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Every speaker so far has said that wages must come down.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: We say that the cost of production must come down.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The purchasing power of money must increase, speakers have said. The only means suggested towards that end, however, is reduced wages or longer hours.

Hon. G. W. Miles: No; payment by results, the same as in the mining industry.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: That will not have the desired effect. There is payment by results in the shearing industry, but to-day the sheep are not being shorn.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is because the shearers will not obey the Arbitration Court.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Did the pastoralists obey the Arbitration Court?

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Yes, absolutely, and paid the extra 2s.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: For two years the pastoralists took away from the shearers the extra 2s. 3d. When the shearers got an increase of 3s. 4d., the pastoralists said they wanted an agreement for five years at £2 per 100.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: That is all nonsense.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: It is not nonsense. Sir Edward Wittenoom knows it is correct. Then there came a reduction of 1d. per sheep. Is that reduction in the shearing rate going to save the Australian wool industry? The owner of 20,000 sheep is in a big way, and to him the reduction would save £80. Why, the shearers could leave £80 worth of wool on the sheep? I would not strike if I were a shearers. Could not a shearers leave a penny-worth of wool on a sheep? Could he not leave a pound of wool on the sheep? But he does not

choose to fight the pastoralist in that way; he chooses to fight the pastoralist for the penny. During two years the pastoralists took from the shearers 3s. 3d. per week. When the position was reversed, the pastoralists refused to pay the additional 2s. 4d. W. M. Hughes has said that the reduction in the rate for shearing works out at one-seventh of a penny per lb. for wool, and that as there are 7 lbs. of wool in a suit of clothes, the reduction in the shearing rate means bringing down the cost of a suit by one penny, provided there are 7 lbs. of wool in the suit. For the sake of that penny, the sheep are not being shorn, and the pastoralists and the country are losing the wool. The difference on the whole clip is so small that probably it could be burst up in a champagne beano down at the club. I happen to be a member of the executive of the Australian Workers' Union, which is interested in the shearing industry.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: The shearers could leave a pennyworth of wool on if the shearing rate was £2.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am satisfied that the workers will not do such a thing. However, I have been led away a little.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: You have done very well in presenting a bad case.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Mr. Nicholson waxed enthusiastic about Great Britain. We are all more or less descended from Britons, but I do not know that Australia is under so great an obligation to Britain as many members make out. Britain has lent money to Australia for many years, and has drawn wealth from Australia for many years. The war cost Australia £700,000,000. Of that amount, £400,000,000 was borrowed. Nothing has been said of the awful loss in Australia's manhood. Hon. members have nothing to say about the honour of Australia relatively to her own people.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I would like to refer Mr. Williams to the report of my remarks. I think he will find I gave full credit in the respect to which he alludes.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: You say nothing about what Australia - -

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask the hon. member to address the President, and not an individual member of the House.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I apologise, Sir. I have not heard any member express anxiety about the honour of Australia as

regards the fulfilment of her obligations to her own citizens. I do not care if Australia does not repudiate a penny owing to anybody else in the world, so long as she does not repudiate her obligations to her own people. I would repudiate the man to whom money is owing rather than the man who is starving. I say, "Repudiate nothing, but above all, do not repudiate the manhood of Australia." Is not the country repudiating the men whom it sends into Blackboy Hill Camp to lead a mere existence, and is it not repudiating the unemployed men who are not fortunate enough to get into that camp? I would far rather repudiate the money lenders than repudiate those men. There is nothing to say that that may not come. Not one speaker has shown a way out of the difficulty, or has suggested any measure which would enable the country to overcome its troubles. We have to find £32,000,000 annually over a period of 50 years, and for what? Did not France repudiate? Did the French people get back the money they put into the war? Nothing of the sort. The franc that they put into the war was worth 9d., and they got back a franc worth 2d. Those who held the bonds of their country lost the money represented by those bonds, and they were proud to lose it because in doing so they saved their country from a condition that would in all probability be worse. The first duty of a State is to the people who are alive. Even if all the wealthy of to-day came down, as the wealthy of France did during the period of deflation, to the bread and butter line, they would still be alive. To-day one in six of our people can only be described as just living.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I am afraid your argument is inconsistent.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: It is not. I am arguing that to-day in Australia one in six of the population are dependent upon the charity of his fellows, even though he is able and willing to work. I say that one in six of our population is prevented to-day from working. If an Australian citizen finds his creditors pushing him too hard, the law protects him. It allows him to pay back the money he owes if he is able, and in his own time; or else it permits him to pay his creditors so much in the pound as the court decides he is able to pay. In this

respect, is not a nation the same as an individual?

Hon. J. Nicholson: I am afraid you are giving a wrong exposition of the law.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I certainly do not propose to enter into a legal argument.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I think you are getting a little beyond your depth.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I may be wrong, but that is how I understand the matter.

Hon. J. Nicholson: There is such a thing as honouring one's obligations.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The Australian nation must honour its obligations to everyone, including its own citizens. Everyone in the country is entitled to obtain work. Why should people die of starvation while the bondholder is paid a rate of interest that has increased from 3½ per cent. in 1914 to 6 per cent. now? Different hon. members have suggested that a reduction in wages should precede a reduction in the cost of living or cost of production, whichever they may choose to term it. How can wages come down? Why should they come down—and interest remain at the same rate? Let us presume that the cost of production is reduced by 20 per cent. and interest rates remain the same. What does that mean? It simply means that the bondholders' money is increased in value by 20 per cent., whereas the earning capacity of the worker is reduced correspondingly.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is wonderful reasoning.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: That is the truth.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The truth according to the Hon. C. B. Williams.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: And according to anyone who analyses the position properly. Mr. Nicholson gave us the side of the question that appeals to those he represents; I give the other side of the question on behalf of the people I represent, and of whom I am one.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I think I represent all sections of the community.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: You do not.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Never mind these interruptions; you are making an excellent speech.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Then Mr. Macfarlane advised us to economise and talked about a man who smoked two boxes of cig-

arettes smoking one box only. I do not think he was serious. If the people as a whole accepted that advice and ceased buying various articles of food, clothing and so forth, I do not know that we would remedy the present position. The best citizen is the man who spends his money and puts it into circulation. If that were not done, no business man could succeed in his activities. According to the report in "Hansard," Sir William Lathlain spoke in a similar strain, and advised the people to cut out excesses and to economise. The worker economise! I do not know how he exists in Perth. The business men of the city have done all the economising on his behalf by putting the worker on half-time, to their own detriment. I would prefer to see men sacked rather than put on half-time. If they are sacked, it gives them an opportunity to seek employment elsewhere.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Then you prefer no bread to half a loaf?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I do not believe in that sort of argument. The more important question is that of the workers receiving a living wage. They are not getting it now. They are in receipt of half a living wage only, and that is against the principles of the working classes. Then Mr. Macfarlane referred to the position of the producers of Australia, as well as the public generally. Let me tell Mr. Macfarlane that the butter people are thieving—perhaps I had better not use that word and had better put it another way. The butter people of Australia are taking £2,000,000 out of the pockets of the consumers of this country.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: And what have the workers got? That has been on account of excessive wages.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Where is there an industry in Australia in which the workers receive excessive wages? Name one! Mr. Macfarlane and men of his sort always think that the worker is too well paid.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I do not.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The hon. member just mentioned excessive wages. Why does he not name one industry that pays excessive wages?

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: And who are they that are getting the £2,000,000?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The butter people of Australia. They are just as big thieves as the sugar people. They get £13,000,000 out of the pockets of the people

and the butter people are thieves to the extent of £2,000,000. If the price of sugar were reduced to 3d. per lb., which would be a fair charge, there would be a saving to the people of £4,000,000. If the butter people were content with a fair price, we could save that £2,000,000 and there would be £6,000,000 saved in one hit. By that means, the cost of living could be brought down and the wages of the workers need not be reduced by one penny. The people of Western Australia are asked to buy local butter. If I were to preach to the workers the doctrine of economy expounded here, what would happen to the butter producers? What would happen here would be just what happened in England.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: If the worker is entitled to a living wage, is not the farmer entitled to a fair return?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I admit that the dairy farmer and the wheat farmer are amongst the hardest workers.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: And they ask for a living wage.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The farmer would not complain if he could get an extra 6d. per bushrel out of the people, as you butter people and the sugar people are getting per lb. from them.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: On a point of order. I take exception to the remarks of the hon. member. He said that I, as one of the leaders of the butter industry in this State, was taking 6d. per lb. out of the butter industry on a co-operative basis from the returns made to the dairy farmers. The farmer is just as entitled to a living wage as is the worker. Mr. Williams said that the butter factory proprietors are robbing the farmers to the extent of 6d. per lb.

The PRESIDENT: I take it the hon. member has made a personal explanation. No point of order is involved.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: That is so.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I did not infer anything against Mr. Macfarlane personally; I was referring to the butter people generally. If the people of Australia adopted the attitude of the banks and financial institutions of the Commonwealth, what would happen? What would become of the £300,000,000 on deposit in Australia that could never be met with the £16,000,000 held in coin, the rest being nothing but bits of paper? The people of Australia have

more faith in their banks and financial institutions than the money lenders in England have in Australia's stability.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But where would the money be in circulation?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: If people had no faith in their banks, like the money lenders of England have no faith in Australia, I suppose they would keep their money hidden in their boots; they would not put it in the banks. But that is not the position. The people of Australia have more faith in our stability than the people in Britain have.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The people in Britain have no faith in such as you.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: When the Federal Government formerly in power spent £78,000,000, some hon. members here voted and worked for the return of that Administration. Everything was all right then, but now there is a Labour Government in charge of Australia that sort of thing is to be deplored. There must be a cut downwards of 10 per cent. everywhere. Not a word! Let me get away from this question of depression. I am sick and tired of hearing about it. All I am certain of is that our difficulties have been created by the financial interests of the world. They have been concerned with reducing the standard of living in Australia so that people who have money invested in this country will secure the advantage. There will be a reduction in the standard of living; the investors' money will be worth more, and interest charges will remain the same.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Will you tell me—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask hon. members to let Mr. Williams proceed.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: We are told that in this State the hospitals are suffering for lack of funds. I have dealt with the question of hospital finance on former occasions. I would cut out church collections. Politicians to-day are too much afraid of the people who are running the churches. I never worry about them; I never did and never will. Let us remember the position in Queensland. In ten years the Government have raised £2,123,422 by means of the Golden Casket lotteries run in the interests of the hospitals. Gambling! It does not matter how depression may affect the country, gambling goes on. According to

the Press, at the Kalgoorlie Cup meeting, £2,000 more was invested in the totalisator than two years ago, and £4,000 more than last year. In addition there were over 20 horses in the principal race. The gambling spirit is here, there and everywhere. The Government want money. Instead of wages being reduced, let us take advantage of this other avenue. The people of Australia are prepared to gamble with their money. It will be an easier means of collecting funds than taxation. Why not run two sweeps here and raise funds that are necessary? Western Australia is one of the greatest gambling States in the world. It is on its own. Why do we not take advantage of this? Too many members of Parliament are afraid of the people who wish to cut out gambling. Those people object to sweeps and gambling appeals for charity with the result that the hospitals are practically bankrupt. In Queensland as a result of the Golden Casket £1,750,229 was provided for the hospitals, and £314,206 was provided for the maternity hospital. Why not avail ourselves of this means of raising funds. Instead of reducing wages, let us harness the gambling power of the people. There is another question that no party and no politician has even taken up adequately. The Civil Service of this State is over-manned. If we were to cut the service down by 20 per cent., we would get a better return for the money we spend and more money would be available for the development of the country. No Government have yet been game enough to tackle that question. Certainly the Labour Government were not. I am opposed to the reduction of wages, opposed to the abolition of district allowances, and opposed to those questions going to the Arbitration Court at all. The present Government intend to ask a man stationed at Dowak on the Norseman-Esperance line, or at Goongarrie, on the Kalgoorlie-Leonora line, to work for the same wage as the man in Perth or any other large centre. That is not equitable. In the country districts I have mentioned, the settlers have to get their vegetables, meat, etc., up by train once a week. If the vegetables or meat go bad, that means so much loss to the worker, who has to do without them and live on the hardest of food. Those men have been in receipt of district allowances for 26 years or more. It is not fair to ask such men living

in humpies, without any of the conveniences of the city, seeing only one or two trains a week, and perhaps an odd individual passing by, to accept the same conditions as those who live in fine houses in Perth, with all the facilities available in a big city. It is absolutely wrong. The Government were not elected on such a programme. Despite the fact that Mr. Harris may have reports of various speeches in his possession, I do not think there was one utterance on the part of Government candidates that suggested that if they were elected, they would attack the standard of living in Western Australia by reducing wages and conditions. The only satisfaction I have out of the position is that there were many Labourites who would not vote for the Labour Party at the last elections. They voted against Labour for reasons it would take too long to explain. About 80 per cent. of them voted for the Nationalist Party and the only thing I am grateful for is that these people, who did not cling to the Labour Party, are now getting the stick where they ought to get it for not having voted with their own party.

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

*House adjourned at 6.14 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 4th September, 1930.*

	PAID
Questions: Unemployment—1. Registrations and engagements; 2. Homes, purchase payments; 3. Railway construction ... ..	276
Sanitary Site, Mt. Lawley ... ..	276
Address-in-reply, seventh day ... ..	277

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

### QUESTIONS (3)—UNEMPLOYMENT.

#### *Registrations and Engagements.*

Mr. MILLINGTON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the number of unemployed registered, and the number of

engagements at the State Labour Bureau—(a) in the metropolitan area; (b) for the rest of the State, for the months of February, March, April, May, June, July, and August of this year? 2, What is the number of unemployed at present in Blackboy camp?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Applications for work, State Labour Bureau—

	1930.	Metropolitan Area.	Outside Metropolitan Area.
February ... ..	...	2,725	436
March ... ..	...	2,939	410
April ... ..	...	3,975	408
May ... ..	...	5,896	1,555
June ... ..	...	6,580	1,460
July ... ..	...	6,653	1,139
August ... ..	...	6,589	Not available
Engagements—			
February ... ..	...	362	81
March ... ..	...	516	116
April ... ..	...	320	124
May ... ..	...	868	606
June ... ..	...	375	318
July ... ..	...	422	199
August ... ..	...	330	Not available

The engagements do not include those engaged through local governing bodies. 2, 970.

#### *Homes, Purchase Payments.*

Mr. COVERLEY (for Mr. Raphael) asked the Premier: Is he prepared to receive a deputation of not more than five of the unemployed, who wish to put the cases of dozens of their comrades who are defaulting in purchase payments of their homes, six having been given ejection orders?

The PREMIER replied: Yes.

#### *Railway Construction.*

Mr. COVERLEY (for Mr. Raphael) asked the Minister for Works: 1, When and where were the men picked up who are engaged in railway construction work? 2, For what length of time will they be employed? 3, Does he employ these men for ten days each and pay their fares to and from their work?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The latest general instruction is that 50 per cent. be picked up on the job and 50 per cent. from the metropolitan area. 2, For the duration of the work, provided satisfactory service be given. 3, No.