

last few years have done extremely well. There were a group of six soldier settlers whom the Minister for Mines met. One of them has no less than 150 acres under crop this year, and a number of others are doing remarkably well. If proper consideration is given to my proposal, the outlook for these settlers will be very much brighter.

On motion by Mr. Davies, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.24 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 22nd August, 1923.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Tenth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (South-West) [4.35]: It had been my intention to congratulate Mr. Ewing upon his elevation to Cabinet rank, but after hearing Mr. Holmes yesterday I am not sure that instead of congratulations he does not need sympathy. However much the Leader of the House may wish to carry out his ideals, which, no doubt, are the same now as they were in the past, he is only one of six, and will have to do the best he can with the brutal majority against him. I had the honour of being in Cabinet for a good many years. I was always very outspoken regarding State trading concerns, for instance. I was Honorary Minister for Agriculture, and was called upon to deal with some of the trading concerns. It was with great pleasure I was able to wipe out the fish-selling business and the meat-selling business. Had I had the management of the other trading concerns, no doubt I would have found means of doing the same thing with them.

Hon. V. Hamersley: You did that without any Act of Parliament.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Yes. I obtained legal opinion. I do not know whether the present legal advisers of the Government

tender advice that is not so good as it was in the past. The fact remains I managed to drive a coach and four through the Act when I wanted to, and drove it to some purpose. I hope the Leader of the House will use all the influence he has with his colleagues to see whether something cannot be done with these trading concerns. I have always held they are wrong in principle. There may be times when the Government should step in, as for instance in the early day of the goldfields between Esperance and Coolgardie. The owners of the water condensers skied the price of water to such an extent that it was almost better to die of thirst than to buy it. The Government then installed condensers and policed that district, and brought down the price to a reasonable figure. They warned the pirates that if they did not in future conduct their business in a reasonable manner they would again be undersold. Private enterprise, however, kept going and did the trade. The Government condensers did very little more than supply departmental officers travelling up and down. They fulfilled the necessary function, however. We were told that the other State trading concerns were going to do exactly that and no more.

Hon. J. Cornell: Evidently the Government condensers did not join the combine.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I am coming to that. We started sawmills because it was thought the people were being penalised through the price charged for sleepers for the Railway Department. The Liberal Government erected a sawmill in order to obtain sleepers for that department.

Hon. T. Moore: And a good one too.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Yes, but it was the wrong way to go about it. There was another way without starting sawmills of getting railway sleepers at a fair price. The forests belonged to the State, and by regulation the royalty could be altered from time to time. I said to the Premier of the day, "Do not start sawmills; you have the situation in the hollow of your hand by your forestry regulations. You can make these people supply you with sleepers at a fair price and can state the number that each firm shall supply."

Hon. J. Duffell: You are not a believer in price fixing are you?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I believe in a fair deal for all. The Government could have ensured a certain number of sleepers annually at a fair price. This would have been much better than starting the ball rolling and arriving at our present position. When the Labour Party came into office, believing as they did in State trading, they embarked in the timber industry in a large way. Did they police the industry in order to stop the octopuses from grabbing big prices from people who wanted timber? On the contrary, the price of fruit cases went up 50 per cent. as soon as the Government entered into the saw-milling business, and it has never come down.

Hon. T. Moore: Are the other people supplying cases at a lower rate?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Slightly lower, but the price is not likely to come down when the State Sawmills are holding it up to the extent they are. Meanwhile the growers are suffering. I am not squealing about this. I have advised my fellow fruitgrowers to start spot mills and cut cases themselves.

Hon. E. Rose: Do they not all belong to one association?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Unfortunately, yes. So far as I can see the State Sawmills boss the whole lot in the matter of fixing prices.

Hon. T. Moore: Did not the State Sawmills open up the karri forests?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: No.

Hon. T. Moore: They did.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I will not argue with the hon. member, but his interjection is incorrect. The first one to open up the karri forest around the Warren was the late Mr. Lyall. Of course the karri was opened up years ago at Denmark, and in another part of the State by Mr. M. C. Davies.

Hon. T. Moore: The present Premier started to ring the karri forest. That is all he thought it was worth.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Yes, and that was a great mistake, but he is not the only one. I remember when the karri forest was rung by Millars to fulfil certain contracts and comply with the conditions of contract. That also was found to be a mistake, and was rectified. I have always opposed State trading. I hope both Houses will be willing to place in the hands of the Government the right to sell or lease every or any or all of these State trading concerns. I do not care what party is in power, for I have sufficient faith in my fellow men to believe in their honesty and integrity. Any Government can safely be left to deal with State trading concerns. While on the subject of the State trading concerns, I would like to mention that some little time ago I was accused by the Premier of making wild and woolly statements in the Press. I did make certain statements at Bridgetown but not the statements that were published. Those statements were absolutely ridiculous and no one knows better than Sir James Mitchell that I could never have made them.

Hon. E. Rose: Why did you not contradict them?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I did not know the report had been published until Mr. Rose drew my attention to the fact. Immediately I did know I took action, but it was too late. Is it likely that I would make such ridiculous statements as were published? I said that, so far as the Wyndham Meat Works were concerned, it was better to work them than to leave them idle, for if we did not work them we would lose £80,000 per annum, whereas if we did work them, we would lose only £45,000. I pointed out the indirect benefit the State gained by keeping the works going. Unfortunately, however, the reporter twisted my statements around and

said that I was in favour of not working the Wyndham plant. That was absurd. I was an Honorary Minister in charge of the Agricultural Department, and had a good deal to do with the works. In those circumstances, is it likely that I would deliberately state what I knew to be untrue? The Premier, before stating that I had made wild and woolly remarks, might have taken the trouble to find out if I had given utterance to them. If Sir James Mitchell had referred to my "alleged statements" it would have been all right. He did not do so. On the other hand, however, we find that the Minister for Mines, Mr. Scaddan, made a mistake of £195,000 in his railway figures and his statement appeared in the Press.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That may have been a typographical error.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I saw it at once and knew that Mr. Scaddan, having a certain amount of the right stuff in his head, could not have made such a statement. Naturally I concluded it must have been a silly mistake. I did not rush into the Press, as I should have done perhaps, and accuse a "wild and woolly Judas Iscariot" of making a mistake to the tune of £195,000. I realised that it must be a typographical error, and the next day a paragraph appeared in the Press to that effect. I feel hurt indeed that the Premier, in whose Cabinet I was for quite a while, should have indulged in language of that description, with an alleged statement of mine which he knew I had never uttered. Mr. Moore took Mr. Latham to task for endeavouring to stay the impetuosity of certain individuals in their advocacy of the unimproved land values tax.

Hon. T. Moore: Impetuous farmers.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: He was very wise. Casting one's mind back a few years, I remember wise men in the neighbourhood of Bridgetown and elsewhere rushing in and begging the Government to put a tax on their orchards. I fought them for three years but they beat me. They begged the Government to levy the tax and naturally the Government, being of a kindly disposition, agreed to do so. Within 12 months those same orchardists begged me to get the tax lifted. Fortunately one of the judges of the Supreme Court owned an orchard there, and after these men had paid the tax for three years, he discovered that it was not an annual tax but a registration fee and could only be demanded once. I was a Minister then and, glibble fool that I was, I had paid the tax three times. Finding that I had done wrong, I approached the department with a request for a refund. I was told, however, that it could not be done because the payments had been entirely voluntary gifts on my part. I produced documents to show that the tax had been demanded. I was informed that that had nothing to do with the case. If a man makes a demand and one is foolish enough to comply with it, the law cannot touch that man. The Government held the view that those payments represented a free

gift and collared the orchardist's money; they have kept it to this day. Why did those orchardists desire to be taxed? They were foolish enough to think that the money would be earmarked for the special purpose of securing additional inspectors and of having research work carried out to encourage the industry and prevent diseases attacking the fruit. What happened? The taxes were paid into revenue and that was the end of the whole thing. I like the unimproved land tax in some ways, but any man who is mad enough to ask a Government to place this halter round his neck before he has got his fares and freights definitely altered, is silly indeed. Such a man would be the most gullible individual I can imagine. The taxation would be imposed all right if the request were made for it. There can be no shadow of doubt on that point. If, having requested a tax and secured the imposition of it, one went along to the authorities for a reduction in rates and freights charged by the Railway Department, the Commissioner would say, "Why should I?" He would probably be informed that the land which was then undeveloped would soon be developed and the Commissioner would get extra freights and with the increased population, increased fares as well. Not being altogether a fool, the Commissioner would probably ask when the development was to take place, immediately or within a period, such as three years. The Commissioner would be told that development would take place after a few years and he would tell the deputation that he would deal with the question in three years' time.

Hon. T. Moore: What about the rich city values that have been put up already?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: It is all right in theory but if Mr. Moore can show me how a tax can be imposed upon those people without them passing it on, I will support the proposal.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Someone has to pay for the impost.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: A property owner will raise his rents immediately. If a man owns 50 cottages that are occupied by working men, he will get his increased tax out of those workmen. If a man has a big store he will get his tax out of the people buying produce from him, and so the tax will revert to the man on the land and the worker. For these reasons I dread it. I will not deal with the question of finance. The figures given by Mr. Lovekin rather under-estimated the cost of many of the Premier's schemes. We talk about six million pounds with bated breath! Will six million pounds pay for all those schemes?

Hon. J. Duffell: No more than £800,000 would build that Denmark railway proposition.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I agree that if 20 million pounds were judiciously expended in that part of the State, it would be for the ultimate benefit of Western Australia. I cannot understand why so many people who were

in favour of the Premier's scheme for developing the wheat areas, are opposed to his scheme for the development of the South-West. There is that feeling noticeable, more especially among those in the wheat areas.

Hon. J. Cornell: It must be cussedness.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I do not think it is cussedness; it is, perhaps, ignorance.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is worse.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Undoubtedly. No one to-day regrets the development of our huge wheat areas. Were those areas, however, developed without loss to the State? Shall we not lose about £800,000 through the Industries Assistance Board alone? Have not private individuals, who backed the farmers in the early days, lost huge sums of money? Will not the State have to lose over three millions of money in connection with the settlement of those wheat areas? Even so, does anyone regret it?

Hon. J. Cornell: We have only lost that amount nominally.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: At any rate, it is lost for all time. Despite that fact, would we like to see the wheat areas as they were before the scheme was put into operation? Would we still like to see the State importing flour from South Australia or would we not prefer to see a 20 million bushel harvest ready for export? The same thing will occur in the South-West. What I desire to see is that the State shall profit from the mistakes made in the settlement of wheat areas. I am sorry to say, however, that rather than see that end achieved, we are doing exactly what happened there. I will quote an instance in support of that statement. Many thousands of pounds were lost in connection with transport arrangements and the people had to undergo much suffering, because the railways were not put out first.

Hon. A. Burvill: Hear, hear!

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: We all knew of this great scheme for the group settlements in the South-West and Parliament, in its wisdom, approved of certain railways some time ago. Despite that we have, after all the experience we gained in settling the wheat areas, the spectacle of people being sent down to groups south of Busselton with the railway authorised and yet the construction has only proceeded some 12 miles out. That railway could have been put through while the Premier was in England, and it should have been put through at that period. At that time there was unemployment in the State and instead of doing this important work, the Government proceeded to build the Como tramway? Rather than do that, this essential work, so necessary for the group settlers, should have been proceeded with. Why was not the railway built last summer? As a result of this business, hundreds of miles of roads have been destroyed and a fleet of motor cars has had to be used. I would like to get the figures showing the cost of transport for the groups between Busselton and Cape Leeuwin. If the Leader of the House can give us those figures they will be illuminating indeed. They will prove we have

not profited one little bit from the experience we gained in settling the wheat belt. Generally speaking, the wheat areas have never looked better than they do to-day. To travel through them gladdens one's heart. What strikes me, however, as one coming from cattle and sheep country, is the enormous amount of feed going to waste. Along the Wongan Hills line and eastward, we could depasture millions of sheep, and one can travel through it to-day and not see any, because of the lack of water. If these settlers are to be made prosperous they have to be given what we in the South-West are trying to get rid of, namely, water. That is our big problem in the South-West—drainage, to get rid of the water; and their problem is to be provided with water.

Hon. T. Moore: There is also the dingo problem.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: That can be handled more or less effectually. The South-West Vermin Board in Bridgetown, in the very short time it has been working, has destroyed 1,700 dingoes, most of which were sluts, which shows what can be done. We all know that if the dingo sluts are in good condition they have big litters, and in what state would that country have been if the vermin board had not acted as it has done with such excellent results?

Hon. T. Moore: That should be a charge on the whole State.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I agree. Although I introduced the Bill, I considered that it should be a national question. The sooner it is made a national question, the better. Various members have spoken of their respective provinces, but I was pleased that Mr. Rose showed that the South-West province members are not selfish. We do not want everything to be done in the South-West and nothing elsewhere. I was very pleased to hear his remarks about the Esperance country and the Esperance railway. One of the first speeches I made in the House many years ago was to the effect that Esperance should be linked up with Coolgardie, and I have never altered that view. I know that country better than most people know it, and I strongly advocated the railway then. Even now, I do not think people realise what a wonderful territory we have down there. I advocated not only the railway running north and south, but a railway running east and west to link up with the Great Southern.

Hon. T. Moore: And the present Premier opposed it.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: He did; he never liked that country. Members in another place stated by way of interjection that the present Premier had travelled through it in the dark, and therefore his opinion was not worth having. Whether that is so, I do not know. However, he never liked the Esperance country, but the Minister for Agriculture has recently been there, and "rediscovered" it. Well, it has always been there. This railway should be carried from Norseman to Esperance. We do not want a railway of 60 miles with a dead end. There

should also be a railway running east and west. We are told that we have not many more wheat lands that can be settled. We can settle people in the Esperance district for many years to come. The farther north one goes into the rich forest country—and richer land one never saw—the lighter becomes the rainfall. It is not half a century since we were told that it was impossible to grow crops any distance east of York; yet we find prosperous farms right out to Lake Brown. I hope we shall find them also in the Esperance country before long. I for one have no fear of the Esperance district.

Hon. G. W. Miles: How do you know the rainfall is lighter in the heavy timber country? It should be heavier.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: The records show that the rainfall diminishes as one goes north, and I presume the records are correct. I am of opinion that country capable of growing such a forest cannot be called a desert; in fact, by careful farming, I think it will prove very valuable land to the State. Group settlement is the burning question of the day. To start on the one nearest to Perth, the Peel estate, it would be interesting to know exactly how much money has been spent there. I understand the amount is about £240,000, but that is only the amount debited directly against the 5,000 acres of swamp that is being dealt with.

Hon. J. Duffell: What about drainage?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I think it will be found that a further £250,000 has been spent on the Peel estate and charged up to another account, a national account. I understand that over £500,000 has already been expended, and that is a great deal of money to expend on one estate unless it contains a very considerable quantity of good land. I hope it does, but I am informed—I trust it is not true—that there is only 5,000 acres of good swamp land on the estate.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I understood there was 18,000 acres.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: There is 18,000 acres of swamp, but I understand that only 5,000 acres is cultivable swamp and that the balance, like the swamps dotted about the South-West, is of very inferior quality. If that is so, we shall have to be very careful what we are doing there, because 5,000 acres for £500,000 pans out at £100 per acre.

The Minister for Education: Those figures are wrong.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I shall be only too delighted if the Minister, when he speaks, will give us the correct figures. The costing system is evidently very good indeed; the papers laid on the Table show that, but I want to know how much of the money expended has been debited to another account. That is not the sole expenditure on these groups; that is the amount debited to each group, but over and above that I am certain there has been a large expenditure, and I should like to know the amount of it. I hope that the Minister will not confine himself to pointing out the cost per acre and the cost

of the cottages, but that he will give us the actual figures. Then, again, we have the land between Pinjarra and Bunbury. I was always of opinion—an opinion shared by other people—that we had a huge area of swamp land there. I thought it was between 20,000 and 30,000 acres. People who were supposed to know had told me so. Adjacent to the coast and not including the Bengier swamp, I do not think there is much more than 5,000 acres of swamp land in that district. If one went there to-day, one would have to swim most of the way.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is an ocean to-day.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I think we are over-estimating the extent of our swamp lands. In the far South the same thing has occurred. It was said there were thousands of acres of swamp. At the mouth of the Warren I do not think there are one thousand acres altogether. We see a large area of swamp and we say, "There are thousands of acres of it." As a matter of fact, there is nothing of the sort. When we undertake the draining of these swamps, we should see that the drains are so constructed that they do not drain one man's property and drown another man's property, as has occurred in the past. We should see that the scheme will drain such an area that it will be profitable. A scheme that is not profitable if of no use to anyone.

Hon. J. Cornell: We do not want to have to do the work all over again in ten years' time.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: It is not only a matter of having to do the work all over again in ten years' time; it is a matter of destroying work that has been done. Take the Bengier swamps. The people there put in a drain to carry, say, ten million gallons. Then the Government came along and constructed a drain to carry sixteen million gallons, but they ran the water into the ten million gallon drain, thus requiring it to carry twenty-six million gallons of water, with the result that it overflows and destroys the crops. We cannot have that sort of thing. There can be only one end to it, namely ruin. We have to see that these works are carried out by competent men and in such a way that they will be permanent, and will drain a sufficient area of land to make the proposition payable. That land, properly handled, cannot be beaten. The question of irrigation, which some people are so fond of bringing up, can well be left till the great question of drainage has been settled. As to the heavier timber lands to the south, we who have lived there know what they will produce, but we are attempting a gigantic task in trying to remove the huge forest. We must not be misled in to a belief that it is all jarrah, karri, or other marketable timber. When I speak of the huge forest, I include the red gum which, up to the present, has not been found to be of commercial value. We are trying to remove in a face this forest that took thousands of years to grow, and we are trying to do it in a few weeks. It is a most expensive way of doing it, but we say

we cannot wait; we must push on. If it is wise to go on—and I think it is—we must see that the most inexpensive methods are employed. Mistakes were made at the start, as they always will be in any business, but we are right up against this problem, as has been pointed out by Mr. Moore: What class of labour are we employing to tackle this gigantic forest? If we had the labour on our own farms, we would employ it on only simple tasks that we could supervise. Yet, we are putting these men on to work where not only muscle and brawn are required, but brains as well. We have down there men who could carry out the work at a quarter of the price it is costing to-day. But then the problem arises, what shall we do with the new settlers? It has been proposed to put efficient men with the newcomers. But I do not think the efficient men would work with them. There is nothing more dangerous than working in country like that with a man who is new to the job. He may kill you. Evidently the Premier thinks it wiser, even if the work costs four times as much as it should, to break the newcomers into the work rather than have it done by contract. It would be very interesting indeed to see 1,000 acres of that country cleared on piecemeal, and to compare that cost with the cost of 1,000 similar acres cleared under the present system. I do not like the work going on like this without the contract system being tried. Going down to the settlements and meeting the people there, one is struck by the fact that many of them have made up their minds to spend the rest of their lives on their holdings. The women work as hard as the men in making homes and little gardens. They never think of the 10s. a day sustenance, but only of the future. Such settlers as those I have in mind know that they are now getting a chance which they would never have got in the country they came from. On the other hand, undoubtedly there are some settlers who, once the 10s. per day stops, will not stop another day themselves. I do not see how that is going to be prevented. As long as these settlers work sufficiently well to meet the foreman's requirements, and sufficiently hard not to be taken exception to by other members of the group, I do not see what we can do. However, that land, once cleared and cultivated, will always find somebody ready and willing to step in and carry on the work of those who go out. Fear has been expressed as to what these settlers are to do with their produce when the land is cultivated. That land is absolutely the best fruitgrowing land we have in Western Australia. At Bridgetown we can grow fruit and do grow fruit. From that little centre we have sent away this year 300,800 cases of fruit.

Hon. T. Moore: And sold it very cheap.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I regret to say that we lost money on the transaction. Now let me utter a word of warning. Although the group settlement country is better than even

the Bridgetown country for growing fruit, I would be sorry to see the new settlers embarking on orchards until we see a silver lining to the cloud now overhanging the fruitgrowing industry. As a fruitgrower I know what an unprofitable proposition the industry has been during the last few years. According to Mr. Burvill, the cow is going to save the settler. Extreme pessimism has been expressed by Mr. Baxter. He points out that the South-Western country is sour, and that the nature of the feed grown by it will be such as to render it impossible for many years to produce a butter of anything like first-grade quality. But that is absolutely wrong. Mr. Rose, interested as he is in a butter factory, must know that those statements are very wide of the mark. But there is this to be considered. Suppose every man at present on the groups wants anything up to eight cows in two years' time. Where are the cows going to be obtained? We had the chance of our lives to get a large number of dairy stock over here when the Eastern States were suffering from that dreadful drought. That was our time to hop in. Eastern sellers would then have given a good dairy cow for a rooster. We could have got enough stock absolutely to settle the question of dairy cattle for the South-West. However, we missed the chance. Unless Providence sends another drought to the Eastern States to help us—for which, being Christian men, we can hardly pray—when we do step in to buy we shall have to pay through the nose for the very stock which we could have secured for a bagatelle.

Hon. A. Burvill: How could we have kept the stock until we wanted them?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Some years ago I was up against a proposition, owing to the Government having brought down a lot of stock from the Kimberleys to feed the metropolitan area and the South-West. When those stock came down here, they were practically unsaleable. The bottom had fallen out of the meat market, and the Government had all those cattle on their hands. What were we going to do with them? What did we do with them? Why, Yandanooka alone, before that estate was cut up, would have depastured every one of those animals and kept them rolling fat.

Hon. T. Moore: Yandanooka is good country.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Beautiful country. When I went up there, although the grass was four feet high from end to end of the estate on the eastern side of the railway line, one could have numbered on one's fingers and toes all the cattle being depastured there. And meantime the Government were paying for agistment of cattle on other people's runs. There is an idea in the minds of some people that if we got over a couple of thousand dairy cattle we could not depasture them. Even if we immediately brought the cows into profit, we could dispose of the calves without any trouble what-

ever among the people who already have dairy cattle. To purchase those stock during the drought in the East would have been a rattling good bargain for the State. The Premier has taken a gigantic task on his shoulders, as Premier, as Minister for Lands, as Minister in charge of the Industries Assistance Board, as Minister in control of the Agricultural Bank, as Minister for the Soldier Settlement Scheme, and as Minister controlling group settlements.

Hon. J. Nicholson: And as Treasurer.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: As Treasurer he has only to look after the deficit. But is it possible for one man to carry out all that work? I say, no. It means that Sir James Mitchell has more than he can do, more than he can efficiently supervise. Therefore, he must leave the work to the heads of the civil service. Let me say at once that Sir James Mitchell has under him some very fine civil servants, splendid men who cannot be beaten. Nevertheless, I do think it would be very wise of the Premier to hand over some of his work to, say, the Minister for Agriculture, if the Government will not have honorary Ministers. I think they should have honorary Ministers, because the work is more than the Ministry can do. The Premier should hand over some at least of all that business to another Minister. I do not think that even a superman could effectively control and supervise so many departments.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Why do you say you do not think so, when you know he cannot?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I will put it that way, then, and say that I know the Premier cannot. The time will come when the Premier will regret having tried to carry so much. He cannot exercise that supervision which is so essential. Undoubtedly every now and then one finds a man who is so fond of getting his own way that in anything affecting him he cannot bear to let anyone else have any say whatever. I admire Sir James Mitchell. I admire his optimism, and the great work he has done in the past; but I still have the right to criticise when I think he is wrong. In my opinion, he is wrong in attempting to do what no one man can do, namely, carry the work of all these various departments on his own shoulders. We have some prophecies as to the future of the State. All sorts of ideas have been ventilated as to how we may retrieve the financial position, and ensure success and prosperity. Some men say, "Tax the people; tax them so as to wipe out the deficit." I think the people would be wiped out before the deficit was wiped out; and thus the goose that lays the golden eggs would be killed. Then there is the unimproved land tax, with which I have already dealt. There are men who advocate the reduction of freights and fares on the railway system with a view to encouraging production. I do not think reduced rates and fares would encourage production on the part of the farmer. The position may be different as regards the miner; indeed, I believe it is different. But we have no right

to demand reduction in freights and fares seeing that knowingly and wilfully we built our railways with grades that a magpie would baulk at rather than fly up. We put in grades of one in forty, and we tell the world how cheaply we build our railways. We do not say a word about how much it costs to run those railways after they are built. If an engineer is sent out and told to get a grade of 1 in 40, he is not going to look for anything better than that. If we had told him we wanted a grade of 1 in 80, we could have got it with very little extra expense. Take the line from Balingup to Donnybrook, a switchback with grades of 1 in 40.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But vested interests wanted that line through their country.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: No, not there; that was further south. Between Donnybrook and Balingup we travel up hill and down dale, on grades of 1 in 40 both ways. Yet when the engineers were sent out a year or two ago, they got an excellent grade of 1 in 82 over the same country, with not one-tenth of the cutting there is on the existing line.

Hon. T. Moore: Similarly on the Collie-Brunswick line.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Yes. It seems to me we have put our railways where the worst grades were to be found.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But that is not the fault of the present Government.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: No, it is the fault of every Government that has been in power. I want to congratulate the Minister for Works on having instructed his engineers to get the best possible grade for the Pemberton-Nornalup line. He would not take a grade of 1 in 40. I hope that in future, wherever a line is being constructed, we shall not be so shortsighted as to think of the money we are expending at the time, but that we shall think rather of the millions we shall have to waste later in hauling over impossible grades.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The engineers are not always to blame. They have to reach a certain objective.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: If our population be doubled, and we can keep the bulk of the people on the land, the financial future of the State need trouble none of us; but if our population be doubled and we still have from 48 to 50 per cent. of the people in the metropolitan area, we shall be in an even worse position than we are to-day. Therefore we must make the lives of those in the country bearable. Under the group system settlers are able to live in the back country in better circumstances than were afforded by the old isolated settlement. They have their schools; they do not have to give up their holdings because their womenfolk refuse any longer to see their children growing up in utter ignorance. On the groups they have social entertainments, and a hundred and one ways of passing the time. They are not shut off from everything the man in the town enjoys. It will

be found that the group settlement system will be extended. I hope the Premier will not confine himself to the South-West, but will keep his eye on the Esperance country, and do something there; and that he will not forget that the wheat area to-day is hung up for want of water. We must have a national system for watering that area. I hope he will not forget that north of the Murchison River we have a vast territory of land so wonderful that those hon. members who have not been there and seen it would not believe how good it is.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What do you advise should be done with the Murchison land?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Not that it be cut up into 10,000-acre blocks for people to starve on. I advise that those who know the country be asked to give an opinion as to what shall be done.

Hon. T. Moore: Do you think it ought to be left in million acre blocks?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: In some cases yes, if men can be found sufficiently foolish to pay the rents and taxes on it. Some of that country can be cut up into small holdings, but we must not go to extremes and cut it into holdings so small that when a bad season comes we shall have to assist the holders.

Hon. T. Moore: Your Government extended the leases for many years. Therefore nothing can be done with the land, and you know it.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Anything can be done at any time if Parliament so desire.

Hon. T. Moore: What, break promises?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: They are broken every day. I remember a promise that, whatever happened, the Como tramline would not be built. I remember that promise being repeated to the third time.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: But you have been bolstering up the Government!

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: No, I do not give a hang for the Government or for anyone else. If Parliament decides that those pastoral leases shall be cut up, they can be cut up. Parliament decided that freehold land granted to a man because he had fulfilled certain obligations could be taken from him under the Closer Settlement Bill of last year. Why, then, cannot these pastoral leases be cut up? If the Government would bring down a Bill to deal with all the land in the State, I would support it. In any case, I hope the Premier will not confine his energies to the South-West. I hope he will push the development of the South-West to the utmost, but that he will realise also there are other areas in this State equally open to settlement. If he does that, we shall see in the near future a better chance of prosperity than we see to-day when so much of our land is unproductive, not because the people are not willing to make it productive, but because we, through shortsightedness, did not give them the means to do so.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What more would you give them?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I would see that the water scheme on the wheat areas was nationalised. There are many other ways in which it can be done, and on some other occasion, when I have more time, I will enlighten the hon. member.

Hon. H. BOAN (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.40]: I should like to compliment Mr. Ewing on his appointment to the Ministry. Many members have spoken favourably of his possibilities of success in the new position. Although I have had the pleasure of his acquaintance but a short time, I can endorse all that has been said, for I am sure he has those sterling qualities that appeal to all hon. members. I wish also to mention the appointment of Mr. Kirwan, who I am sure will fill his new office with the utmost credit. I am confident that the honour of the House will be strictly upheld by him. I have followed the speeches very closely. Virtually every reference made to the Governor's Speech has been very hopeful. Some of the comments have been a little severe, but reading the Speech through I cannot but feel that the country has occasion to be proud of its position. I firmly believe that Sir James Mitchell and his Ministry are on right lines and acting wisely. Mention has been made of some of the obstacles we have to overcome. One of the most pronounced is that of taxation, finance. Some hon. members say "Increase taxation; that will solve all your difficulties." It sounds all right, but in principle it cannot be done. I want to make a comparison of our position here in respect of secondary, and even primary, industries with that of other States, and show some of the disadvantages we suffer from in competition with the Eastern States. Every member should face this question and endeavour to unravel the problem. We have a uniform tariff, and the Federal taxation is equal. But there is a wide discrepancy between our State taxation and that of Victoria. Picture a man coming over here from Victoria with a sum of money to invest in an industry. The first question he should ask is "What disadvantages have I to face?" And when he shall have accumulated £1,000 profit on the venture, how will he stand as against a man in a similar position in Victoria? I have here a few comparative figures which apply not only to secondary industries but to the man on the land as well. They serve to show the reason for slackness in every avenue of the State, to reveal the cause of unemployment, and to explain the handicap which is on the community generally?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Who is responsible for the present taxation?

Hon. H. BOAN: I am not here to say. The hon. member knows more about it than I do. But let me make a few comparisons between the taxation levied on incomes in Western Australia and Victoria. In Victoria a man with an income of £1,000 pays 4½d. in the

£, while in Western Australia the amount levied is 9½d., over 100 per cent. more than in that State. On an income of £2,000 in Victoria the tax is 5½d. and in Western Australia it is 17½d. On £3,000 in Victoria it is 6d. and in Western Australia 2s. 1½d. On £4,000 in Victoria it is still 6d., while in Western Australia 2s. 9½d. is levied. On £5,000 in Victoria it is 6½d. and in Western Australia 3s. 6d., and on £6,673 it is again 6½d., and here we find it is 4s. 7d. I ask hon. members whether it is at all likely that people who have money to invest in the hope of making a profit are likely to come over here to give Western Australia the benefit of their capital when the conditions are such as I have quoted? I could give numerous instances of people with capital having expressed a desire to come to Western Australia to invest their money, and having speedily withdrawn on learning what our rates of income tax were. Again, those who are already here and who have capital to invest in manufacturing, have declared openly that it pays them better to manufacture in Victoria where income taxation is comparatively low, and to send the manufactured articles to Western Australia. Not only can the articles be manufactured more cheaply in the sister State, but they can be sent across to us and sold at a price which is less than that at which they could be manufactured here. Hon. members will not deny that the subject is worthy of serious thought. It is also a matter that the Government should take into consideration for the reason that it has an effect which is disastrous for the State. Under such conditions what sort of a reserve can any man build up for the purpose of increasing the avenues of employment? He cannot possibly do it; he is drained dry. It is a serious proposition when the amount of taxation comes to 4s. 7d. in the pound. I would be sorry to enter upon the manufacture of anything under conditions such as these. How is it possible for anyone here to compete against manufacturers in Victoria who have extended to them facilities that are so much more favourable than ours? Of course there are certain ways of overcoming the difficulties, and one which I think should be seriously considered is that of disposing of the trading concerns. They are a drag on the community. Let us picture these trading concerns in the hands of private enterprise. Instead of building up our deficit year after year, these concerns would be paying income tax. The amount that would thus find its way into the revenue would assist to bring about a reduction in income taxation. At the present time the trading concerns do not pay income tax, which is not fair, and not only do they not pay anything in the way of taxation, but they are swelling the deficit. I believe that the Government are quite in sympathy with the proposal to dispose of these concerns, and I know that Mr. Ewing is also of the same opinion. I would say, "Do not be too particular about what they are likely to bring so long as we get out of them." In this way we would be rid

of the loss they are responsible for, and we would be receiving revenue by way of taxation from the purchasers. We are keeping the community poor by retaining possession of them. The matter should receive the urgent attention of the Government, and the disposal of the trading ventures would assist us materially, not only financially but it would be the means of capitalists coming to the State to start industries. In Victoria the farmer pays 6½d. in the pound if he earns £1,000 per annum. Here if a farmer makes a similar profit he is obliged to pay 9½d. That kind of thing cannot go on. Whenever anyone desires to start a little venture in Western Australia, he must go cap in hand to the Government for support to the extent of a pound for pound subsidy. It is impossible to make a commencement in any other way with an undertaking,

Hon. T. Moore: Your own party were responsible for this taxation.

Hon. H. BOAN: I was not here when it went through, but it is never too late to mend. The past has gone; let us rectify the position as we find it to-day.

Hon. T. Moore: We will rectify it next March.

Hon. H. BOAN: With the disposal of the trading concerns we need have no fear about combines. Look at commerce in Perth to-day. Are there any combines? Why, Perth is the cheapest place in Australia at the present time. Competition keeps down prices, and if competition does not succeed in that respect the Government will see that prices are kept down. Western Australia is a State that we should all be proud of. It is a country that provides opportunities for young men and those who wish to accomplish something. It is distressing to find that a man who has made a few thousand pounds becomes immediately handicapped. He declares then that he does not care to remain in Western Australia and he goes to a State like Victoria where the conditions are so much easier. In Victoria he meets someone who says, "How did you get on?" He replies, "Oh, I made £1,000." His friend retorts, "So did I and I pay income tax to the extent of 4½d. What do you pay?" Then he replies that the amount is 9½d. and the result is as I have described it. The sooner taxation is reduced the sooner shall we get on to the right track. I am pleased to have had the opportunity of expressing my views on this matter and I assure hon. members that what I have said has been sincerely spoken.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan) [5.55]: In common with other members I desire to congratulate Mr. Ewing on his elevation to Ministerial rank. I do not think he need be alarmed at the statements made by Mr. Holmes last night because I am certain that, so far as that hon. member's remarks dealing with State trading are concerned, the Leader of the House will meet them cheerfully and honestly and as his convictions move him. I am satisfied that Mr.

Ewing as a Minister will be a factor in the scheme to try to get rid of the State enterprises, and that he will do his utmost to bring about their disposal. We know that last year a resolution was passed by this House giving the Government power to dispose of the trading concerns, and that unfortunately the resolution did not pass another place. The result is that the hands of the Ministry are still, in a sense, tied. I feel satisfied, however, that Mr. Holmes's remarks will spur on the Leader of the House to live up to all that he has said against the trading concerns, and I am looking forward to good results in consequence. I am satisfied also that it should be the ambition of every member to attain Ministerial rank, and to fit himself for that position when it comes his way. I congratulate Mr. Ewing and I trust he will be entirely successful as a Minister of the Crown. I also extend congratulations to Mr. Kirwan on his appointment as Chairman of Committees. I am satisfied that he too will maintain to the fullest extent the best traditions of this House. Most hon. members speaking on the Address-in-reply have touched on every conceivable subject, in some cases important and in others unimportant. I am prepared to leave it at that, understanding it is the desire to shorten the proceedings. Therefore I will confine my remarks to matters of metropolitan importance only. The first subject I desire to touch upon is that of water supply. I am somewhat disappointed at the brevity of the reference to this question contained in the Governor's Speech. The paragraph dealing with the matter is merely this—

You will be asked to vote the necessary money to cover expenditure on extensions of the metropolitan water supply and tramways rendered necessary by the growth of the city.

It will be within the memory of hon. members that for the past two summers the conditions have been serious regarding the metropolitan water supply, particularly in the higher areas. So far back as 1907 it was recognised that steps should be taken towards the provision of an adequate and permanent water supply. A report which was prepared advocated that a certain course should be taken. The matter was allowed to drift and has never been properly grappled with. In the last couple of years the position has become so serious that the people in the metropolitan area now look to an approaching summer with considerable nervousness. Temporary expedients have been adopted, one of which is the installation of artesian bores. Apart from the difficulties associated with bore water, such as algae growth, salinity and temperature, there is always the danger of a diminishing supply and an eventual petering out altogether of that supply. As the metropolitan area depends largely upon the bore system, we are taking a big risk. When the temporary Canning River, Nicholson road, scheme was before the country three years ago it met with such

condemnation that the Government called for expert advice from Mr. E. G. Ritchie, whose report has been laid upon the Table of the House. He dealt with the whole scheme. His report dealt with the temporary methods such as bores and the Mundaring reservoir, and with a permanent supply from the Canning River dam, having particular reference to sites Nos. 1 and 2. He said—

In regard to artesian bores, the increased exploitation of this source of supply is not advised any further than shall be absolutely necessary pending the acquisition of additional supplies of hills water. The artesian system of supply is regarded as too insecure for the growing requirements of a large city, and substantial additional supplies, delivered by gravitation, are the need of the day.

The engineer said that artesian bores, and an increased supply from the Mundaring Reservoir and the Canning at Nicholson road scheme could be looked upon as temporary expedients of a costly nature. As regards the Mundaring reservoir, he said, as most engineers have agreed that, owing to the low elevation in relation to distance from the city it is not advisable to consider it as a scheme for the metropolitan area. So far as the metropolitan area is concerned, the farming and mining communities should say, "Hands off the Mundaring reservoir. That scheme belongs to us." I am with them in that. For the metropolitan area a separate scheme is required. The whole thing resolves itself into a question of the Upper Canning scheme. Mr. Ritchie recommends this scheme and the adoption of the No. 1 in preference to the No. 2, as suggested by Mr. Lawson. He says the elevation is satisfactory. The No. 1 scheme had an elevation of 460 feet from the bed of the river with a 200 feet wall. It would hold 15,825 million gallons and give a daily supply of ten million gallons. It would also have the Wongong Brook, a fine stream, to fall back upon with the growth and demands of the people. The No. 2 scheme would have an elevation of 360 feet, and the wall would be 225 feet high. It would have a capacity of 18,810 million gallons, and give a daily supply of 16 million gallons. The consumption last year reached 13 million gallons a day. At that time the city was not consuming its full requirements. Many consumers got no water at all from day to day, or week to week. Had they been getting their full supply even the Canning scheme would have been fully stretched to give the people of the metropolitan area all the water they wanted, leaving alone any question of increased demand in the future.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What is the cost?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: The cost was fixed at a time when cement was dear. The engineer recommended mud and rock walls, and the linking up of small reservoirs as was expedient. He said that cement walls could be considered at a later date when they could be built at a cheaper rate. Between 1909 and 1919 the consumption of water in the metro-

politan area increased 91 per cent. It was still the lowest per capita consumption of the large cities of the Commonwealth. The consumption was about 35 gallons a day as against that in South Australia of 65 gallons, and some of the other States of 45 to 47 gallons. Session after session the Government pass this matter over without giving it any serious consideration, and are overlooking one of the most serious things we have to face. I should like to touch upon the tramways and their dual control. Wherever the tramlines are set down, the condition of the roads through the city is distinctly noticeable. The lines sometimes stand up an inch or an inch and a half above the roadway. Between Murray-street and Wellington-street the road is in a scandalous condition. This is due to the tramway people pulling up the blocks and not putting them back in the proper way. The result is that the water gets through, and lies there, and the trams and the traffic splash the water for quite a distance as they pass. This bad road formation allows the water to percolate between the blocks and the cement and get into the permanent roadway, greatly to its detriment. It is wrong to have dual control over the city streets. I look for some sort of reciprocity between the Government and the municipality.

Hon. J. Duffell: Do you suggest the municipalisation of trams?

Hon. G. Potter: And of water supplies?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Yes. If there was this reciprocity the trouble I refer to could be remedied at once. It is a menace to the city and the public. The tramway people cannot be induced to improve their portion of the roadway at the time the City Council are doing their part. If some arrangement could be made whereby the City Council when doing their work could complete the whole job, and charge the Tramway Department with its proportion of the expenditure, it would be a far better scheme. I am also pleased to note that the marketing scheme, which received such bad treatment last year when the Bill was presented, has not been dropped, and that the Minister for Agriculture is having a conference with the various bodies with a view to establishing marketing facilities at an early date. The pollution of the river is still a serious matter. The public have had that menace to health year after year, and it will probably be worse than ever during the coming summer. No mention of that is made in the Speech. No attempt is made to remedy the condition of affairs about which the public have been complaining so bitterly every summer. The Government are to be congratulated on bringing forward a scheme for the establishment of an agricultural college. The establishment of such an institution will be a great boon to the agricultural community. The sons and daughters of farmers will then be trained in the proper way so that they may become efficient in farming and husbandry of every description. The Speech says that dairying is increasing and that new butter factories are about to be established. I hope the experience the Government have had over

the Avon butter factory will cause them to go slowly in the matter of establishing further factories; otherwise it will not be the only experience of the sort the Government will have to face. It will mean losing good capital, and bring the Government further into State trading. They are now running the Avon factory ostensibly, I understand, for the shareholders, but I do not think the shareholders have been consulted, and there never has been a shareholders' meeting as to handing the factory over to the Government. I hope the Leader of the House will inquire into the point. Good roads represent one of the great needs of the State. The railways are heavily capitalised, and the demands upon the Commissioner are such that he has to get revenue by hook or crook. It is a questionable method of improving the finances of the railways to raise freights. The motor traffic has greatly increased, and we must consider the question from the national standpoint of building roads fit to carry heavy motor traffic. Some 20 years ago I held that a cheap and suitable way of meeting the difficulty was for the Government to dissect the South-West with good roads, and use labour from the prison and the Hospital for the Insane for this work. It should be a national work to open up the country. It would be better to use such labour instead of leaving these people congregated in hospitals or in the prisons, and put them out into the country to work out their own redemption. By this means, they would be opening up the districts and constructing good roads through them.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [7.30]: I do not feel inclined to participate in the debate on the Address-in-reply at this late stage and would not do so, especially in view of the general desire to finish the discussion as soon as possible, were it not that it might be considered ungracious if I did not acknowledge my feelings of gratitude for the all too kind references made to myself in the course of the debate. I have nothing to add to what I have already said by way of thanks for, and appreciation of, the honour done me, further than to say that if I fail to realise the high anticipations of the way I shall carry out my duties, it will not be for any want of good feeling on the part of my fellow members, nor for want of that help the House characteristically extends to anyone who has duties to perform in it. I would like to take this opportunity of extending my good wishes to the latest elected member of the Chamber, Mr. Carroll. I can assure him he comes to a House in which a very fine spirit exists, a House in which members express their independent opinions and in which members are not so influenced as they are elsewhere by party ties or party considerations, a House where the best of feeling exists among all the

members, but at the same time, a House in which members are inspired by a very high sense of responsibility. I would also like to join in the congratulations extended to Mr. Ewing on his attainment of Ministerial office. The Premier deserves to be congratulated on the wisdom of his choice, for he could not have selected any more popular member of the Chamber to represent the Government here. While on that point, I must express my disappointment that the Government have not seen fit to have two representatives in this Chamber. I consider it is too much to ask any one man to represent a Government here and, at the same time, to carry out the departmental duties he has to fulfil. It is not fair to the Leader himself, to this House, nor is it in furtherance of efficient administration. I was struck with the references made by Mr. Willmott when he spoke of the Premier having too extensive duties to perform, duties no one man could satisfactorily carry out. I agree with that. As Mr. Willmott pointed out, the Premier has not only to carry out the duties attached to his office as Premier, but he has to take charge of the work of repatriation and the onerous duties, perhaps the most onerous of all, attached to the control of the finances. In his endeavour to straighten the finances and to restore sound finance, surely sufficient is involved to fully occupy the whole of his time, with an accumulated deficit approaching six million pounds and with the finances in the condition in which we find them, is there any more important Ministerial office than that of Treasurer? References have been made to migration and the suggestion was made that a board should be appointed to control that work. I am of opinion that migration in its present form should occupy the attention of one Minister alone. When Mr. Willmott speaks of the onerous duties the Premier has to perform, I would ask whether the same thing does not apply more or less to all the Ministers? In this State, the work of Ministers has been increasing each year. There are the State trading concerns and extensions of Government services in various directions, and although the working has consistently increased and the number of departments too, the number of Ministers to-day is less than it used to be. We hear of the Government assuming responsibilities irrespective of Parliament. In not only Western Australia, but in other countries, Governments are slowly but surely encroaching upon the authority of Parliament. When the tendency is in that direction, —I will not go into a number of cases we could cite here where the Government have acted without the authority of Parliament—the natural corollary is that a larger number of members of Parliament shall have a share in the government of the country. Of the eighty members of Parliament in both Houses, there are many able men who would be only too pleased to accept some of the responsibility of government. The Government might call upon members to

act as honorary Ministers, as acting Ministers or as under secretaries of departments. It would be possible to improve the position if that course were adopted. Has that not been evidenced during the course of this debate? What has been the general tendency of the discussion? Apart from the question of policy as to whether or not the State trading concerns should be maintained, the whole criticism of the Government has been against their administration. All the faults found have been with acts of administration. At least one member, Mr. Moore and, I think, Mr. Hickey as well, would say that even the failure of the State trading concerns was due to mal-administration on the part of Ministers. However that may be, the general adverse criticism of the Government to-day has been regarding its administration. I have heard no one object to the migration policy nor yet to the land settlement policy. When one recognises the multifarious duties Ministers have to perform, it is not a matter of surprise that they should be guilty of so many mistakes in administration, but rather is one astonished that the mistakes are not still greater. If there is any cure to be found surely it is in the extension of the responsibility of government to a larger number of members of Parliament. Coming back to the question that prompted these remarks from me, we have the position of the Leader of the House here. Irrespective of the question of having two representatives of the Government in this Chamber, we may consider what are the duties of our Leader. I do not say for one moment that he is not full of energy and capable, but to ask him to carry out the duties his office involves, is to desire too much of any one man. His duties are extensive. He has to attend here during the whole course of the sittings. He has to answer questions not merely at question time, but during debates that cover a wide range of subjects. He has to be prepared, by way of interjection or otherwise, to answer all sorts of questions. He cannot answer them without a thorough and complete knowledge of the whole of the governmental affairs of this State. He has to be au fait with Bills before the House. His duties do not end there. He is in charge of a number of very important departments of State. In the first place, as Minister for Justice he controls the Crown Law Department, the work connected with the Supreme Court and the stipendiary magistracy. He is also in charge of the Titles Office, and of the Arbitration Court work. Furthermore, he is the head of the Electoral Department. At present we are face to face with a general election for the Legislative Assembly and the biennial election for the Legislative Council. We will also have before us shortly a Redistribution of Seats Bill involving an alteration of electoral boundaries and rolls. All this means a considerable amount of work in connection with that department. The duties of Minister for Justice alone, if satisfactorily performed and

not perfunctorily as Ministers have had to carry out their duties lately, because it is almost impossible to do otherwise, would constitute a good deal of work and responsibility for one man. But he is also Minister for Education and if there is one department offering immense scope for improvement, it is this one. In addition he is Minister for the new department of the North-West and that comprises the Aborigines Department, the control of the Wyndham Meat Works and other departments.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The Wyndham Meat Works would be enough for any one man.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And the North-West comprises a territory as big as Queensland.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The peopling of the North-West is a matter of vast importance not only to Western Australia, but to Australia generally. I suggest that this work is not merely State work; it is national work. We have but a handful of people—340,000—gathered in the South-West corner of the continent, and those people are struggling to develop the vast North and North-West. The peopling of that area is essentially a national work. The emptiness of that area is a menace to national safety. I am not one who has ever sought to incite an anti-Federal spirit in this State. I believe an anti-Federal feeling can never exist in Western Australia, because it cannot be established upon a sound basis. The more carefully one investigates the relations between Western Australia and the Commonwealth, the more satisfied one is of the utter absurdity of those who urge that Western Australia does not receive a fair deal from the Commonwealth. But a case could be made out for Western Australia, a case that would be acceptable in the eyes of the Commonwealth, but it should not be spoilt by foolish anti-Federalists talking a lot of rubbish such as we have heard lately about the great Federal gold steal, etc. We are a handful of people struggling to develop an area of one-third of the Commonwealth. It is essentially a national duty to people the North and North-West, and surely we would have an unanswerable case if we pointed out to the Commonwealth that the emptiness of our North and North-West is a menace to the safety of the Commonwealth and that the Federal Government ought to assist us in our endeavour to people that vast area and so secure the rest of the continent.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You try to get a response to that and see what your experience will be?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I have discussed it privately with some very responsible members of the Commonwealth Parliament and their personal opinion was that if the case had been properly represented by the State Ministers, it would have received favourable consideration. Instead of that, when our Ministers go East, they put up some absurd case against the Commonwealth that will not stand a moment's investigation; it is a subject of ridicule by anyone who really knows

the position. I suggest the advisableness of approaching the Commonwealth with a view to requesting a special grant to aid the development of the North and North-West. It is a national work that ought to be assisted by national funds.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Why not ask the Commonwealth to give us some of our own money back?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Commonwealth have not done too well in their administration of the Northern Territory.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: No; and perhaps on that account they might be all the more ready to give a grant to the State Government in the hope that our North-West Department might do better than has been done in the Northern Territory.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: We shall not do any better until we have a special Minister for the North.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I am arguing that it would be advisable to have a special Minister. The duties and responsibilities now carried by six Ministers might well be spread over a greater number. I certainly think this Chamber should have in it two Government representatives. Some comment was made regarding a statement by one of the Ministers when Mr. Colebatch was going away that future Governor's Speeches would lack the literary grace and choice diction that had previously marked those productions. That prediction has been borne out, and I commiserate with His Excellency in having had to give utterance to the rambling and ungrammatical rignarole that was put into his mouth.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Quite true.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The Speech included statements referring to all sorts of subjects that were of no consequence. Some of them we had known all about before, and the Speech gave us no fresh information. On others the information given was of no value, but the particular points on which we desired enlightenment were discreetly and entirely overlooked. Reference has been made to the absence of any statements of consequence concerning the mining industry. I was not much surprised at that, because unfortunately there has grown up in this State a spirit of indifference to the industry. There is no country in the world that would not place a higher value than does Western Australia at present on the wonderful asset we possess in our mining resources. There is scarcely a known mineral that is not found within the borders of Western Australia, and its auriferous area is the largest in the whole world. It extends north and south for about 1,000 miles from Ravenshorpe and Dundas right up to Hall's Creek, and over the whole of that area gold can be found. The auriferous area is between 300 and 500 miles wide, and yet we hear comparatively little about the development of our mineral resources. The development of our mineral resources will go on for generations to come,

and great finds will be made. One of the troubles of the industry is there is not the same spirit of optimism exhibited towards mining as is exhibited towards agriculture. We want someone who will adopt the same policy towards mining that the Premier adopts towards agriculture. The Premier in season and out of season—and rightly so—talks about the wonderful wealth of our agricultural lands. When visitors come here he talks to them about nothing else. They are taken all round our agricultural areas and there is an unceasing flow of talk regarding the wonderful future of agriculture. If there were similar optimism, enthusiasm and energy displayed by the Mines Department towards the mining industry, it would be better for the State generally, especially for the agricultural industry. There are great opportunities ahead of the mining industry still, and we should never forget that fact. I have attended several functions in Perth and have heard much about the agricultural industry, but little or nothing about the greatest asset of all, not even excepting agriculture, and that is our mineral wealth. Owing to your thoughtfulness, Mr. President, there was an exception at the latest gathering we had in this House—the reception to the Overseas delegates. You brought forward magnificent auriferous specimens that were lately found in the North. To-day similarly good finds are being made. It is true there is not another Golden Mile and that there are no great mines rivaling the Great Boulder, the Horseshoe or the Ivanhoe, but still the mining industry is providing a very prosperous livelihood for an immense number of people. I who travel a good deal in the back country and meet these men—the finest type of pioneers, men with a magnificent spirit—find that they are not receiving from the Government the encouragement they deserve. Only a couple of weeks ago I was visiting one portion of my province, Ora Banda, an excellent poor man's field. All over the place small shows were working, but they are prosperous shows from the point of view of the average prospector and the average working man. I received only one complaint. I found that the Government battery could not work because provision had not been made for a water supply. Since then rain has fallen and the battery will be able to work so long as water remains in the dam.

Hon. J. Duffell: How many are there in Ora Banda at present?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: There is a large number of shows, quite enough to keep the battery going practically all the time.

Hon. J. Duffell: Anything of a payable proposition?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Scores are payable propositions.

Hon. J. Duffell: You surprise me.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The hon. member is probably thinking of some show that would need a company with big capital to develop

it. I do not say there is anything of that kind, but there are scores of shows where working men can obtain a prosperous livelihood if only they can get the means to crush their ore.

Hon. A. Lovekin: How far are they from the pipe line?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: About 40 miles. They had a pipe line there, but it was taken up. This is only one of dozens of instances with which I could keep the House going all night. I am glad that the Government have done something in connection with the goldfields water scheme, and that they propose to reduce the rates. That, I am sure, will be of great benefit to the East Coolgardie goldfields. I do hope, however, that they will remove certain restrictions under which the users of the water suffer. The goldfields water scheme is one of the worst monopolies ever established in the history of the world. One hears of private monopolies, but I have yet to learn of anything so abhorrent to all one's sense of fair play as has operated for years in connection with the water scheme. Take the case of a man who has a mine. If that man strikes salt water, he cannot use that salt water for the treatment of his ore. If he uses salt water from his own mine, the price of scheme water is immediately put up to such a prohibitive figure that he has to shut down his mine. If he happens to have a dam in the neighbourhood of his mine, and that dam fills as the result of rain, and he uses that fresh water, at once the price of scheme water goes up to a prohibitive rate, making it impossible for him to continue. The Government compel the individual to waste what is the most precious commodity on the goldfields—water, whether salt or fresh.

Hon. A. Lovekin: What reason do they give for a stupid thing like that?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The reason that they want to establish a monopoly. They give no other reason. They simply will not allow people to use any water other than scheme water. That state of affairs does not exist in the agricultural districts. Of course it could not operate there. The Government could not put up the price of scheme water to a prohibitive figure if crops benefited from rain. Mr. Moore last night spoke of the high rates for railway carriage to mining districts. No one who has studied those rates can fail to see that they are not purely charges for services rendered, but that in many cases the railways are being used as a taxation medium. Take the rate for the carriage of gold, which was increased some time ago. That rate is practically a tax upon gold, because the gold has to be carried over the railways. When the rate has gone up to a figure that is monstrous and absurd, having regard to the weight of gold and its size, it amounts to nothing short of a direct tax on gold, and one which the mining community does not receive credit as having paid it by way of taxation. One could give any number of instances of the same kind.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The State enterprises policeman appears to be getting off his beat a bit.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: In the case of fertilisers the Government very rightly impose a low railway rate for the benefit of the agricultural districts, the argument being that the use of fertilisers means that the agricultural industry will advance and that thus the railways will benefit. What fertilisers are to the agricultural industry, explosives are to the mining industry. But when we endeavour to apply the same reasoning to explosives as is accepted by the Government in connection with fertilisers, we are told, "Oh no, that is quite beside the question." It is because of instances such as these, which one could quote indefinitely, that goldfields people feel there is a want of sympathy towards them, feel there is not that Ministerial enthusiasm and energy which ought to be displayed for the advancement of our mining resources. Next I wish to refer to a matter in which I have been interested ever since I have been concerned in the public affairs of this State. I refer to the Esperance railway. It seems to me very unnecessary for people to talk about discovering the possibilities and resources of the Esperance district. The report of a Royal Commission issued in 1915 gave all the particulars, and a great deal more than Mr. Maley revealed after his visit. It was unquestionably a discovery to Mr. Maley, but it could not have been a discovery to the Premier, nor to Mr. Willmott, nor, I am sure, to Mr. Baxter, nor to the people of the goldfields, nor to anybody knowing anything at all about the southern portion of the State. There was something in the nature of a discovery regarding that land between Zanthus and the seacoast, which is far away from the Esperance railway. Mr. Baxter doubted the views expressed by Mr. Maley concerning the value of the land south of Zanthus. I have been told that the land is very good, and that it is all that the Government reports represent it to be. I have never been there myself, but from what I have learnt I believe there is a vast area of land in that region which can be opened up for settlement. I feel very grateful to the various country members who have expressed the hope that the Esperance-Northward railway will be extended to Norseman, but there has been an ominous silence on the part of the metropolitan members and members representing the Fremantle district regarding that extension. Anyone who will look at the map of Western Australia will see what a little gap there is between the head of the Esperance-Northwards railway and the Norseman line. That gap is locally known as "the centralisation safeguard." When the Bill originally came before the House it was for the construction of a railway between Norseman and Esperance. That is the railway that ought to have been constructed. It was defeated, but those of us who were very anxious that the line should

be built preferred to accept half a loaf rather than not get any bread. In those days the Country Party, with their policy of decentralisation, were not in existence. Otherwise I am perfectly certain the Esperance-Norseman railway would now be in operation. However, past Governments—I am not now referring to the present Government—have treated the Esperance district very badly. I have known as many as 70 or 80 settlers to settle in that district on the strength of promises made by the Government of the day, promises which in every case were not fulfilled. The settlers did not get Agricultural Bank assistance, or help from the Industries Assistance Board; but still quite a number of them battled through without a railway. Many of them are still there, and though some of them are not in a prosperous condition, the fact that they have stuck upon the land is a tribute to their determination and also a tribute to the worth of the land. Now there is a want of confidence as to the district receiving fair play in the future. It is true that a good deal has been done for the district by the present Government, who ploughed the land for the settlers, and that the settlers are now getting Agricultural Bank assistance. But, for all that, there is a fear that what has happened in the past may happen in the future. If the Government want the Esperance district to be settled, they must show that they mean that the district shall get fair play. The machinery for the construction of the railway is on the spot, and the sooner the railway is completed to junction with Norseman, the sooner will confidence be restored in the good faith of the Government and the sooner will settlement in the Esperance district be upon a proper basis. I believe the day will come when the Esperance district will be a new province added to Western Australia, a new province well settled by prosperous farmers. The resources of the district are greater even than represented by Mr. Maley or the Government reports. I know the district well, and I know that there are in it swamp and other lands quite equal to, if not better than, anything in the South-West. I cannot acquit the Premier of considerable blame as regards his attitude towards the Esperance railway. It is quite true that he has done a good deal for immigration, but it is also quite true that he has done a good deal to drive some of the best settlers in Western Australia out of the State. He has been bringing migrants into this State from England, but there is not a goldfields member in either House who could not give the names of probably dozens of men formerly living on the goldfields who would have settled in the Esperance area had they been satisfied that they would get fair play there. Most of those men have drifted away, with their families, to settle in the Eastern States. I know of some cases in which they have bought land in the Eastern States at absurd prices, land not as good as they could have taken up here in Western

Australia. They liked the Esperance district because they knew the value of the land. The Esperance climate suits the goldfields people and there are other reasons for their preference. While Sir James Mitchell has been bringing migrants in by one door, hundreds and hundreds of the most desirable men of this State have been driven from our goldfields to the Eastern States. That is why the population figures for Western Australia do not show up as favourably as they should, and do not show that the immigration policy is increasing the population of the State to the extent that it should. For a number of years I have been interested in the Education Department. The ex-Minister for Education did great work. In season and out he preached the value of education from a rational point of view. When the cry went up for economy, he took the stand, "Hands off the Education Department!" I think he was right. Now that adult suffrage has been granted, now that every man and woman has a voice in the control of governmental affairs, the only safety for democracy is education. There is a good deal to be feared from mob control if the mob be ignorant, but we need fear nothing from a people educated up to a sense of their responsibility. For that reason it is of extreme importance that we should prepare for the future and see to it that our children are educated, so that they shall be able properly to exercise their duty in taking a share of the control of the affairs of the country. The education vote has been gradually growing. To-day it is in the region of £600,000. It is certainly a big vote, but I do not think it is too large. Mr. Stewart said that even to-day instances could be quoted of children who are not receiving the advantages of education. Mr. Moore referred to the age at which children complete their compulsory attendance at school, and contended that the age should be raised. I have a great deal of sympathy with that contention. Also I think there is scope for improvement in the administration of the Education Department. I am sometimes in doubt as to whether or not we are receiving full value for the money spent. It is quite true the curriculum is sufficiently extensive. The children are taught an immense variety of subjects, but from my point of view, book learning is not everything. Certain essentials must be taught, it is true, but there are other considerations equally important. I ask the Minister is he quite satisfied with the children that are being turned out from the State schools? Has sufficient attention been paid to such questions as mind training, character building, and the duties of citizenship? I know many difficulties are attendant upon improvement in this direction. It largely depends upon the teachers. However, I do not despair of the Minister's being able to effect considerable improvement. Mr. Nicholson referred to the disparity existing between the number of skilled and unskilled workmen in the State. The Education Department's report makes

reference to the system of trade schools. Good work is being done in the direction, but I think a great deal more could be done in the same way. The apprenticeship system, which lasted so many hundreds of years, is now quite out of date. That system sacrificed many years of the lives of young people, years that were utterly wasted. In trade schools, such as exist in New South Wales and Queensland, boys are taught trades in a much shorter time and just as efficiently. In the establishment of trade schools I think will be found a solution of the question why we have not a larger number of skilled workmen. It is deplorable that so many of our boys have to take their places amongst the unskilled because of circumstances over which they have no control. I look to the Minister's doing a great deal to improve the Education Department, and I sincerely wish that in this as in other respects his career in office may be attended with marked success.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [8.22]: With others I desire to congratulate Mr. Ewing upon his appointment to the Ministry. I am sure he will discharge his duties just as well as has any other Minister we have had in this House. Members here have always rendered ready assistance to successive Ministers, and I am satisfied the same courtesy will be extended to Mr. Ewing. I also wish to congratulate Mr. Kirwan upon his elevation to the post of Chairman of Committees. I am sure we shall never have reason to regret his appointment. I congratulate the Government up on the speech with which His Excellency opened the session. As a rule an immense amount of ground is covered in such a speech, and almost invariably a large number of new measures are foreshadowed. On this occasion, I am pleased to say, the promised Bills are very few. It is high time Ministers decided to give earnest attention to their respective departments and leave the statute-book alone. I was pleased to see it definitely stated in the Speech that there is to be no new taxation. Mr. Boan's remarks this evening were quite sufficient to warrant the Government in coming to the conclusion that no further taxation is necessary. Indeed, I hope we may be granted some remission of taxation. Many people are looking seriously at the impositions levied upon their financial resources. After listening to the remarks of Mr. Kirwan, I am satisfied that the fear of taxation is the reason why some of the large mining companies are chary of investing further capital in their properties. If those that are successful in their operations make large profits, the demands of the Taxation Department upon those profits are sufficient to render it doubtful whether it would not have been wiser had the companies left well alone. Both Federal and State taxation should be reduced, at all events in their incidence upon people successful in their work. I particularly welcome in the Speech the reference to railway extensions in

the province I represent. The extension from Narrambean to Morredin is now proceeding. The settlers in that district have only been awaiting the line before developing that country. Another extension, namely that from Piawaning to the Round Hill, is to be constructed. I sincerely hope the Government will see their way to further extend that line northwards, rather than follow the recent survey to connect up the line with Pithara. It will serve a very fine tract of country between Midland and the Wongan Hills line. I know it is the wish of the Commissioner of Railways to link up those two railways as soon as he can. It would be very much better to take the line further northwards, and so link up the Wongan railway at a point nearer to Mullewa. It is all good country, well worth railway facilities. The Uearty-Yorkrakine railway would not have been necessary had the Dowerin-Morredin line not been swerved out too wide from the main goldfields line. A great deal of the country in between those two lines might be justifiably likened to the Greenough Flats. Although it lies between two main lines, that country is too far from either, and consequently another railway has to be built to serve the people in that district. I mention this in the hope that there will not be a repetition of it when the railway from Piawaning to Round Hill is constructed, and that a large tract of good country will not be left unserved. I am also pleased to notice that there is a reference to the proposal to run a railway to Dale River. Settlers there have been anxiously waiting for that connection for many years, and I trust that the advisableness of constructing the line will be speedily investigated.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Where will it start from?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Probably from Brookton, and when further extended, it would be a direct line from Corrigin through Armadale. The desire has been that it should be taken this way so as to save the people in the far eastern belt a considerable distance when conveying their produce to the port. The adoption of this route would obviate a considerable tonnage having to pass through the heart of the city.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Would it not be better to start from Armadale?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It would be better to connect the two points at once. There is far more settlement at the Dale end and it would be a shorter linking up between Beverley and Brookton. However, an inspection is to take place and, I presume, the engineers will decide which is the better proposition. At Beneubbin there is a tract of magnificent country that will justify railway communication, and when it is known that the Government intend to do something in that direction a large area will be eagerly taken up by those anxious to acquire land.

Hon. T. Moore: It is being rushed now.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: There are many settlers there already, and they declare that there is no land in the State equal to what is in that district. At the same time we know it is hopeless for people to attempt to settle there until they know there is a reasonable prospect of their getting railway communication. The other important matter that concerns me is the reference contained in the Speech to the agricultural college. I do not mind whether it is called a college or a school; I am pleased, however, to see a reference to the matter. In looking through the report of the Education Department and being aware of the fact that the vote has been increasing year by year, it is marvellous to observe that although last year we spent £556,000 in various ways, the only amount that was devoted to the actual teaching of agriculture was the sum of £5,398 which was voted for the Narrogin School of Agriculture. I notice that the Perth Technical School cost £30,691, the Fremantle school £6,417, the Northam High School £16,000, the Bunbury High School £17,000 and that the estimated cost of a high school at Albany is given as £21,000 while the estimate for a similar school at Geraldton is £15,000. For many years past I have approached Ministers in various Governments and have always been told that there was no money available for the establishment of an agricultural college or school. I always accepted that reply, but when I saw that such large sums of money were being spent on technical education, and that so little was being done towards the teaching of agricultural subjects, I was disappointed. I feel now that we can congratulate the Government on having come to a decision regarding the agricultural college. There are many people in the State who are anxious that their sons should acquire a knowledge of scientific farming. Many are sent to the Eastern States because of the absence of facilities in our own State. I trust that a suitable establishment will be erected in a good agricultural centre where advantage of the facilities that will be offered can be taken by a large number of students. If the college is conducted in the way that we hope it will be, we should be able to impart that knowledge which cannot be given in the other States, and the students will know that when they leave they will be given a thorough grounding in the life's work they have before them. At the present time if youths are sent to neighbours' farms, they do not get the opportunity to learn the different subjects that can be taught at the college. The farmer of course does his best, but usually that means only ordinary farm work. On the average farm nothing can be learnt about growing fruit, or the pruning of vines or trees. The greatest difficulty is experienced at the present time in the way of getting men who know anything about pruning trees, and if one is not careful he will find the men he employs will probably ruin the two previous years' prunings,

because the work will be done without system. We want young fellows to apply system to everything they do, whether it be in the breeding of dairy herds or sheep or the growing of their wheat, and generally throughout their farming operations. Many of us who are on the land to-day are still in the experimental stage, and throughout the length and breadth of the State many of those who have been successful, would have been even better off if they had been given the opportunity to learn how to do their work properly. The successes in many instances have followed on years of failure, and to-day those farmers know why they failed and they have had to make up lost time. I hope that when the agricultural college is established it will be in the vicinity of the main water course of the Avon River, where it will be possible to do something by way of irrigation. We know that it will be possible to obtain the best results if attention is given to the question of irrigation which can be carried out in the vicinity of existing water courses. In the absence of definite information it is too expensive for the individual to embark upon that branch of agriculture. It devolves upon the State to direct the people how to embark upon it. The people are succeeding along the Murray River, and I fail to see why we cannot succeed here. Excellent results would follow. It is to the benefit of the State that all land along our rivers should be put to the best use. Before establishing an agricultural college the best possible site should be chosen. I hope the matter will not be lost sight of. It must be difficult for the Government to finance this country in view of the constant requests that are made to them. If by attending to the administration of the departments better service can be given to the country I shall be the more happy in congratulating the Minister for Education. I hope he will long remain in the office, and make a success of his Departments, particularly that connected with the North. There is a wide field open for him in the North. He will get a huge revenue from that part of the State when it is opened up. In this respect Mr. Miles can be of great service to him. There should be a fine future for the people who are settled in the North. I hope we shall speedily get a large population there to help us in developing it, for it will be to their advantage as well as to the advantage of the State. I regret the State has lost the services of Mr. Despeissis, who had a long experience here and was well qualified to advise the Government. He has now gone to Fiji to teach tropical agriculture. We have in his place a much younger man than Mr. Despeissis, who was so well qualified to teach the people how to grapple with affairs in the North. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. J. Duffell, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.40 p.m.