

has been in use for 30 years. Mr. Greig watched it for the last two years, and he now says it will carry 25 sheep to the acre, and therefore is worth £125 per acre. Mr. Greig considers that land able to carry one sheep to the acre is worth £5; hence his calculation of the value of the plot to which I have referred. As members know, Mr. Greig is a sheep farmer. The bottle-brush land should be combined with hill or sheoak land in the proportions of about one-third of the former to two-thirds of the latter. That mode of subdivision would leave a good deal of land with ironstone; and hill land, which is a poor class of country, has been proved to grow the *Pinus pinaster* to perfection. The land should be surveyed into blocks immediately; the Minister for Lands has hinted that this will be done. When dairy farms of about 300 acres are established here and there amongst the hills, the hill land itself should be reserved for pine growing. The settlers who take up dairy farming would then have wood right alongside their holdings; and they could do the work required by the Forests Department. There would be 500 or 1,000-acre plantations of pines scattered among the dairy farms, and under such conditions the risk of fire would be minimised. In this instance, the Forests Department could work in well with land settlement. Pine is very much wanted in this country, because of the rate at which orchards are being planted, and also because of the rate at which our forests are being cut out. In the absence of pine afforestation our fruitgrowers will have no option but to import wood for cases. The afforestation should begin now. If the Government have not funds for the purpose, they should make provision to have areas reserved for pine afforestation; and the work of planting could proceed at the earliest possible moment. The Governor's Speech also makes mention of a new Drainage Bill. It is high time that such a measure was enacted for the South-West. Our existing drainage legislation is unworkable; indeed, the Act has been a nuisance wherever it has been applied. Under it one cannot do the same as one does under the Roads Act—define an area and proceed with one's work independently of anybody else. Under the existing law governing drainage, a few settlers who find themselves in difficulties owing to water on their land and want to form a drainage board, have first to call a meeting and secure the votes of a majority of the landowners in the district in favour of the creation of a board. What actually happens is that people on the higher reaches of creeks and rivers drain their areas on to the land of the people below them. When the meeting has been called, the people who have drained their lands refuse to agree to the constitution of a board. Only the few people who are flooded out form a drainage board, and then the expense of the work proves to be too much for them. I have seen many drainage schemes, and, with the

exception of that on the Peel Estate, I have not seen one scheme that has not been messed up by the engineers, though a good deal of the messing up is due, not to the engineers, but to the unworkableness of the existing Act, under which the work has to be done. If a drainage Bill is introduced it should cover the whole of the watershed, and main drains should be treated like main roads or railways or harbours. The settlers in the particular district should not be left to bear the cost of the main drains, which should fall on the entire community. If the cost of main drains is to fall on the settlers, it will mean that the first two generations will be asked to pay back the cost, which is an impossibility for them. I would have liked the Peel Estate Royal Commission to consider that aspect of the drainage problem. As regards the Peel Estate, there is an adjoining piece of ground, larger than the estate itself, that drains into the estate. If the cost of the main drain on the Peel Estate is to be charged to the Peel settlers, they will be so overloaded that eventually the Government will be compelled to write off part of the capitalisation. The cost of subsidiary drains should fall on the settlers. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion before the Chair.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Greig debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.41 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 19th August, 1924.

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

QUESTION—ROAD CONSTRUCTION, FEDERAL GRANT.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, In connection with the expenditure of the Federal grant for road construction, is it required that unemployed desirous of work should be members of the A.W.U.?

2, Are local residents, orchardists, and small farmers generally and others given full consideration in respect to employment without question as to membership of a union?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. 2, All applications receive full consideration, and in this case the foreman of the local board has been engaged by the department and the local plant will be used; but as a general principle the Government consider it is in the best interests of the State as well as that of the individual settlers that their time should be devoted to developing their holdings, and that road construction work be left to those who depend upon it for a living.

QUESTION — MIGRATION, AGREEMENT WITH IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT.

Mr. THOMSON (without notice) asked the Premier: Will he lay on the Table of the House the agreement between Western Australia and the Imperial Government respecting the settling of migrants on the land?

The PREMIER: Yes, I have the agreement here. I move—

That the paper be laid on the Table.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Tenth Day.

Debate resumed from 14th July.

Mr. WILSON (Collie) [4.35]: In common with others who have spoken, I desire to offer you, Sir, my felicitations on your attaining the high office of Speaker. I hope you will live long to occupy the position. I want also to congratulate the members of the front benches, Ministerial and Opposition alike, on their exchange of seats. I trust they will continue to occupy their new seats for many years. The State is to be congratulated on the result of the fight in March. One thing I can say is that the party on this side cannot do any worse than did their predecessors—

Mr. Sampson: Than you have done up to the present.

Mr. WILSON: While there are great hopes of our doing something better. I listened with interest to the reading, in the other Chamber, of the Speech with which the Lieutenant-Governor opened Parliament. I am pleased with the number of amending Bills the Government propose to bring down, although I regret that no mention has been made of a Bill to amend the Coal Mines Regulation Act. That Act has been in existence since 1902, and has practically outlived its usefulness. I am sure that after an interval of 22 years there is room for many amendments. I know there is on the stocks an amending Bill framed by the

employers and the employees. It has been there for the past two years, and it would not require very much effort to put it into shape and bring it before the House. I trust the Government will have that done before the end of the session. The Speech notifies us that the Government intend to bring down legislation dealing with State insurance, with workers' compensation, with arbitration, with fair rents, and other necessary measures. Also in the Speech it is announced that the Government intend to appoint a Royal Commission to deal with group settlement. The other night the member for York (Mr. Latham) declared that Royal Commissions were nothing more nor less than a waste of public money, and could do no good. Yet the same hon. member has had the audacity to be the first in the House to put on the Notice Paper a motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission. He roundly condemns Royal Commissions, and then praises them by asking for one. I may say he unconsciously insults members of his own side when he declares that Royal Commissions have never done any good. If he has forgotten, others still remember the good work of the Royal Commission appointed to see that the diggers had a fair go. The result of that Commission was that £30,000 was handed back to the diggers by moneylenders and other exploiters. Two members of that Commission sit on the same side as the member for York. I refer to the members for Moore (Lieut-Col. Denton) and for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson). Then there was the Royal Commission that dealt with the war patriotic fund. If it be not too late I suggest that the Government adopt the recommendations made by that Commission. In many towns throughout the State there lie untouched sums of money collected for the soldiers in France. The authorities to-day do not know what to do with that money, and the time will come when nobody will know anything about it. The Royal Commission recommended that that money be put into a fund under public trustees so that it could be used for the soldiers' dependents, widows and orphans, for whom it was collected. Although the last Government took no heed of the Royal Commission's recommendations, I hope the present Government will adopt them.

Mr. Richardson: There is a fair amount of that money in the aggregate.

Mr. WILSON: Yes. Another Royal Commission that did some good was that appointed to inquire into the repatriation of soldiers. Through the work of that Commission the soldier settlers have received up to £53,000 and I understand the process has not finished yet. The men will still get some more. Yet the member for York declared that Royal Commissions never accomplished any good. For the Noombing Estate £10,000 too much was paid, while the Piesse's Brook settlement cost £2,000 more than it should have done.

Mr. Brown: Do you say that too much was paid for the land?

Mr. WILSON: Yes, £10,000 too much for the Noombing Estate.

Mr. Sampson: Piesse's Brook was Government land.

Mr. WILSON: Yet £8,000 too much was paid there.

Mr. Sampson: You mean in the development.

Mr. WILSON: I mean what I say. Some of the land was bought from private people. City firms sold it to the Government, charging 25 per cent. and 30 per cent. more than they were prepared to accept from private individuals. That came out in the evidence. If this is not proof that that Royal Commission did some good, I must be dense. Coming to the question of soldier settlement, this State stands an easy and favourable first in the Commonwealth, due especially to the efforts of Mr. McLarty. The whole question, after you leave this State, has been marked by incompetence and incapacity. Even now in Queensland they have come to the conclusion that they may have to shift soldiers from certain districts. In places, soldiers had to be taken away in a body because they had been placed on land on which they had no chance to make a living. In New South Wales there is £2,000,000 interest owing to the department by soldier settlers, and no hope of recovering it. In the newspapers a couple of weeks ago the question of soldier settlement in Victoria was dealt with, and it was urged that steps should be taken to see that the land given to soldier settlers was of fair value, and that they had a reasonable chance of making a living on it. It was also urged that help should be given in necessitous cases, and that the amount the settler would be obliged to pay should be fixed within the ensuing three years. The paper also said that the position in Victoria implied that the chickens were coming home to roost. In that State the debit against soldier settlement is £12,000,000. Dr. Earle Page, in regard to soldier settlement, and in reply to Mr. Cook, said recently that the amount advanced by the Commonwealth to the States for this object was £35,063,686; that New South Wales had received £9,826,203, Victoria £11,968,176, Queensland £2,779,452, South Australia £2,957,780, Western Australia £3,463,782, and Tasmania £2,163,304. He also stated that the interest owing to the Commonwealth Government was £631,000. He went on to say that though the conditions were so unsatisfactory as to cause many failures, the Commonwealth Government were prepared to confer with the State Governments in the matter. It is not too late now to make that announcement. I have always maintained that it

was the duty of the Commonwealth Government to see that the men who fought in France were repatriated on the land. The report of the Western Australian Royal Commission on Soldier Settlement set forth the same thing. If it was good enough to spend £700,000,000 in killing people, it is good enough for us to spend £70,000,000 to enable people to till the land and earn a living. The Federal Government have a surplus of £10,000,000, and should wipe off the indebtedness of the soldiers. Dr. Earle Page would show good statesmanship if he announced that he would help some of those soldiers that had been settled on the land. The question of group settlement has been prominent of late. I have been charged with being a pessimist. The Minister for Lands said to me, "You are the most pessimistic Scotsman I have ever listened to." I told him that I was not a pessimistic Scotsman but that I was the most truthful one he ever knew. A man is not a pessimist because he refuses to be blind to the faults of any scheme. I refuse to be made blind. On many occasions I have travelled through the groups from Augusta to Pemberton. My visits have not been motor jaunts. One does not always see the best or the worst of the group settlements when travelling through by motor. There are other ways of finding out what is being done. I have lived in the South-West for 20 years, and spent the previous 20 years in Gippsland. I say that commercially and economically the South-West can never be a paying proposition. This development, however, is a national undertaking, and we have to see that it is made a success.

Mr. Stubbs: Gippsland pays.

Mr. WILSON: Not in the circumstances that arise in the South-West. I have two brothers-in-law who are dairying between Fish Creek and Boolara in Gippsland. They have worked hard with their families for over 20 years, and even now are not able to ride about in a motor car. It is true they have not had subterranean clover on which to feed their cows, but they have had good English grasses. Their holdings comprise 150 to 200 acres, but they are still battling away. The same thing applies to our South-West. If the grasses in the South-West are the best in the world, with a debt of £2,000 to start with, I still believe it impossible for the group settler to be successful. It is all right to pick out the eyes of a place where the clover has been growing for years. One man is milking 70 cows on a good patch of clover country, but there are others who could not milk one cow on the same area of land, because there is no clover there. The whole question resolves itself into one of costs. The most successful system of clearing that I know of is that adopted by Mr. W. N. Hedges.

I visited No. 1 group, which should be the most forward of them all.

Mr. Stubbs: How long ago was that?

Mr. WILSON: Last February. I was electioneering. The group settlers were going to listen to what the Labour Party intended to do for them. I saw a good deal of the clearing that had been done. Up to that time No. 1 group had cost £22,000, and the foreman said the total cost would be a great deal more—in fact up to £38,000. The foreman explained that when the group was started by the first foreman on that group trenches were dug around the trees, and the good soil taken out and set aside so that it could be used 'or filling up the holes afterwards. He explained that a mistake had been made over these trenches, and the department stopped the work. After three years the trenches were being filled up again. Many jarrah trees were set aside for posts and rails, and many post holes had been dug. Later on the groupers pulled a number of other trees down, and the whole lot was burnt together. The group settler cannot afford to pay out for all that waste of money. A tale is told of certain works that were carried out in the Russelton district. The member for Sussex knows all about it, but did not enlighten the House. A good deal of money was spent in an attempt to drain the groups, but as it was found eventually that the drains would not function and that the water would not run uphill, the drains were condemned. The engineer was retrenched and another was put on in his place. It might be all very well if the capitalisation of each holding did not exceed £1,000; under those conditions the settler might have a chance of making a success of his undertaking. When the capitalisation reaches £2,000, however, he cannot possibly do it. It would mean that he would have to find £130 a year in interest, and would have to pay to the department £2 10s. a week before he could bring a penny home to his wife with which to buy salt to put on the children's porridge. Then again, how can the settlers possibly live in this way, especially when they have no market for their produce? I congratulate the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) on having regained the use of his political eyesight. For three years he was blind to the need of market facilities for the settlers, notwithstanding the complaints that were made concerning this.

Mr. Sampson: What will you do now?

Mr. WILSON: You will see what we can do. The Premier has half promised that the question of marketing facilities will be considered, and I know he will make his promise good. When the Soldier Settlement Commission visited the Swan district many cases of hardship were brought under notice. A war widow, whose son was working for her—he, too, had also been a soldier—sent six cases of tomatoes to market and

received 9s. 3d. for the lot. She had to pay 10d. for each case, and her returns were 11d. a case. At Karragullen another settler sent eight cases of good apples to market, and the return was 16s. 5d. At Balingup a man sent six big bags of onions to market, and received 3s. 8d. for the lot, equal to 7½d. per bag. The late Government overlooked a letter that appeared in the "West Australian," from Mount Barker, headed "A Fruitgrower's Complaint," and reading—

I would like to call the attention of the public to the conditions under which it is expected a fruitgrower can live and bring up a family. On December 28th and 31st I forwarded nine cases of plums to a Perth market. The first five cases brought 1s. 9d. per case (total 8s. 9d.), and the railage, commission, cartage, and sale fees amounted to 5s. 10d., leaving a net return of 2s. 11d. for the five cases, or 7½d. per case.

But he did not get the 7½d. clear. The letter continues—

Each case cost me 6½d., so I got 1d. for a 20lb. case of plums.

Mr. Sampson: There is ample justification for new markets. We look to the Government to introduce the necessary legislation.

Mr. WILSON: The writer of the letter proceeds—

The return to me from the four other cases totalled 3d., and then I had to pay 2s. 6d. for the cases. Can a fruitgrower carry on with returns like these? Do you think it ought to be allowed? All the fruit was in good condition. Last year I sent to Perth four 40lb. cases of pears, in good hard condition, and I received a 2d. stamp in return. Under such conditions fruitgrowers have no possible chance of making a living.

Mr. Lindsay: Something is wrong with the marketing conditions, surely.

Mr. WILSON: Yes. I have been informed recently that the Perth agents' fees have been increased, so that the returns to the grower will decrease. There has appeared in the "West Australian" an illuminating article on the amounts which these soldiers have to pay. The article says, in effect, that sustenance and so forth amounts to £500, that a house costs £220, implements and horse and cart £75—I do not know how many implements the settler would get out of that amount—fertiliser £40, and six cows £72. If six cows are bought for £72, they will be duds, and there will be more blind tears than milk. Before I leave the groups let me say that on some of them the amounts to the debit of the settler, if all charged up, would total more than £2,000; and the Government charge no more than £1,000. We have made a splendid deal with this group settlement business by giving donations of £1,000 to the "pommies"—I am a "pommy" myself. The dinkum

Aussie is charged £1,000 more than the migrant, in some cases.

Mr. Sampson: The other £1,000 is still a liability on the migrant's block.

Mr. WILSON: Nonsense! The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. I have voiced these things, and got myself into not too good odour for doing so. Take a group of ten men who are migrants and ten men who are Australian. That group may cost £40,000, or £2,000 per holding. The Government can charge the migrant only £1,000, whereas the dinkum son of the soil, the Aussie, can be charged £2,000. That, in brief, is the position.

Mr. Taylor: The difference was stated to be £700.

Mr. WILSON: I can safely leave it to the Minister for Lands to contradict me if I am wrong. Some groups stand at about £2,000 per holding now, and there are not too many cows and implements included in that amount.

The Minister for Lands: The highest for one group is £28,000.

Mr. WILSON: But the group is not finished.

The Minister for Lands: It will be finished in about nine months' time.

Mr. WILSON: Then if that is so I say that the cost will come to what I have stated. Here is another matter worth mentioning: On some of the groups I have seen more T.N.T. high explosives used than ever I saw in France. The trees are blown to smithereens. As the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) has said, it would be better that the trees were ring-barked and given a chance to dry, so that the land should clear itself by freer burning. That is the system employed in Gippsland. There are some Gippsland farms that have taken two or three generations to clear. In some cases it is only the grandson who reaps the benefit. The truth of that statement is borne out by the case of my own brother-in-law in Gippsland, and can be supported by hundreds of families there.

Mr. Sampson: We must not abandon the South-West. You are too pessimistic.

Mr. WILSON: I am not pessimistic; I am simply truthful. It is far better to recognise the trouble, and face it, because sometimes the chickens come home to roost. Some of these settlers are sitting on very bad eggs. I compliment the Government, especially the Minister for Works, on the attitude adopted regarding the 44-hour week.

Mr. Taylor: Have you any solution for the last trouble you were dealing with?

Mr. WILSON: Yes, to appoint a Royal Commission, the members of which will really understand the work. However, I am not going to be taken off the track. I will leave it to the hon. member interjecting to find a solution.

Mr. Taylor: It is your turn now, though.

Mr. WILSON: If we had parties of expert clearers doing the clearing in the South-West before the settlers were put on the groups, we would do some good.

The Minister for Lands: That is outside the agreement, though.

Mr. WILSON: Yes. A foreman on one of the groups who understands his work, having had 12 years' experience of it, and being the owner of a fine orchard, had a number of groupies sent to him. He wanted to be honest and square with them, and said to them, "Now, men, you have just come here, and I understand what it is to be a new arrival from the Old Country. You have been six weeks on board ship, and you are not fit. If two of you give me one man's work I will be content for the first month." The migrants nudged one another and whispered, "By jove, isn't he a fool!" A week or two later the foreman was asked how those migrants were getting on. His reply was, "I made a mistake; I should have said 10 men to one man." One cannot expect good work in the bush from men who never saw an axe before, unless it was a small wood axe, and who never knew a horse except perhaps a hobby horse. One cannot expect these new chums, without experience, to give good work. Occasionally a new chum is set to work to chop down a big tree, and it really takes him a week to work round it. Such tasks dishearten any man. Reverting to the 44-hour week, I have had experience of working hours in factories as well as in mines. In my time I have worked from 6½ hours a day to 13 hours a day. Again I congratulate the Minister for Works especially on having had the pluck to carry into effect what he promised during the election campaign—the 44-hour week. A study of hours of work is most interesting. One of the finest kings and statesmen Great Britain ever had—I refer to Alfred the Great—pronounced the dictum that there should be eight hours' work, eight hours' recreation, and eight hours' rest. He did so over 1,000 years ago; and yet we are told we have not advanced far from the barbarian stage. In 1756 the coal miners of England worked 6½ hours, and those of Scotland 7½ hours. Gabriel Jars gives this information, and it can be had in our library here. Robert Owen's co-operative employees in 1833 worked on the 8-hour basis. Again, in the early sixties of the last century, masons in Melbourne worked eight hours a day. In Northumberland, long before the close of last century, coal miners worked 6½ hours bank to bank. In the matter of industrial working hours I have not too much time for the Old Country, but there is on the statute-book of Great Britain a seven hours day bank to bank for the coal miner, and that has been the law for the past nine years. Yet here in this outpost of the Empire, where we say conditions are better, we have eight hours. I have to state an exception to that rule,

however. The recognised working time among workers generally is eight hours, but the coal miners of Collie have had a seven-hour day for the past three years. Instead of the 44-hour week, they work 42 hours in one week and 35 hours in the other week. For the collier or miner who works in vitiated air, it is most injurious to do more than six hours from bank to bank. Working in the bowels of a coal or stone mine is a very different thing from working in God's fresh air. If the six hours had been in operation in years past on the goldfields, we would have with us to-day many fine men who passed out under the system of long hours, passed out through the doors of Wooroloo.

Mr. Lutey: Perfectly true.

Mr. WILSON: We in Collie have set an example, and I hope the people generally will benefit by that example. We then made an agreement with five collieries, all incorporated shows and all working together. Certain people say, "You mention the seven-hour day in Collie, but you do not mention the result." I will give the result from the Government publications, results which show that more coal has been produced in the seven-hour day than in the eight-hour day. I will take the three years just past, and the previous three years. In passing let me say that the coal miner in England, while working only 6½ hours, proved selfish, because he made his boys work seven and eight, and even ten hours. In 1918 every man employed in the industry at Collie—there are approximately about 800 of them—produced 545 tons of coal. In 1919 the production was 553 tons, and in 1920, 557 tons. That gives an average over the three years under the eight-hour system of 552 tons of coal produced per man.

Mr. Taylor: Have you worked out the average per day per man?

Mr. WILSON: No. The Collie miner does not work every day. For instance, some miners last week worked only two days, others five days. I should say the average number of days per week would be four.

Mr. Taylor: It would be the same with other mines.

Mr. WILSON: On the basis of four days' work, it would average about two or three tons per day per man. In 1921, the first year when the seven-hour day came into force, the production per man was 539 tons. In 1922 the production per man was 589 tons, and in 1923, 590 tons. Those three years gave an average of 572 tons per man. That is to say, under the seven-hour system they produced 20 tons per man more during the year than they did under the eight-hour system. Perhaps they do not take so long over their meal hour—for the men of Collie work to the utmost of their strength. During the half-year ended 30th June last the production per man was about 317 tons, or at the rate of 634 tons per year.

That will give 82 tons more under the seven-hour system than under the eight-hour system. I do not make any apology regarding this question. I hope the time will come when all underground workers will have a chance to make a living under fair conditions. In six hours underground a man can do sufficient work, and he should then have an opportunity of looking forward to improved conditions, when he comes home after work. A man on the surface has the advantage of God's own air; the man below has not. On the other hand, the man underground has to work in vitiated air and under adverse conditions. I will not stress this question further, but will proceed to refer to State lotteries for the assistance of hospitals. I am in favour of conducting lotteries, particularly when we consider the magnificent response that has been shown in Queensland. The Government there have given hundreds of thousands of pounds to the hospitals, in assistance to maternity cases, and have even made contributions on other occasions such as the Mulligan disaster, all of which money came from the funds accumulated as the result of the State lottery system. In Perth, on the other hand, when we go along the streets, we are accosted by people selling tickets, and each has his little cut out of the business. The sooner I learn that the Government intend to conduct lotteries to raise funds for the hospitals, the better I shall be pleased.

Mr. Richardson: Those tickets are not all sold for charity either.

Mr. WILSON: That is so. Of course, in any such move we will have the churches against us, but from my experience the churchman's conscience is elastic. I know that, because when I go to bazaars I can see it for myself; I believe they are among the greatest gambles I know.

Mr. Clydesdale: Have they taken you down?

Mr. WILSON: Yes, and they have to be pretty smart to take down a Scotsman. I will say further, that both the hon. member and the churches have taken me down.

Mr. Taylor: And you are not the only one.

Mr. WILSON: The member for Canning asked me to go with him to a bazaar and told me it would cost me nothing. Why, I had to borrow £2 the next day to pay my debts as a result of going to that church bazaar.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The money would be better devoted to hospitals than for it to be sent to Tasmania all the time.

Mr. WILSON: Large sums of money are going constantly to Queensland and Tasmania, and it ought to be good enough for this State to follow the example of those States. I commend that suggestion to the Government, although I understand the member for Cue (Mr. Chesson) said he intended to introduce a Bill to authorise the

running of a State lottery. If he does not take action, I will see what can be done before the session ends. I will give him his chance first, and if he does not avail himself of the opportunity, I will take the fence myself.

Mr. Richardson: You will require a pole to get over the fence.

Mr. WILSON: And that pole will be public opinion. The reference to hospitals brings me to a local matter. I wish to refer to the Collie hospital. It is a disgrace to civilisation. It is a bug-infested hole and if I were sitting on the bench in the Police Court I would give a certificate of merit to anyone who burnt it down and was brought before me. The Collie hospital is not fit to house patients. Collie has an assured tenure of life as a big industrial centre. It has the makings of a big inland city. Time alone will tell that, however, but in such a place the people should have a decent hospital. The poky little hovel they have is a standing disgrace to the community. Travelling through other parts of the State I have noticed substantial brick hospitals constructed in small townships where the surrounding country has not nearly the potentialities of Collie. The time has arrived when the Government should take steps to have a better hospital provided; especially should this be agreed to in view of the fact that over 800 miners are employed in the coal mines and there are over a thousand timber workers in the district, all of whom in case of accident, or sickness, depend upon this little hole for medical treatment. There is another important subject with which I am concerned. It relates to a work that is bound to come. I refer to the establishment of a power house at Collie. I should correct my statement, for it will be a power house for the South-West and not for Collie alone. That part of the State should be drawing its supplies of electric current from a power house at Collie. Bunbury is waiting for it. There is ample coal there and the other requisites are present as well. Collie coal is good enough to be hauled to East Perth to generate current for the city supplies. Collie is entitled to a bit of the financial loaf. Next year the Collie authorities will be faced with the necessity for putting in a new power station. The plant at Bunbury is practically obsolete and the municipal authorities there will have to take some action, too. The Mitchell Government appointed a committee of inquiry; I was one of the members. We investigated the proposal to establish a power house at Collie and went into the matter thoroughly. The report presented by that Committee indicated that the power scheme at Collie would pay from the very inception. That could not be said of the Perth scheme. All provision for covering depreciation, interest and sinking fund was made. Of course, such a scheme would mean the expenditure of a lot of money. In the Old Country, however, the authorities

are giving great attention to the generation of electricity for manufactures, and I believe in Australia, the Prime Minister, Mr. Bruce, has stated that the Commonwealth Government are prepared to help in the supply of cheap power for industrial concerns. If that be so, Collie should be able to get some assistance.

Mr. Thomson: It is worthy of consideration.

Mr. WILSON: It may cost something like a quarter of a million, but hon. members may remember that we spent £50,000 on the Lake Clifton railway and we have dropped another £90,000 into Herdsman's Lake, and say nothing about it. If the State agreed to the establishment of a power house at Collie for supplying electric current throughout the South-West, it would see something for its money. There are millions of tons of coal at Collie, and the coal belt extends from that centre through to Wilga. There is no other such coal field in the world that has so many tons to the acre as the Collie field. While the coal is not the best in the universe, it is the best we have, and we have got to utilise it.

Mr. North: It is good enough for power purposes.

Mr. WILSON: That is so. In addition to the coal we have hundreds of millions of tons of the finest clay in the world in the Collie area. Some of it was tested years ago and Professor Simpson stated that it compared favourably with the best porcelain clay. The necessary water supplies are there. It was a standing joke for years because the authorities said that there was not a sufficient supply of water in the Collie district to provide for the requirements of a power house. The committee appointed an expert to make investigations and survey the water area of the Minninup pool. As a result of that inquiry we found that in the Minninup pool there was five times the quantity required for the purposes of the Perth plant. With the construction of a small weir at a cost of a few hundred pounds, we could get 50 times more than was required here. The engineer, Mr. Taylor, was agreeably surprised when he found out the facts. The pool is about four miles long and in many parts is 60 feet deep, while at some spots it is about a quarter of a mile wide. Surrounding the pool are thousands of acres of Crown lands that are untouched. That land is ready waiting for people to take up and establish industries there. Let me mention the question of the woollen mills. I was somewhat disappointed regarding the establishment of woollen mills in Western Australia, because I know something about them. I was interested in the matter when the question of erecting mills at Albany was under consideration. I was invited to assist the committee in their work. When I saw some of the members who had been appointed to the committee I decided to

leave the matter with them. I saw one man there who knew no more about woollen mills—it he knows as much—than a goat knows about music. Although I had been a spinner and weaver for 8½ years, I came away feeling satisfied I could do no good there. I found that all the information they had was book lore, such as hon. members can procure from books of reference in the library. Mr. Little, an expert from Glasgow, was brought out to advise in connection with the woollen mills. He said that it would cost too much to establish one. At that time I took exception to his statement for I believed he was making a mistake. I said we could buy mills in the Old Country holus bolus, and establish them here for half of what the mill would cost here. He contradicted me, but I adhered to my opinion, because I had in my possession, papers from the Old Land containing information regarding mills that were being sold. I found out shortly afterwards that a big amalgamation had taken place and some of the factories that were no longer required contained machinery that was in good working order. In fact it was better than new machinery, which requires a certain amount of time before it works smoothly. I told him that I knew some machines had been running for 50 years and he replied "Nonsense." Then I quoted the machines on which I had worked 50 years ago in the mill at Drakeville, in Ayrshire, which machine is running to-day. I mentioned that it was just one of the spinning jennies and his reply was, "Yes, there has been little improvement in them." If one of those mills had been purchased the plant could have been provided for less than half the cost of a new mill. I am afraid the cost of the new mill will be too great. If there is any place eminently suited for woollen mills, it is Collie. We have good water there as well as coal, and it seems a satire to establish woollen mills at Albany wherein the power might be generated with coal brought from Newcastle.

Mr. Richardson: Was there not some difficulty regarding the temperature at Collie?

Mr. WILSON: I do not think there was any real difficulty on that score.

Mr. Thomson: Will not the Albany mill use Collie coal?

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Yes, local coal.

Mr. WILSON: I understand Newcastle coal is to be used. Apart from that, I would like to see woollen mills established at Geraldton, Perth, and Bunbury. There is plenty of room for one at Collie, near the big pool. The Government should consider the scheme and see whether money cannot be provided for it. I am satisfied it would be a paying proposition from the start.

Mr. Taylor: Do you think Narrogin would be a suitable place?

Mr. WILSON: I am good friends with the member for Williams-Narrogin, who would see that the wool from his district

was sent to Collie to be manufactured. I am hopeful that Collie will soon come into its own.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [5.34]: I desire to heartily congratulate Ministers upon their accession to office. For over 12 years I have been associated with the Premier as a member in this House, and I have learned to know the qualities that have resulted in his party placing him in the high and honourable position that he occupies to-day. I feel, too, that the Labour Party did the right thing in electing their Ministers by ballot. It has resulted in men of moderation and common sense being appointed to seats on the Treasury benches. The first Nationalist Government in this State—the Lefroy Government—were elected under that system.

The Premier: And they were the strongest Government we had had for years!

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I approve of the method of electing that Government, which loses nothing in comparison with those that followed it. I am glad that the system we adopted then has again been followed. I did not desire to see the Labour Party in power. They are not there on my vote, but I believe the Government can do useful work in regard to both legislation and administration if they get a fair deal from the extremists and red-raggers outside. We have extremists outside all parties.

Mr. Taylor: The member for Leederville has his eye on you.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I regret that one result of the election was the loss from our party of the former member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering). At the time when a majority of the members left the Country Party, Mr. Pickering adhered to his principles, though it would have been easier for him both here and in his constituency to have left the Primary Producers' Association. I regret that the State has temporarily lost his services in this House. The Leader of the Country Party has already told the Government that we will give fair consideration and reasonable assistance to measures they bring forward. We shall be pleased to give them any advice, particularly concerning matters affecting the primary industries. The farmers' parliament last week passed a resolution offering through the executive to tender to the Government advice and assistance in the same way as they had offered the preceding Government.

Mr. Taylor: If they carry it out as well with the present Government as they did with the late Government, well—

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I have it on good authority that the late Government in no way accepted the offer, but the offer is repeated in the same spirit to the present Government. Although the Government have a majority in the House, I venture to say the result of the elections

must be unsatisfactory to everyone outside the Labour Party, owing to the unsatisfactory basis on which the election was conducted, due to the failure of the late Government to carry its Redistribution of Seats Bill.

The Minister for Works: Under that we would have got a bigger majority.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Even so, it would have represented the voice of the people instead of the voice of numerous decadent pocket boroughs. The Labour party, when in Opposition, condemned the present Redistribution of Seats Act and I joined with them in 1911 in pointing out to the electors the jerry-mandering to which which it opened a way.

The Minister for Works: Your trouble is the pocket boroughs are in the wrong part of the State.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No, my objection is that the election was not conducted on the fair and honest basis it would have been had the late Government shown more backbone and put through their excellent Redistribution of Seats Bill, which, in spite of the few imperfections it contained, would have evoked a fairer expression of the voice of the people than is possible with the present boundaries. I have never regarded that measure from the point of view of one or two constituencies. It was the general principle of a fair and honest redistribution carried into effect by a Commission consisting of the Chief Justice, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Surveyor General, based on a fair and equitable Electoral Districts Act that had been passed by the Parliament. I have the returns showing the enrolment for various districts on the 30th June last, and they reveal the most appalling discrepancies in the number of electors in various districts. The Cue electorate, for instance, had 634 electors, while Menzies had only 483. Mt. Leonora had 781, and Mt. Margaret 504.

The Minister for Works: What did Roebourne have?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Roebourne had 573.

The Minister for Works: And Leederville had over 10,000.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am pointing out the discrepancies.

The Minister for Works: We on this side have the two extremes—the big and the small—and they balance.

Mr. Taylor: That is not the only thing you balance.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In my district there are 4,136 electors. It is a primary producing electorate, and I venture to say its representation as compared with that of the districts I have mentioned is altogether too small in number. The Canning electorate has 11,540 electors and the Leederville district 10,415. When we

compare these with the figures for Cue, Menzies, and other districts I have mentioned, every fair man must admit it is essential to have a proper redistribution of seats before we again go to the country. To avoid expense I would recommend the Government to adopt the boundaries that were submitted to us last session as a result of the work of the independent tribunal I have mentioned. The Government, from their position on the Treasury benches, are of course well above party politics and I urge them to bring that measure down again. We will help them to put it through.

The Premier: That never occurred to us.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I condemn the late Government for not having put the Bill through. They had the numbers and the opportunity, and as one of the members who sat behind them at that time, it is unsatisfactory for me to now have to ask the present Government to do what they failed to do.

The Premier: How did they have the numbers? Five voted against it.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The ex-Premier introduced a machinery measure setting forth the basis on which the Commission was to determine the new boundaries, and that measure was made a party measure and went through. When the ex-Premier received the report of the Commission, he said, "Gentlemen, please yourselves; I am for it, but it is not a party measure." Some members who were generally greatly influenced by the member for Northam were amongst those who voted against the Bill.

The Premier: Some of his most loyal supporters left him on that occasion.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It was a fair and equitable measure and even now might be resurrected and passed with advantage to the electors. The Minister for Works said that if the Bill had been passed, the Government would have had a larger majority. If that be so, he should have no objection to adopting my proposal.

The Minister for Works: That machinery Bill provided for more jerry-mandering than any other.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The verdict of the electors on the existing boundaries showed that the people desired a change of Government, but I am not prepared to admit that they got the change they wanted.

The Premier: But on any boundaries you like a majority wanted a change.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: A verdict with the existing boundaries as a basis must be regarded as one of "not proven," rather than in favour of the side that actually gained the advantage.

The Premier: We shall get Narrogin under the new boundaries.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Premier is quite welcome to try.

The Premier: I will build that Narrogin-Dwarda line at election time.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSON: The sooner the better. The hon. member is very popular in the district and I would have to regard him as a very formidable opponent when supporting his candidature. I advocate an equitable redistribution of seats before the next elections, with due and proper regard for country interests. The programme of legislation referred to in the Governor's Speech is formidable. It includes State insurance, main roads, fair rents, scaffolding and drainage, whilst it is proposed to submit amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act, Industrial Arbitration Act, Mining Act, Municipalities Act, Road Districts Act, Explosives Act, Pearling Act, and the Jury Act. Whilst the programme is thus outlined we have no details. Therefore I do not propose to weary the House by expressing my views on any of these subjects until we have the measures before us. I cordially approve of the Government's intention to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the group settlements. I advocated during the election campaign that such a Commission should be appointed, and I think, particularly in view of the disclosures made by the Minister for Lands, who I am pleased to say has investigated the group settlement business, it is necessary that the Commission should be appointed quickly and that the sooner it gets to work the better. There has been altogether too much secrecy in regard to the actions of the late Government concerning the groups. Repeatedly we tried to get a fair and square and open statement about the position of the groups, but always failed. In fact, I may say, the previous Government's policy concerning the groups, was truly and aptly described by the former Minister for Lands, Mr. H. K. Maley, at the Primary Producers' Conference a year ago. The question was raised, and the reply given by Mr. Maley was, "The matter is so simple that if I explain it, you will not be able to understand it." That was the position of the Mitchell Government in respect of those who made inquiries about the groups. If the statements of the Minister for Lands a week ago are accurate, and I believe they are, the matter is one of grave concern to every resident in the State.

The Minister for Lands: Unfortunately the statements I made were true, and they are borne out by the Crown Law Department.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It only shows the seriousness of the position we have been placed in during the period in which the only information we could get was that the matter was so simple that if it was explained we would not be able to understand it. The Country Party have always approved of the principle of group settlements, and the idea of bringing out the

unemployed workers of Great Britain to fill our empty and unimproved areas has always had our cordial support, subject of course to the scheme being properly administered at this end. In my opinion the first essential with regard to proper administration is to see that full value is obtained for the money advanced. That has always been the principle with regard to land settlement in this State. The Agricultural Bank was established by the late Lord Forrest for the purpose of advancing money to farmers on the basis of the farmer giving full value for the money obtained. As a matter of fact in the early stages of the bank's history only half the value of the improvements was advanced to the settler. Our settlement has always been carried on under the principle of full repayment by the settler, with interest added. Every man who has gone on the land in Western Australia with the assistance of the Agricultural Bank, the Industries Assistance Board, or the Soldier Settlement Department, has started out with the full knowledge that he would have to repay the money advanced as soon as he was able to do so, and—the conditions were made easy—the full amount advanced with interest added. If the statement made by the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) that some groups have cost almost £2,000—I know of some, the cost of which has already reached £1,400 and the expenditure on which is not yet completed—there is certainly room for investigation. Now we are told that no matter what the cost may be, not more than £1,000 can be charged to the group settler, under the Imperial agreement.

Mr. Richardson: That is ridiculous.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It certainly is a ridiculous agreement, but we have had an agreement made and signed in Western Australia before to-day by a Minister of the Crown who stated that he did not peruse it.

Mr. Richardson: I do not believe what you say in regard to the groups.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I hope that what has been stated is not correct. At any rate, the subject is so important that it deserves a separate debate as soon as we can get authoritative information or the Premier has made a pronouncement.

The Minister for Lands: You cannot get anything more authoritative than the agreement itself.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No. Ever since 1890, when legislation was introduced by the late Lord Forrest which enabled a settler to get a free grant of 160 acres, we have worked on the basis of the settler repaying in full with interest added the advances made by the State, and there should be no departure from that principle without the full approval of Parliament. For my part I welcome group settlement to Western Australia, but I do not approve of the people going on to the settlements being given more favourable terms than those extended to the sons of

our own settlers, or to our own returned soldiers. I notice that the Government propose to increase taxation of land. I strongly object to any increased land tax, or any burden being added to those already borne by the settlers. I do not oppose the taxation of unimproved land so long as the tax is made to apply only in that direction. The condition of our agricultural industry to-day is not such that the settlers are able to face with equanimity any increased land tax. I hope the Government will not take any action which will have the effect of increasing the burden of those who are on the land. As a matter of fact, I hope there will be some reduction in existing taxation. Something should be done to place the State taxation throughout Australia on a uniform basis. It is not fair that new and undeveloped States like Western Australia, with a handful of people, who have nothing like the big incomes that are derived by residents in the older States, should be penalised to the extent of those people being driven away. The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) told us the other night about our taxation running up to 4s. 7d. in the £ on large incomes, whilst Victoria seems to be benefiting unduly and unfairly, and in a manner never contemplated under the Federal Constitution by imposing a maximum tax on incomes derived from personal exertion of only 6¼d. in the £. This kind of thing must, no doubt, result in frightening away people with capital from the State. There is no part of Australia where money is so urgently required for development as in Western Australia, and where better returns from expended capital can be obtained than in our own State. An effort should be made to bring about equalisation of taxation in the various States. I suggest that the Government should remove the super-tax. This particularly pernicious form of taxation was imposed by the previous Government. We all have an inherent dislike to paying compound interest, and this tax of 15 per cent., imposed on the existing tax, is particularly objectionable. It is taxation in its very worst form. I know that the Government, when they took office, found the Treasury depleted of loan funds. They are facing financial difficulties which will place obstacles in the way of their carrying out their policy in many directions. I admit, therefore, that this is an inopportune time in which to ask the Government to forego taxation. But in regard to the super-tax the Premier himself opposed it in the past and I hope he will take steps to remove it.

Mr. Richardson: What about raising the exemption?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: A fair step in that direction was taken last session.

Mr. Richardson: We can raise it a bit more now.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I wish to say a few words in regard to railway construction. In 1911 when the Labour Government assumed office, it entered on a vigorous public works policy and built railways from one end of the wheat belt to the other. These railways are to-day amongst the best of the State's assets. Some people condemned that vigorous public works policy, but I think it is a fortunate thing for the State that those railways were built because they were constructed at a time when the cost of construction was something like half that of to-day. The railways that were built by the Scaddan administration are a credit to that Government, and are amongst the best developmental works in the State. At the present time we could not help settlement more than by continuing the construction of railways in the wheat belt, particularly in districts such as the Great Southern, east and west of the wheat belt. If the Government built those railways and advanced money through the Agricultural Bank to improve the land along the routes of the lines, they could do so with absolute safety and be certain of securing a quicker return than by concentrating on heavily timbered country in the south. Having seen something of the agricultural districts of the various parts of the wheat belt from Geraldton in the north to Katanning in the south I can declare it to be one of the finest belts in Australia. We really do not realise its immense possibilities. In the Great Southern there are opportunities for closer settlement in viticulture and dairying and kindred industries, and it is simply marvellous to notice the success that has been achieved by Mr. Callan of Narrogin and Mr. Malcolm of Wagin, who are producing great wealth from small areas of good land. I urge upon the Government the construction of the line from Narrogin to Dwarda. The Premier has mentioned this railway on many occasions. For that I thank him, because it shows that he has it prominent in his mind. This railway was authorised in 1915. It is the only railway authorised at that time which has not been built.

The Premier: I am amazed at its not having been built in all these years.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Here again I have to come to the Labour Party to get something their predecessors failed to do. The Labour Party were the sponsors of the authorising Bill introduced by the present Minister for Lands, then Minister for Works. From that time till now he and the Premier have never failed in their advocacy of the line. I wish also to congratulate the Government upon having restored responsible government by Cabinet. During the absence of the ex-Premier in England, when Mr. Colebatch was Acting Premier, Cabinet held a meeting and considered the building of this railway to provide work for the unemployed. At the end of the day Mr.

Coletatch made a statement to the metropolitan newspapers to the effect that Cabinet had decided to provide work in the country to relieve unemployment, and that they would start immediately with the construction of the Narrogin-Dwarda railway. A beginning was made; men were sent to Narrogin to do the clearing, and 12 miles of this railway are cleared to-day. But whilst the work was in progress the ex-Premier returned to Western Australia and, without consulting his colleagues in Cabinet, stopped the construction of the railway. When the file was placed on the Table in this House we saw the decision of Cabinet to build the railway, and the decision of one member of Cabinet, who happened to be the Premier, to discontinue it without consulting Cabinet.

Mr. Richardson: He was a good judge.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: When the present Minister for Works came to Narrogin and was met by a representative deputation of about 200 settlers living on the route of the Narrogin-Dwarda line, who requested that the railway should be proceeded with, the Minister replied that Cabinet had considered the question—

The Premier: What else could he say in the face of 200 men? Intimidation, I call it.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That Cabinet had decided to proceed with the construction of the railway as soon as time and circumstances would permit.

Mr. Richardson: When was that?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Last April.

Mr. Richardson: Then they must stick to their promise.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I believe they will. The people of the district have waited 10 weary years since the previous Labour Government went out of office, expecting this line to be built.

Mr. Corboy: Perhaps you have never brought it before the House.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: A large soldier settlement was established in that area. The Government purchased the Noombling estate from Mr. Michael Brown.

The Premier: It was a pup, too.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: A deviation of the railway has been approved by Parliament and surveyed to take this railway to the soldier settlement at Noombling.

Mr. Corboy: I do not think it will save those fellows.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I think it will, for it is a fine area of country, although I admit that, without a railway, their prospects are very poor.

The Minister for Lands: It is a parliamentary promise and must be kept.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I thank the Minister for that assurance. At present we are not entirely without unemployment, and there is no railway offering better facilities for absorbing unemployed than does that line. At this time of the year it is difficult to put men into the extreme South-

West, but if the men were sent to Dwarda and Narrogin the Government would be able to keep them employed full time right through the winter and spring months. There are also other proposals important to the development of Western Australia that I feel it my duty to bring before the House. East of Yilliminning-Kondinin railway are very large areas of well settled land upon which immense quantities of wheat are produced and numbers of stock reared. We have settlements at Walyurin, East Jilikin, and Kalgarrin, some of which might have been served had it been decided to build the Newdegate railway on the recommendation of the advisory board, namely, from Kondinin through East Jilikin to Newdegate. However, it was decided to build the line from Lake Grace to Newdegate. I hope a deviation to the north will be made, with the object of serving the North Newdegate settlers.

Mr. Corboy: That has already been decided upon.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am glad to hear that. But the position of the settlers of Walyurin, East Jilikin, and Kalgarrin is an impossible one until the settlers are provided with railway facilities. I urge the Government to build that important railway to serve that great district east of the Yilliminning-Kondinin railway, starting from Dudinin or Kulin.

Mr. Corboy: Would you recommend those places, as against Kondinin, for a starting point?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I leave that to the professional advisers of the Government. In my opinion the vital thing is to afford those settlers railway communication. They went into the district on a definite promise of railway facilities, and I urge the Government to carry that promise into effect as soon as possible. On two previous occasions the Railway Advisory Board were instructed to visit Quindaning, with a view to reporting on the best methods of providing railway communication for the district. Quindaning is almost the only one of the old settlements to the west of the Great Southern that has been left without railway facilities. The late Mr. Frank Wilson when Premier visited Quindaning and promised that the advisory board should go there. Also he instructed the advisory board to go there. But, owing to the war breaking out and other circumstances, the board's work was suspended and the visit never paid. I urge the Government to send the Railway Advisory Board to Quindaning in the near future. The district has been settled for 60 years and the people there have been very patient. They now ask that the advisory board go through and draw up a definite scheme for serving the district with railway communication. In conclusion I have but one small request to put before the Minister for Railways. That is in regard to the action taken by the Government in closing the main railway crossing in Egerton-street, Narrogin.

Narrogin is a growing city, already known throughout the State as the Ballarat of Western Australia. In the original survey a main railway crossing was provided from one side of the city to the other. The Commissioner of Railways came along and, without any parliamentary approval, illegally closed this main road in the very heart of the town. It was done during the war period, and with the approval of the municipality, taken after a referendum. But the effect of separating the two sides of the town has been disastrous. One has to go nearly half a mile to get across the railway from one side of the town to the other, except one passes by a small overhead footbridge. I urge the Minister for Railways to build an overhead vehicular bridge in the centre of that progressive town and so remedy the harm that has been done. I hope our labours in the present session will be of benefit to the people of the State.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [6.12]: May I follow the example of the previous speakers and congratulate you, Sir, on your elevation to the office of Speaker. Your long parliamentary career and your judicial knowledge eminently fit you to occupy that seat. I also wish to congratulate the Premier and his colleagues on their assumption of office. I cannot say we are pleased to see them there, but we have to take what the gods give us.

The Premier: Yes, we are a gift from the gods.

Mr. ANGELO: I cannot satisfy myself that Ministers have won their present position through having made a larger number of friends than they previously had. Their victory, I think, was in great measure due to the apathy of the followers of the late Government, caused, I regret to say, to a great extent by the bickerings that have taken place between members on this side.—

The Minister for Lands: One business man told me it was an act of God.

The Premier: It certainly saved Western Australia.

Mr. ANGELO: I regret that those bickerings took place, and I trust that members on this side will do their utmost to sink party differences and form a solid Opposition. The other evening I was interested at hearing the suggestion by the ex-Premier to his successor that he should amend the Constitution Act and appoint additional Ministers. It is curious that the ex-Premier himself did not adopt that suggestion, since it was frequently made to him in the House during the last three years.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. ANGELO: Before tea I was commenting upon the suggestion made by the Leader of the Opposition to the Premier for increasing the number of Ministers. I was

reminding older members that a similar suggestion was made to the ex-Premier on several previous occasions. I am pleased to see that he has passed that on to his successor. It is ridiculous to think that six men, even if they be the best in Australia, can properly develop and govern this huge territory, comprising a third of the continent. Let us compare our methods with those adopted by our neighbours in the Eastern States. Queensland has nine Ministers; New South Wales twelve; and Victoria nine, making in all 30 Ministers to look after the Eastern third of Australia, as against six Ministers who are considered sufficient to look after the interests of the Western third of Australia. In the Eastern States Ministers have the advantage of a number of Federal Ministers, who relieve them to a great extent of all social and ceremonial functions, thus giving the State Ministers considerably more time to devote to the affairs of their own particular States. The Premier wisely appointed three honorary Ministers. A workman is worthy of his hire. I do not think our Ministers are sufficiently paid, even when they hold portfolios and to expect honorary Ministers to give up the whole of their time to their duties on an allowance from Cabinet Ministers, is not a fair thing. The Premier can depend upon my vote for any act that will mean altering the Constitution to give him power to appoint three more Ministers of full rank. If he thinks of doing this I urge him to appoint one of the new Ministers to do nothing else but look after the North-West. Sometimes I have been asked why we should have a Minister for the North-West, if not one for the goldfields and one for the South-West. The position as regards the North is quite different. Any other part of the State may be visited by a Minister, and, in the course of two or three days, he can return to his office. The Minister for Works may go to the goldfields or Albany and return in three days to catch up with his work. It takes a man five weeks to go to Wyndham and back, by steamer, and even then he has not time to go more than a few miles inland from the ports. We want a Minister who will devote at least five months of the year to that part of the State, visiting every portion of it, seeing for himself what is required, to act, as it were, as a deputy for the Government, and report to Cabinet the personal knowledge he has acquired and the result of his investigation. Such a Minister should be clothed with a certain amount of authority. He should be given discretionary power within certain limits. If he found, on going to a place, that a certain amount of work was urgently needed, involving the expenditure of a moderate sum, he should be able to deal with the matter out of hand. On larger issues he could report to Cabinet and obtain a decision. The North-West Department is not run on right lines, for it has meant the creation of a little administration all

itself. There are officials of the public works service and others attached to the North-West Department. This is unnecessary. The Department should be purely an advisory one, and a staff of two or three should be ample. The Minister in charge should ascertain for himself what is necessary and report to Cabinet, and decide for himself on all minor questions. Having once come to a decision, he should call on the Minister controlling the Public Works or other Department concerned, asking for the loan of certain officials to help him in carrying out the work that is deemed necessary. For years past it has been customary for members representing the North-West to put before this House certain necessary works. Year after year we have gone on doing this without much result. There are four or rather five members, if we include the member for Murchison, representing that part of the State, but their voice is as one crying in the wilderness. So many other requests are made to the Government that our requests are more or less overlooked. If a Minister for the North-West were appointed, with a voice in Cabinet, he could do more than all of us put together, especially if he were backed up by us as well. Something must be done to develop the North, for that is very essential for the safety and progress of the State. It is not my intention to put before members my ideas for developing the North-West, but I do strongly appeal to the Premier that, if he appoints three extra Ministers, he should make one of them Minister for the North-West. If he will do that it will save a considerable number of long speeches in this House, and probably result in much good being done. I congratulate the Premier upon his contribution to the debate some two or three weeks ago. His speech was a comprehensive and informative one. He showed great tact in making it. He took this House into his confidence in much the same way as the directors of a company are taken into the confidence of the chairman of directors. He told us the position of the finances, and appealed to our loyalty and patriotism to assist him in his trouble. There is no doubt this State is in a serious position, and in delivering that speech he probably anticipated that many requests would be put before the Government by members. His long experience as a parliamentarian led him to believe that, especially at the commencement of a new Parliament, the Government would be inundated with requests. Members jointly have already asked for about 1,600 miles of new railways involving the expenditure of many millions of pounds. The Premier has told us how impossible it is to carry out such work at present. I was also interested in what the Premier told us about the raising of future loans. I regret he has found it advisable to join with the other States in borrowing money for Western Australia. Every penny that is borrowed by the Gov-

ernments of Australia means so much less for private development. Many people, who could not previously get high rates of interest on their money, used to spend it in developing properties. They formed syndicates, and companies, and with the money took up large tracts of land and improved the broad acres of the State. Now that Governments are borrowing in Australia and paying up to 6 per cent. interest, some of it free of taxation, an inducement is offered to these people to put their money into State and Commonwealth loans, and refrain from private development. This is a great pity. If Australia requires to borrow money, it should go outside for the purpose. To borrow within the Commonwealth is like people borrowing from members of their own family. They all become hampered and financially embarrassed in carrying on their affairs.

Mr. Thomson: It is expensive to borrow from the Old Country.

Mr. ANGELO: I agree that the rate of exchange is at present prohibitive. One banker told me recently that, when trying to buy some money on London drafts another banker wanted to charge him no less than 87s. 6d. %. This shows that even amongst bankers prohibitive exchanges exist. This position, will, however, soon be altered and the change will be a drastic one. The demand for London exchanges has been so high that banks have put all their resources into this avenue of profit with advantageous results. They have, however, nearly reached the end of their tether, for between £45,000,000 and £50,000,000 of Australian money is now locked up in England. When they have reached the end of their tether, they must evolve some scheme for having this money once more made available for Australia. When they have come to an end of their resources in the purchase and sale of drafts they must look for other avenues of profit. I think it will come about in this way, that the banks will agree to lodge their resources now accumulated at Home in some common fund to be held either by the Bank of England or the British Treasury, and on that security have a larger note issue in Australia. That would be quite reasonable and moral and right. If I deposited a couple of hundred pounds in some bank here, it would be perfectly legitimate for me to go to the Eastern States and there issue cheques against that deposit. That is what is going to happen with the accumulations at Home. The money will be deposited at Home and then made available by some paper issue in Australia. Immediately that has been done—I think it will come very quickly—we shall find the rates of exchange on London dropping to almost nothing. The rate of exchange fluctuates. It is not very many years since a man taking £100 to a bank in London, would be given a draft for £100 10s. on a bank out here. The position was then vice versa. I believe that within a few months the Premier will

and the borrowing of money in the Old Country made much easier for him. Recently a suggestion was made by Sir James Connolly—I do not know that it was published, but I should like to bring it to the Premier's notice—as to the advisableness of not confining our English borrowing to London, but of seeing whether we could not raise some money in the provinces of Britain. Not only are there large amounts of money in the provinces, but the mere fact of our borrowing money from provincial lenders would help to advertise Western Australia. As we know, if one has a few shares in the Swan Brewery, there is no beer like Swan beer; and if one has shares in a motor company, that company's car is the best of the lot. So it is in the matter of finance. If we can induce the people of the English provinces to take up some of our bonds, they will become interested in Western Australia, and they will talk Western Australia and do more to advertise Western Australia than can be done by many of the means of advertisement we utilise at present. Now a word or two as to the dingo. As a representative of the pastoral industry I should of course advocate the wants of the pastoralist; but very fortunately, with the high price of wool and the good prices being obtained for sheep, the pastoralist does not want very much done for him. The dingo question, however, is not one affecting the pastoralist only. It also affects the farmer, and further—I wish to emphasise this point—the whole of the future prosperity of this State. Hon. members generally cannot realise what a serious menace the dingo has become in this State. I am glad the member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley), in his maiden speech, stressed this point, which has also been dwelt upon by other members. The present Government have done something already towards dealing with the evil, but I hold that they have not yet done enough. I recognise it is impossible for the Government to do everything in this matter, and I do not think the pastoralists and the farmers want the Government to do everything. They do, however, want the Government to give them a lead. Somebody has to give a lead in the business, and I am certain the pastoralists and farmers are quite prepared to bear their share of the financial burden of any big scheme—it will have to be a big scheme—for getting rid of the menace, if only the Government will lead the way and show what is to be done. The Minister for Agriculture should, in my opinion, invite representatives of the pastoralists and the farmers to a discussion, where the matter could be discussed from all view-points, the best method of coping with the pest ascertained, and opinions of the pastoralists and the farmers elicited as to the most suitable means of financing the scheme. In the first place we must have a uniform dingo rate throughout the State. It is quite useless that one board should be

paying £3, £4, and £5 per scalp, while other boards pay 5s. This simply means that the board willing to pay the £5 are paying more than they should be. The dingo scalps come in to that board from many parts of the State not controlled by the board. Further, the lessees and owners of stations and farms are not fair to themselves. The man who owns a cattle station and whom the dingoes are not troubling like they trouble the owner of a sheep station, is apt to do nothing at all, and consequently he is breeding the pest for the other man to cope with. The situation calls for a uniform bonus, and also a uniform system of eradication. Everybody must compulsorily bear his portion of the cost and do his share of the work. I will not weary members by reading to them an article which appeared on the 31st July in the "Bulletin," dealing with this dingo question, but I crave permission to read this extract—

THE TRAGEDY OF WESTERN N. S. WALES.

A group of men who know every phase of the tragedy communicate this as their considered appeal to the Parliament and people:—The following comparison of sheep numbers on properties in the West Darling before and after the invasion will indicate the effects of the dingo:—

Station.	Sheep Numbers before Dingoes came.	Reduced Numbers owing to the Dingo.
Momba	490,000	No sheep
Langawirra and Start's Meadows	80-100,000	
Yancannin	100-170,000	84,000
Grasmere and Cuthowarra	23,000	No sheep
Morden	60,000	4,630
Tarella	40,000	No sheep
Wonneminta, Nundora and Packaddie	80,000	
Tonko	15-20,000	"
Yantara	80,000	"
Salisbury, Downe	80,000	"
Boora	30,000	2,918
Yandama Group	53,000	No sheep
Quinyambi	20,000	"

Similar figures could be given as to other properties, but the instances are ample to show the great loss to the State. . . . By this time the sheep numbers had fallen from 16,028,022 to 3,770,345; the great Momba station, which at one time carried 490,000 sheep and returned 7,000 bales of wool from one clip, had gone right out of sheep and was given over to cattle; scores of lessees, admirable pioneers, who had fought the dogs for years and understood the country and knew its needs, gave up in despair; thousands of square miles of some of Australia's finest sheep country saw the last merino go; stations which had employed 80 or 90 men all the year round supported less than half a dozen; Wiltona, a thriving township with a population of over 3,000, drifted almost beyond recognition; stagnation superseded prosperity, and the country was fast losing the very type of men for whom the Outback calls. Where 1,000 persons are required in this country under cattle, 15,000 would be supported under sheep.

That last sentence should appeal to the Government. We want population in this State; we want to see plenty of men employed on our sheep stations, and if those stations have to turn over from sheep to cattle it is going to be a serious thing not only to the finances of the State, but also from the viewpoint of the employment sheep stations give as compared with cattle stations. I do urge the Ministry

to take this question into their serious consideration. Our Gascoyne, Ashburton, Roebourne and Pilbara lands are very similar in conditions to the lands of western New South Wales, and we ought to take a lesson from the results that have come about in the mother State. The ravages that have taken place there can easily be repeated here, unless we set to work speedily to combat the pest. We have only about 6½ million sheep in Western Australia, whereas we ought to have 20 millions. The wool industry is the one industry where we have not to go and look for markets. If we grow butter, we shall have to seek markets after overtaking our local consumption. Fruit is hard enough to sell to-day, as everybody knows. Even wheat fluctuates, and markets have to be found for it overseas. But as regards wool, we need not move from our door to find a buyer. The world will come to us to buy our wool. Then let us do all we can to protect the greatest industry we have in Western Australia. Already this little handful of 5½ millions of people in the Commonwealth grows 24 per cent. of the wool of the world, and over 70 per cent. of the merino wool of the world; and Western Australian merino wool is coming to the front both as regards quality and quantity. Then let us do everything possible to prevent this splendid industry, this to us all-important industry, from being crippled or ruined by the dingo pest. I noticed in the Press the other day that the Federal Government intend to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the wants and disabilities of Western Australia. I wish to remind the House that some three years ago a joint select committee, afterwards converted into an honorary Royal Commission, was appointed to prepare a case for Western Australia at the then pending convention. Mr. Hughes, at that time Prime Minister, had promised that there should be a convention at the end of 20 years' life of the Federation. The State Royal Commission commenced to take the necessary evidence, and our example was followed by the other smaller States, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania. Immediately Mr. Hughes heard that these States were preparing a case for the convention, with the hope of obtaining amendments of the Federal Constitution, he dropped the idea of the Convention, and we were told that amendments of the Federal Constitution would be made by the Federal Parliament itself. We knew how absurd that would be from our point of view, and the taking of evidence ceased. The honorary Royal Commission, however, still exists; and I agree with the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) that immediate steps should be taken to prepare a case for the Federal Royal Commission that is about to visit this State. It is use-

less for the Federal Government to send over a Royal Commission to inquire into our conditions and our disabilities if we are not to give the evidence that is necessary from our point of view. Therefore, I hope the Premier will ask the present Royal Commission to continue the inquiry or else appoint some other body to prepare the case for Western Australia.

Mr. THOMSON: Did that Royal Commission prepare anything at all?

Mr. ANGELO: As soon as the convention was dropped the Commission became dormant. Everything is ready to restart the inquiry. I cannot conclude without complimenting the Minister for Lands on his able speech the other evening. I listened attentively for 2½ hours, and the information given us was very comprehensive and instructive. So much was it so that I am now in favour of a Royal Commission to inquire into group settlements. At the outset I could not see the necessity for any such inquiry, but from what we have heard from the Minister as well as from other hon. members I believe that an exhaustive inquiry into the group settlement scheme should be made. It cannot do any harm. If we only find out definitely what we have been told already, something will have been gained. The expenditure will not be large and the result should be worth while. If a Royal Commission comprising a capable man or men of outstanding ability be appointed so as to make a thorough investigation and furnish recommendations, only good can result. It will be helpful to the Minister and to Parliament as a whole. I will support the appointment of a Royal Commission along these lines. Other members have offered their help to the Government. I wish to say that I will help to keep up the strongest and most critical opposition I can, on the ground that if we want good and capable government, we must have a good solid Opposition.

Mr. STUBBS (Wagin) [8.3]: It is nearly 13 years, Mr. Speaker, since I first had the honour of being elected to this Chamber, and during the period that has elapsed I have heard many speeches on the Address-in-reply. As an old member of the House I claim without fear of contradiction that the speeches, particularly from the new members of the House, we have heard this session were of an exceptionally high order. The speeches of Ministers and other members have been most informative. There has been no bickering and no rows across the floor of the House. We have not heard one member blaming another for past mistakes. In 1911 the Labour Party were elected to power by a big majority. All must agree that that Government had a very hard row to hoe. They had to fight against the effects of drought for two or three years, and then there followed the war period. Many people in Western Australia, including myself and those I repre-

sent, feared that the advent of a Labour Government would represent the downfall of the man on the land. Well do I remember that one of the planks of the Labour Party's platform at that time was the non-alienation of Crown land, with the ultimate nationalisation of all land. The farming community became very apprehensive for fear that the Labour Government intended to take away their heritage. It was not long afterwards that the Labour Government found that that plank was either not popular or was not wanted. The fact remains that it was dropped from their platform, and I feel sure that the good sense of the majority of members on the Government side of the House to-day will agree with me when I say that the ownership of even a quarter of an acre of land is far better than a 99-years' lease. This is ancient history, and I only mention it to say that I freely admit that the Labour Government of the past assisted materially in the keeping of hundreds of families on the land who otherwise would not be there to-day. There was a drought unparalleled in the history of the State. It affected particularly certain parts, and I hope such a drought will never occur again. The Government sent trainloads of water into the arid districts, and when I asked the Minister for Works how I was to assist in securing payments for the water from people who had no money at all, he replied, "We will not ask for the price of that water." I will not say anything more than that the electors in March last sent Labour back to power. As a humble unit on the Opposition benches I would remind the House that we have three leaders on the Opposition side. We have the Nationalist Party, led by Sir James Mitchell, and then we have as leaders of their respective sections of the Country Party, the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) and the member for York (Mr. Latham). We have three leaders of separate entities on the Opposition side but each member of the Opposition will scrutinise with interest the measures that are to be presented to Parliament as well as the doings of the present Government. Like the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) I agree that the criticism to be levelled against the Government will be fair. It is to be hoped that the Bills to be placed before us will be acceptable to the people and in the best interests of the State. I listened to the speech of the Premier which was not impassioned but carefully prepared and not exaggerated. He unfolded a plain, unvarnished tale of the position as he found it. I could not help feeling that it was my duty to carefully weigh the contents of that speech, seeing that Western Australia has a population of only 360,000 souls, and has to find each year an enormous amount of money to provide interest and sinking fund on her loan indebtedness. Because of that, every hon. member has to put on his con-

sidering cap and ask how the State can progress with such an enormous load to be carried by a mere handful of people. The task is too great for half a dozen men, or for the 50 members of this Chamber. It has to be admitted that Federation has not been a good thing for Western Australia. We agreed to participate in that movement in 1900 and each year since then has seen the position becoming worse. Out of 100 people in the more populated States of Victoria and New South Wales with their densely crowded cities of Melbourne and Sydney, 99 know little and care less about Western Australia. Here we have one-third of the whole of the Commonwealth, and I know that the new members of this Chamber particularly will pardon me if I suggest to them that they take the earliest opportunity to visit the North-West of this State. They will come back to the House and agree with me that we have a heritage, the value of which very few people in Western Australia recognise. We have millions of acres of beautiful soil in the Kimberley districts. One could travel up the Fitzroy and Ord Rivers for a couple of hundred miles and see not more than 20 white people. There is as rich soil from 10 feet to 20 feet deep as one could wish to clap eyes upon, and 20 or 30 people own millions of acres of that class of country. Some of those individuals do not even live in Western Australia. It has to be admitted that they lived there for a few years and battled against great odds. They did well there. It would pay the Government to immediately appoint a Minister to control the north-western portions of the State and permit him to go to that part to see for himself the vast possibilities and the enormous empty spaces that await development. With the opening up of those vast areas Western Australia will become the richest portion of Australia, if not the richest country in the world. I have visited the North-West several times during the last seven or eight years, and each time I have come back feeling sad that we do not develop that part of the State. We have not only splendid soil and a fine climate there, but an unlimited water supply that can be conserved at a very small cost. Many argue that the climate there is against white people undertaking developmental work. I believe that the North can be developed by white labour. If we do not populate it, we must consider the consequences. One has only to go for three days' sail north from Darwin and one will come to an island containing 40 millions of people. Every square inch except the tops of the mountains is cultivated and the soil there is no better than is to be found in the Kimberley districts. Many of those millions have to live on rafts on the rivers and on the edges of the sea because, if they lived in houses, there would not be enough room to grow the food they consume. All those coloured people have as much right to live on the earth as have

we in Australia, and they are increasing in the island of Java by probably a million a year. If we do not send a white population to our North, some day Australia will be called upon to show cause why she has not developed that territory. In addition to the pastoral country there is an immense area of metalliferous country that has hardly had a pickaxe in it. At Hall's Creek one of the old residents told me that as many as 2,000 men had made a good deal of money out of alluvial gold. The reefs at Hall's Creek can be seen all along a ridge of hills extending for probably 40 or 50 miles. Would it not pay the Government to equip a party and send a couple of geologists up there? In addition to gold, there are copper, tin and silver to be found, and there is every possibility of that part of the State bringing a new era of prosperity to Western Australia. I realise that mining gave us our first start, and it is regrettable to see the decline in the gold yield year after year. I heard the other day that a new find had been made in the Wiluna district. If the boring there results in opening up a big auriferous area we may expect an influx of population far and away greater than any scheme of immigration could produce. I hope the Government will see that a much larger grant is made available this year to stimulate the industry. A party of farmers, formerly goldfields men, have been prospecting on the boundary of the Wagin and Yilgarn districts, and have located what they consider to be a payable belt of copper ore. I feel confident there is a vast tract of payable country between Lake Grace, Ravensthorpe, and Esperance that will yet prove a valuable asset to the State. Anything that can be proposed to resuscitate and assist the industry will receive my hearty support. The Minister for Lands, in the course of a 2½ hours' speech, dealt exhaustively with group settlement. I wish to pay a tribute to him for the clear and lucid statement of the position as he found it when he assumed office, and for the illuminating figures with which he supplied us. The "West Australian" this morning devoted a leading article to the figures quoted by the Minister, and particularly to the agreement made by Sir James Mitchell with the British Government. If the statement of the Minister be correct, that when the cost of settling a migrant in the South-West is £2,000, the State can charge him only £1,000, every member would agree to the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole business. I understand the "West Australian" queries the accuracy of the Minister's statement. If we agreed to meet the expenditure over and above £1,000 for group settlements, returned soldiers in my district who owe the Government £2,000 would quickly demand to have their liability reduced to £1,000, and I think they would be entitled to ask for it. Their arguments would be that they went away

and fought at the war and on their return they were charged £2 for every £1 charged to a migrant arriving here only five minutes ago. If the Minister's reading of the agreement leaves any doubt in the minds of members—

The Minister for Lands: That is the opinion of the Solicitor General.

Mr. STUBBS: To settle a family on £160 acres and equip the holding cannot be done for £1,000. It will cost nearer to £2,000.

The Minister for Lands: The officers estimate £1,700.

Mr. STUBBS: That would be reasonable if for the money you could clear 25 of 30 acres of the heavy timber land, build a house and supply the necessary machinery and stock. A settler would require 10 or 15 cows, two or three horses and some pigs, and the house alone would cost £300. Where is this money to come from? Who is going to pay for all this? If the British Government want us to foot the bill, the sooner we have unification and link up with the Commonwealth the better. Our population of 350,000 people cannot carry such a load.

The Premier: That is the agreement all right.

Mr. STUBBS: After that deliberate statement by the Premier, the Government are justified in appointing a Royal Commission. With the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson), I believe in calling a spade a spade. I try to be an optimist.

The Minister for Lands: If you tell the truth, you will be called a pessimist.

Mr. STUBBS: No business man can afford to ignore the facts. The Government are in control of this group settlement business. They are charged by the people with the duty of making the revenue and expenditure of the State balance. They have no chance to balance if the State is to be called upon to carry this heavy additional load. I am not here to criticise Sir James Mitchell. He is imbued with a desire to settle people in this State. I am sorry he is not present to hear the statements from the Ministerial benches, because he would then have an opportunity to refute or explain them. When the motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission comes before the House—

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The Government may appoint it without a motion.

Mr. STUBBS: I hope the agreement will be placed on the Table so that members may peruse it. If there is no possibility of rectifying the position, the Government will find themselves in serious trouble with other settlers.

Mr. Corboy: They will have been landed in that trouble by the late Government; we did not give that agreement our blessing; we did not know anything about it.

Mr. STUBBS: That is all I have to say regarding group settlements. I feel confident that we did not employ experienced

men when the groups were started. Only recently in company with a former Minister of the Crown, Mr. Broun, I was at Denmark, and I saw sufficient there to convince me that a good deal of money had been spent by a Government department long before that expenditure was warranted. We all know that in the Denmark country the rainfall is heavy and that the roads become in a deplorable state in winter. There were a dozen new tip drays sent to the group settlers, and a finer lot of horses one would not have wished to see.

The Minister for Lands: They were hired from the Agricultural Department.

Mr. STUBBS: These drays, instead of being a blessing to the men on the groups, were a curse, because it would take a horse all its time to pull an empty dray, let alone take a load of produce over the roads. A good deal of money has been wasted on the group settlements at Denmark, and that opinion is shared by men who have been there 10 or 15 years, men who have no axe to grind, merely a keen desire to see the district go ahead.

Mr. North: State enterprise is often very costly.

Mr. STUBBS: I do not consider group settlements can be regarded as State enterprises. I trust that the expenditure in connection with groups will in the future be closely scrutinised. Everybody will agree that good roads are essential to the success of land settlement, and I congratulate the Minister for Works on promising to introduce this session a Roads Bill framed on the lines of the Victorian legislation. This will be in the best interests of the State and will save the Minister a good deal of work. I have come into contact lately with the work performed by the Victorian authorities in the way of road construction, and I feel sure that if the Minister will embody some of the sections from the Victorian Act in the Bill he proposes to introduce, Western Australia will derive considerable benefit. I wish to quote a letter received by the member for Perth in the House of Representatives recently from the Federal Minister for Works. It reads—

During this year I have had evidence of the value of an organisation such as the Country Road Boards Association in connection with the allocation of the road grant. No difficulty whatever was experienced in the allocation of the moneys made available under that grant, and the construction of the works approved. I may state that similar organisations have been established in the States of Queensland and South Australia, and the result has been as satisfactory as that obtained in Victoria.

I read in a newspaper only a few days ago that the New South Wales Government intended to bring in legislation to provide for the expenditure of three millions on the country roads of that State. Of course this could not possibly be done in Western Aus-

tralia with our small population and limited resources, but I think it is a step in the right direction. For years I have advocated the need for bringing in legislation such as that proposed by the Minister for Works, and I congratulate the Minister on having promised a deputation recently that he would do so. I am sure that the Bill will be carried by a large majority in both Houses. The main thing for a farmer to have in addition to good land, is good roads to enable him to cart his produce to market. I was interested in the speeches made by several members on the subject of marketing the produce from the South-West when that time arrives. The intention of the previous Government was to establish the dairying industry on a sound footing. Close handy to the metropolitan market is a large tract of country known as the Peel estate. I understand from people more intimately acquainted with the locality than myself that the land there is capable of growing vegetables in large quantities, greater in fact than to satisfy our own requirements. Then the member for Collie read extracts from letters of disappointed fruit and market gardeners who had sent their produce to Perth and had got only a two-penny stamp in return. I do not know whether it is the function of the Government to find markets for growers of produce. It is, however, an important factor in the progress of any State that there should be markets for whatever is produced, and members on the Government side of the House should endeavour to assist the producers to find markets for their goods. Twelve months ago when I was in Singapore I saw Western Australian oranges offered for sale at 6d. each. I learnt there that there was a very good market for oranges, but a drawback seems to be that we have no direct representative in that part of the world. There is a demand, not only for oranges but other fruits, jams, pickles, and vegetables. Instead of the European population there being compelled to live on tinned cauliflowers, tinned beans, tinned peas, and even tinned cabbage put up in America or England, there is no reason why they should not secure some of our products, and these could be supplied if only we had the proper kind of vessels in which to convey them. I am convinced that the demand would be very big and would prove remunerative. A little over a year or two ago a vessel carried on its deck some hundreds of cases of apples to Singapore. Some of the cases were marked "Cleopatra" and when they arrived at the wharf at Singapore they were found to be not only not of the character described, but were the most miserable specimens of fruit that could ever have left the State. The people who shipped them ought to have been prosecuted for daring to export such fruit. The consignee on seeing the fruit, promptly dumped it into the sea and declared that no more of his money would ever go to West-

ern Australia. We have a big market at our very doors for a number of lines that we can grow, but we have no facilities for transport. I urge the Government to inquire into the possibilities of establishing markets in the near East. About two years ago a delegation left Western Australia with a flourish of trumpets and proceeded to Java and Singapore, but I never heard the result of the visit, nor what good they did. If they did any good, there is room for fifty times greater improvement. Australia, I am sorry to say, is hardly known in many parts of the East. A prominent merchant in Singapore told me that he had several times endeavoured to establish a trade in potatoes and that while the first three or four shipments were first class and he was able to get £17 per ton for them, he was now forced to import from California at a cost of £20 a ton, because we did not maintain our original standard. It will be in the best interests of the State if an officer is appointed to supervise the goods sent out of Western Australia, so that the fair name of the State may not be tarnished as has been done by unscrupulous exporters in the past. We have a splendid market for Western Australian goods in Java and the Malay States and even in India. I urge upon the Government the importance of providing markets for our products. Only a few months ago, when travelling along the Denmark line, I saw dozens of people at one siding opening their correspondence. One woman was crying. She had sent 10 cases of peaches and received 1s. 3d. back, out of which she had to pay for the cases. I asked her if the fruit had been sent away over-ripe but she said that all were as sound as a bell.

Mr. Sampson: We must have the Queensland Act.

Mr. STUBBS: There must be something radically wrong when our growers can send tomatoes and other perishable products to the market only to find themselves in debt when they are disposed of. The position of the group settlers in the future, particularly in reference to their produce, is one of great importance. So, too, is the question of the marketing of produce. I am sincere when I say that the administration of the Lands Department is in the hands of a Minister who is not only sympathetic but has a grip of the requirements of the men on the land. I believe he is sympathetically inclined towards them and their difficulties. He knows what they have to undergo for he has gone out into the back country and seen the position for himself. I am convinced that in the future the wheat yield of Western Australia will continue to go ahead by leaps and bounds. East of Katanning, Narrogin, Wagin, and Pingelly is a tract of country that is eminently suitable for cereal growing. We are only scratching many portions of our agricultural belt. If the Premier or Minister for Lands could spare a few days

to make a trip, I am certain, if they inspected the country through to Ravensthorpe from Kondinin, Lake Grace, or Nyabing, they would traverse miles of country through which a plough has never been drawn. The explanation is the great distance from a railway. It would be impossible for men growing wheat there to cart their produce over distances of from 40 to 50 miles. While I do not wish to be parochial, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to a settlement 30 miles due east of Lake Grace where there are over 200 settlers at present. Two or three years ago the Mitchell Government promised that when 15,000 acres of land had been cleared and cultivated, a railway would be constructed to that centre. That centre is at Newdegate, which is close to the border of the Yilgarn and Wagin electorates. I have received a statement from one of the settlers in which he points out that there are between 13,000 and 14,000 acres under crop this year and next year it is anticipated that there will be between 34,000 and 40,000 acres under wheat. I do not ask that a railway should be constructed from Lake Grace to Newdegate in preference to other railways that have been authorised, but I would urge the Government to do what they can to help the settlers in that area. It is not possible to cart wheat for upwards of 40 miles to Lake Grace under existing conditions and make it pay. It would take two days to cart a 4-ton load to the siding and two days for the return journey. Such trips would represent an economic loss and would in time kill the horses. Further than that, the horses employed in such work would not be available for seeding operations later on.

Mr. Corboy: The average time taken for the return trip is five days.

Mr. STUBBS: The track is sandy in many parts and the Government have made a grant to put the road into order. Even with a good road hon. members will realise the impossibility of carting wheat over such great distances. This means life or death to the man on the land.

Mr. Corboy: The present contract price works out at about 2s. 2d. a bushel for carting.

Mr. STUBBS: There are other expenses to be added to that and it simply means that these men will leave their holdings unless it can be shown to them by the Government that there is a reasonable chance of a line being constructed within the next year or two. A deputation recently waited upon the ex-Premier and asked him to redeem the promise he had given regarding the construction of the railway. Just before leaving office Sir James Mitchell instructed that a survey should be made and I understand that the work is nearly completed. If it is not possible to construct a railway I suggest that the Minister for Works should consider the advisability of laying down a cheap tramline. The people do not wish to harass the Government in

view of the parlous state of the finances and the difficulty of obtaining loan money. Perhaps the Government will make inquiries as to the advisability of constructing a light tramline until such time as 50,000 or 100,000 acres of land are under cultivation. I feel certain that a tramline would meet the requirements of the people for the time being until it is proved beyond all doubt that the future of the district is assured. I remember 10 or 15 years ago when the land around Lake Grace was inhabited by boodie rats and a few rabbits. It was then thought unfit for wheat-growing. Less than 40 settlers took off 100,000 bags of wheat from that area last year and I hope that between 120,000 and 130,000 bags will be delivered at the siding this season. That development was carried out by people from the Old Country, probably none of whom had seen a forest before, with the exception of the parks around London. In my opinion the Newdegate area is equal, if not superior, to the land at Lake Grace. If the Government can see their way clear to do something for the settlers there, it will be in the interests of the State to keep them on their holdings. They cannot stay there unless means of communication are provided either by way of motor traction or by the iron horse. I congratulate the Government on the work they have done since their advent to office and I trust that during the next three years good seasons will be experienced and that the affairs of the State will be administered so as to enable Western Australia to become the brightest gem in the Empire.

Lieut.-Col. DENTON (Moore) [8.58]: I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, upon your elevation to your high and honourable position. I trust you will live for many years to enjoy that honour. May I also congratulate the Premier and Minister upon assuming Ministerial rank. I trust they will have a prosperous time while in office and that during the period they are in charge of the government they will endeavour to place the affairs of Western Australia on a very satisfactory basis. The late Government laid the foundation stone upon which the present Administration can build. I had not intended to speak on the Address-in-reply because I consider too much time is taken up with the debate. It is only fair to give the Government a chance to bring forward legislation which I trust will be for the good of the country. I wish to refer to a question that was dealt with during the last Parliament regarding the purchase of the Midland Company's railway and concession. I do not wish to labour that at the present juncture, but I hope that before long the people of the Midlands will come into their own. The Government would be well advised to take over a large area of Midland country for the purpose of group settlement. They will find up there sufficient good land for the settlement of thousands of mi-

grants. I have been through the group elements in the South-West, and I can say it will be many years before that part of the country becomes productive. In our northern lands we have large areas on which migrants with very little trouble could make their holdings productive much more quickly and easily than would be possible in the South-West. For production, our district is second to none in the State. Indeed we have those lands that will compare with any in Australia. I do hope the Government will make some effective provision for the extension of water supplies in agricultural areas. There is very sore necessity for water on the Wongan Hills railway. Unfortunately our gold mining industry appears to be on the wane. Nobody regrets that more than I do. In the early days the goldfields were responsible for bringing into the State thousands of valuable settlers from all parts of the world. In my district most of our settlers are ex-goldfields men. Now that the gold mining industry is on the wane, some of the goldfields water might well be spared to relieve agricultural settlers. It may be said that the farmer ought to provide for himself. Usually he does, but sometimes Nature does not come to his aid at the time he most requires assistance. So I trust that the goldfields water scheme will be extended from Goomalling along the railway towards Mullewa. That would afford much relief to the settlers, and so would result in improved yields from their holdings. It is often said that the man on the land is the backbone of the country. But we are apt to forget that when a man goes on the land he takes with him his women folk to share his hardships and sufferings. Frequently have I heard agricultural members speak of the trials and tribulations of the men on the land, but I have never heard a member speak of the woman who helps the man on the land. I should like to learn that the Government intend to bring in something in the nature of a bush nursing scheme to help, not only those women struggling beside their husbands on farms, but also those women struggling to assist their husbands on mining claims at the back of beyond. I trust the Government will bring down wise legislation. If they do, it will have my support.

The Premier: But you may not be able to discern the wisdom of the legislation.

Lieut.-Col. DENTON: Under the guidance of the Government we shall have no difficulty in that. Much has been said about the ex-Premier. In my opinion the ex-Premier has done very much to put this country on a sound foundation. To him all praise is due for the way he has stood by the State of which we are all so proud.

On motion by Mr. Hughes, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.7 p.m.