

again, especially as we have land suitable for dairying purposes close handy to where the factory is situated. It would be necessary for the Government to repurchase the land, but in suggesting that we are not asking for any preferential treatment. If it is good enough to provide group settlements with cows on land whose suitability experience has proved to be questionable, surely land such as the Greenough flats that is said to be eminently suitable for dairying is worthy of consideration. Inquiry might well be made into the cost of purchasing a fair-sized area, and providing cows for the people who take it up. That would give the district a chance of getting some return from the money expended on the Geraldton butter and bacon factory. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. C. H. Wittenoom, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 16th August, 1928.*

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

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

*Mr. Sleeman and the "West Australian."*

**MR. SLEEMAN** (Fremantle) [4.33]: I rise to make a personal explanation. In this morning's issue of the "West Australian" I am credited with having asked some questions in the House yesterday, whereas they are questions which emanated from the

member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson). I am always prepared to stand by anything I do myself, but I am not prepared to father all the questions that may be asked by that hon. member. I know mistakes do happen. I trust now that attention has been called to this matter, the Press will make the necessary correction, and give that correction the same publicity as was given to the questions that were published in this morning's paper.

Hon. G. Taylor: And put the same quality into it.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. C. P. Wansbrough, leave of absence for one month granted to the member for York (Mr. Latham) on the ground of urgent private business.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to the member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum), on the ground of urgent public business.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Seventh Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. KENNEALLY** (East Perth) [4.36]: The position in which the State finds itself should be a cause for congratulation on the part of all parties, both Government and otherwise.

Hon. G. Taylor: Speak for yourself.

**Mr. KENNEALLY**: I am endeavouring to do that. I assume that members of the Opposition are just as desirous of seeing the State prosper as are members of the Government side of the House.

Hon. W. J. George: Why should they not be?

**Mr. KENNEALLY**: If the member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) on behalf of the Opposition takes exception to that, I must confine my assumption to members on this side of the House.

**Mr. Richardson**: Members over here are quite capable of speaking for themselves.

**Mr. KENNEALLY**: I feel sure this House will approve of any action that the Government may take in conjunction with the Centenary Committee, which they have been responsible for forming with the object of

seeing that the hundredth birthday of the State is celebrated in a manner befitting Western Australia. This committee will see to it that the right thing is done in connection with the celebrations attendant upon the birthday of the State. It will shortly be appealing to all members to assist it in its work. I feel sure that the House, by its support, financially and in other ways, will render all possible assistance to make the celebrations a success, more especially in view of the fact that the members of the committee are representative of all sections of the community. The development that has taken place generally has been referred to in the Speech. Whilst that development has brought in its train a considerable degree of success, it has also brought with it a certain amount of trouble relative to what has been referred to during the debate as the unemployment question. It is not difficult to trace the causes which have led up to the greatest part of the trouble through unemployment that has been suffered in this State. Last year Western Australia was the one part of the Commonwealth that could be said to have had a successful season. This success, compared with the so-called failures in the Eastern States, directed the eyes of those who required employment as a result of those failures towards this State, which was able to provide a certain amount of work owing to its having passed through so good a time. A State can, after all, absorb only a given number of workers each year. It is not unusual to find that a State cannot absorb all those who are seeking employment within its borders. When the Hill Government were defeated in South Australia and the Butler Administration took charge, one of the first acts of the new Government was to dismiss 2,000 railway employees. I am willing to aver from actual knowledge that this State received from 300 to 400 of those men, who came here in the belief that, on account of the good harvest they had read about, employment would be offering in Western Australia for them. As it was with the railways, so was it with other avenues of employment. Our prosperity brought unemployment in its trail, not for the people already in the State, but for those who had migrated here in numbers larger than the State could at the time absorb. It will be agreed that to the extent that unemployment is attributable to the causes I have mentioned it will be merely transitory. Another

aspect of unemployment has to be considered, namely the continual stream of people coming to this country from overseas. We have been told that the Prime Minister has made arrangements by which a limited number of Southern Europeans shall come to this country. We have been told he has made definite arrangements with respect to the number of Italians who will be allowed into this country. He is the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, and when he speaks of "this country," he speaks of the Commonwealth. Our difficulty is that though the number may be limited to 3,000 or 4,000 souls a year, nothing has been said as to which State or States shall receive these people, and in which State they are expected to make their permanent homes. The unfortunate position in which this State finds itself is that it seems to be getting more than a fair share of these Southern Europeans.

The Premier: Nearly half the total coming to Australia.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Instead of receiving the quota which should be ours, which on account of our limited population would be small if we took them on the per capita basis, we have, as the Premier says, received almost half the number of Southern Europeans who are making their permanent homes here. With respect to a large number of those coming in through these channels it is not a question of a permanent home; it is a question of using this country simply as a means of raising sufficient finance to enable them subsequently to live in another country. It can readily be understood that there are people in this as in any other country prepared to exploit this kind of labour. That it is being exploited in this country there can be no doubt.

Hon. G. Taylor: You want proof before you make a statement as wide as that.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I anticipated the hon. member would want proof. His leader in the Federal arena wanted proof, just as he does. We had to take the trouble to give the proof to his leader in the Federal House.

Hon. W. J. George: That is all right.

Mr. KENNEALLY: We complained to the Federal Government that Southern European labour was being exploited by the farmers in this State. We asked the Federal Government to give consideration to the introduction of the quota system in relation to migration, just as has been done in America. In support of our application we informed the Prime Minister that Southern Europeans were being employed here at £1 or 10s. a

week, and, in some instances, at nothing per week but their keep. The Prime Minister challenged the accuracy of the statement, and that necessitated procuring sworn affidavits. They were obtained and forwarded to the Prime Minister, who then instituted his own method by which to obtain information as to the correctness of our assertions and of the statements contained in the affidavits. When he was satisfied that the affidavits were correct, and when further affidavits had been forwarded to him, the Prime Minister did not again challenge the accuracy of the statements. On the other hand, when further pressed to introduce the quota system in connection with migration to Australia, he replied that to do so would raise difficult international complications.

Hon. G. Taylor: And complications may be very dangerous.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The hon. member has been suffering from complications for a long time! The point made by the Prime Minister raised the greater question as to whether Australia is to be the one country in the world that cannot be permitted to say what people shall be admitted within its borders, or in what numbers foreigners may come in. If America had dealt with the problem in the same way, and had accepted the position that she was not to have control over migration to her shores for fear such action would raise international complications, the trouble that we have in Australia would not be our experience to-day. I believe it is because the uninterrupted stream of foreign migration to America was stopped by the introduction of the quota system, that the flow of Southern Europeans has been directed to Australia. If we do not take the necessary action in this young country to prevent the undue influx of foreigners, we will be faced with the question of flooding to an inordinate degree by Southern Europeans. That inflow will go on to such an extent that the foreigners will not be able to intermix with the Australian population without mental disadvantage to our Australian-born. That is a point that must be considered from our own point of view.

Hon. W. J. George: Hear, hear!

Mr. KENNEALLY: When we are told, as we have been told during the debate, that we should not take action to have effect given in the direction I have suggested, I am constrained to point out that in so far as it is possible to take action from the State point of view, that action has been taken. Any

success that can result must necessarily rest in hands other than our own. We cannot prevent Southern Europeans and other foreigners from coming to Western Australia merely by State action. They can be prevented from coming here if the Commonwealth Government are seized with the necessity to take action.

Hon. W. J. George: The State Government can make representations to the Federal Government.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Those representations, both at the suggestion of the Australian Labour Party and irrespective of their suggestion, have already been made by the Premier.

The Premier: There is a big file built up with those representations.

Hon. W. J. George: I do not object to the A.L.P. making suggestions to the State Government.

Mr. KENNEALLY: No, but those representations have been made to the Federal Government and we do not seem to get any further advanced regarding alien migration.

Hon. W. J. George: That is the worst of Federation.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Last night we heard remarkable theories advanced with regard to unemployed. The proposed method of dealing with the problem was remarkable from my point of view. The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) said that the method to be adopted to eradicate unemployment from our midst was to get more people to come here looking for employment! Pursuing that line of argument, he further stated that as far as he could see—he did not mention that he was short-sighted!—the fewer the number of secondary industries we had in Western Australia, the better it would be, because the more secondary industries we had, the more unemployment there would be.

Mr. Mann: I said that was the position as it existed to-day.

Mr. KENNEALLY: According to the member for Perth, we have this position: If we have 2,000 unemployed in this State, the best means by which we can get over that trouble is to bring in another 3,000 or 4,000 people to look for work.

Hon. G. Taylor: You would have to increase the police force.

Mr. KENNEALLY: And, in addition, after bringing in the extra thousands of workers, we must not establish any further secondary industries because, so the member for Perth would have us believe, if we were to do that, there would be far greater unem-

ployment prevalent. If the difficulty is as easily overcome as he suggests, I am surprised that the Premier has not already grappled with it successfully. With the member for Perth, I admit that the unemployment problem has been with us for years, but the difficulty has been in a more accentuated form and has been apparent for a longer period this year than in any other year within my knowledge. I have already endeavoured to give the reason why that is so. I wish to point out another phase to Opposition members, and I wish to do so in no party spirit.

Mr. Teesdale: A change!

Mr. KENNEALLY: We have been told of various ways by which we can cope with this difficult problem. For some time past efforts have been made, from a non-party point of view, to see whether something cannot be done so that people who honestly desire employment, shall obtain it. We—I refer to representatives of the Labour organisations, the employers and the Government—have been in conference on several occasions to give consideration to this problem. There has been no desire to secure publicity, nor have we attempted to deal with the problem from a party standpoint at all. We have considered it with a sincere desire to assist the State and to provide opportunities for work for those who are desirous of obtaining it. We have been giving attention to the seasonal nature of employment in this State. That point was referred to by the member for Perth. We have endeavoured to see whether the activities of local governing bodies and of the Public Works Department could not be so regulated that the least quantity of work might be undertaken during that period when the garnering of the harvest provides the greatest amount of work and thus, when there was little work in the farming areas during the winter or lean months, there would be more work available from the Government and local governing authorities. If that could be arranged, it would mean that the men, after the harvesting had been completed, would have an opportunity to return to available work that would keep them going and obviate their idleness for a period of the year.

Mr. Mann: Did you approach the City Council?

Mr. KENNEALLY: We did.

Mr. Mann: They did all their work and finished it when the winter began!

Mr. KENNEALLY: We found that it was necessary, when some of these works were commenced, to carry on until they were finished. It was not an economical proposition to commence some classes of work, hold them up during certain periods of the year, and recommence during the winter months. Some works extend through the whole year, and it would not be a payable scheme to merely carry out that work during the winter. We have had the hearty co-operation of the City Council and I am convinced that as time goes on we shall have similar co-operation from other local bodies. That work is being undertaken by representative men without any idea of securing the limelight of publicity; all that influences them is the desire to assist in the development of the State and the interests of those who are honestly desirous of securing employment. I am confident that we shall be able to solve the problem in a manner that will be beneficial to the State. I am hopeful, however, that with the promise of good seasons in the Eastern States this year, the problem will be less acute here because the Eastern States will be able to find employment for their own people. If this is so, I am confident that the development of our State will be such that we shall be able to find employment for our own people and for a reasonable proportion of those who have made their way West during recent months, with the object of making their homes here. We shall be able to do that, particularly if we secure from the Federal Government the assistance we claim and which is, I think, our right. Opposition members have given us various methods by which they consider unemployment can be overcome. We have been told that the main cause is the basic wage that is fixed in Western Australia. They say that had we no basic wage, many people now out of work would secure employment.

Mr. Mann: Who said that?

Mr. KENNEALLY: The member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) for one.

Hon. G. Taylor: And there is some truth in the statement.

Mr. Brown: There is a lot of truth in it.

Mr. KENNEALLY: As the member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) considers there is some truth in the statement, no doubt he will stand up to his views when on the hustings. Let us analyse the state-

ment and see what truth there is in it. Our friend from Pingelly said it was better to be employed at £1 a week than at nothing.

Hon. G. Taylor: I am not subscribing to that.

Mr. KENNEALLY: No, the hon. member desires to get in out of the wet. The member for Pingelly averred it was better to be employed at £1 a week. Because he said that if it were £1 a week that had to be paid, the farmers would then employ men. Possibly that accounts for their employing Southern Europeans at that price, and possibly if the Australian worker were prepared to sell his labour for £1 a week, the farmers would employ him. Seeing that the Australians are not prepared to work for £1 a week, and since there are others coming to this country who are prepared to work for that amount, possibly it accounts for those others being employed when Australians are out of work.

Mr. Lindsay: If you are referring to the Italians, they are employed at contract clearing, not at wages work.

Mr. KENNEALLY: We are not confined to the utterance of the member for Pingelly, for it will be recollected that we were taken on a real mental cruise the other evening by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson). He took us to India and explained what the coolie could do and how cheaply he laboured. He then took us to Africa and he told us of the way the kaffirs worked. Then he told us we had to get down to reason, that those people could do their work so cheaply, and that we had to return to sanity. Evidently sanity, according to the hon. member, is reached by getting down to the level of the kaffir and the coolie.

Mr. Mann: Be fair. That was not his suggestion.

Mr. Lindsay: It is an exaggeration of his statement.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The hon. member went on to say that whilst those conditions obtained, and whilst the trades union organisations in Australia which he was condemning, maintained their present attitude, and whilst that labour was not available, we had not returned to sanity. His appeal was to return to sanity in order that we should be able to compete with those other countries by supplying labour at a price that the employers were prepared to accept.

Hon. G. Taylor: He did not say that. That may be all right in the Trades Hall, but it is no good here.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It is a long time since the hon. member was at the Trades Hall. It has improved since he left.

Hon. G. Taylor: I will tell you something about the Trades Hall before this debate is over.

Hon. W. J. George: The member for Katanning has always paid fair wages, wherever he has been.

Mr. Lindsay: That is not what the member for Katanning meant.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Assuming that the objection raised by the member for Toodyay is valid, that the member for Katanning did not intend his statement to mean that the price should come down to the kaffir level, what I want to ask either the member for Katanning or the member for Toodyay is this: If that is not the contention, why was it said that we must return to industrial sanity because the kaffirs and the coolies could do the work for that price?

Mr. Lindsay: Because we are growing commodities under our own conditions in competition with their conditions. The argument was that we must get efficiency here.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Let us accept that view as correctly representing the ideas of the member for Katanning. As pointed out by the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) we have to provide the cost of freight to those countries, in addition to having labour that can compete. If there is anything in the argument put forward by the member for Katanning, it is that to return to industrial sanity we must have our workers work at a wage that will compete with those of coolies and kaffirs.

Hon. W. J. George: No, he was speaking, not on the wages question, but on the conditions.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I have yet to learn that in the counting of the total cost, conditions are separated from wages. After all, the whole is embraced in the cost of production. But we were told by the member for Katanning exactly where he was leading. He mentioned it himself. He said that in order to get over the difficulty, this House should instruct the Arbitration Court. That is his method of dealing with it.

Hon. W. J. George: Instruct it in what way?

Mr. KENNEALLY: He did not say. I am more concerned about the attitude of a member of the House who says we should

instruct the Arbitration Court. Many Opposition members have previously hinted that that was their idea of dealing with the question, but now we have a member prepared to come out into the open and say we should instruct the Arbitration Court.

Hon. W. J. George: We might as well instruct our other judges.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It would be just as logical.

Hon. W. J. George: Nobody who was a sensible man would do that.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I am glad some members of the Opposition dissociate themselves from such an attitude.

Mr. Lindsay: What the member for Katanning said was that some of the union leaders should instruct their members.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Were it not that I am not permitted to read from "Hansard" of the present session, I would turn up "Hansard," page 62, and quote the words contained therein, showing that the hon. member said we should instruct the Arbitration Court. The question was put to him again, and he adhered to the idea that we should instruct the Arbitration Court. I can understand his followers wanting me to get away from that idea.

Hon. G. Taylor: He will not get much support for that on this side.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I am glad to hear it. I am also concerned with the method by which some of the hon. member's supporters are now endeavouring to find an excuse for what he said. If we are to assume that the member for Katanning was not capable of expressing his own opinion, we can pass on to the next question. But if we are to assume that he is sufficiently competent to voice what is in his mind and in the minds of his party, it raises a serious question when the attitude adopted is that we should instruct the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Lindsay: They were not his words. They were put into his mouth.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Members can in their turn get up and deny their leader. The member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) was very much concerned on somewhat the same lines. He endeavoured to point out—to use his own words—that when this country becomes industrialised, it will be impossible for a man to become a skilled artisan after he reaches the age of 21. His complaint also was that the basic wage was fixed by the court, and that therefore it was not profitable to employ men when they were 21 years of age and pay them that wage. Then the

hon. member proceeded to give an illustration. He used you, Mr. Speaker, as a medium by which he could explain what he meant. He pointed out that after reaching 21 years of age you became associated with the law, but that had it not been for the fact that you were able to become associated with the law after being 21 years of age, the opportunity to join the legal profession would not have been yours. We are entitled to draw deductions from a statement such as that. If it means anything at all, it means that the member for West Perth and those who think with him are of opinion that people in this country should be given an opportunity to become skilled, to learn a trade after they have reached the age of 21. Carrying that to its logical conclusion, and taking the opposition offered to the declared basic wage in conjunction with that attitude, we find that members opposite are leading us to the idea that in order to make provision for men becoming skilled after reaching the age of 21, we should be prepared to break down the basic wage and have men over 21 years of age indentured in order that they might become skilled. I do not hear many members subscribing to that idea, supporting the idea of one who, to say the least, is in the running for the leadership of the other section of the Opposition, the idea that if the basic wage is too high to permit of men becoming skilled after 21 years, there should be a system by which men could be given an opportunity of becoming skilled after passing that age. Therefore the implication is that they should be given an opportunity of being indentured after reaching 21 years of age and taking less than the basic wage.

Hon. W. J. George: What is wrong with the improver system?

Mr. KENNEALLY: Is the hon. member associating himself with the idea of paying less than the basic wage to a man over 21 years of age in order that he may improve?

Hon. W. J. George: When a man has finished his apprenticeship, he might benefit by carrying on as an improver for a couple of years.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Assuming that a man is over 21 years of age when he requires that further improvement, do I understand the hon. member to say that he should be given opportunity as an improver at less than the basic wage?

Hon. W. J. George: That is a matter not to be settled by me. There is a court for that

purpose. I have seen a man slow in his apprenticeship, but work as an improver and eventually become a good tradesman.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Therefore we have another member who, if he does not go the whole distance with the member for West Perth, at least goes three-quarters of the distance to meet him. Whilst he does not openly subscribe to the idea of paying less than the basic wage to a man 21 years of age, he says that should be a question for others to determine.

Hon. W. J. George: Would you not sooner see him improve until he becomes a good tradesman?

Mr. KENNEALLY: As the hon. member says, we have the Arbitration Court to attend to that. Then we have the other idea, namely, that we should instruct the Arbitration Court.

Hon. W. J. George: We have no right to instruct the Arbitration Court. The member for Katanning did not mean that, although he said it.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) essayed to deal with the question of apprenticeship, and in his zeal to get that instruction given to the Arbitration Court, he proceeded to quote the percentages of apprentices in the various trades. I was a little interested in that matter, because if the hon. member was correct in the percentages he quotes, it would be necessary for us to give some attention to the question itself. He said that in some of the trades the proportion was one apprentice to three journeymen, while in other trades there was one apprentice to four or five journeymen. When he was asked whether there were not some trades in which the proportion was one to one, he evaded the question to some extent. But the cardinal feature of the proposition he put up was that he ignored altogether the fact that while almost all the apprenticeship regulations and provisions stipulate that the proportion of apprentices shall be one to three, they do not stop there. They go on to say, "or fraction of three." By those means a very large proportion of the apprentices in this State have been indentured, so that when we come to deal with the smaller avenues of employment, the proportion of one to three or one to two or fraction thereof results in there being one apprentice to one journeyman. Taking into consideration that aspect of the apprenticeship question it is idle for the hon. member to claim that the average on the whole is one apprentice

to three journeymen. In making that statement the hon. member either said what he knew to be untrue, or was speaking of some thing of which he knew nothing.

Hon. W. J. George: That is hardly fair.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I cannot put it in any other way.

Hon. W. J. George: He would not be likely to tell a lie on a question of the kind when his remarks are placed on record.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I am not saying that he told a lie.

Hon. W. J. George: You said that he stated something that was not true.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I said it was one of two things. If the hon. member is so anxious about the reputation of the member for Katanning—

Hon. W. J. George: I like everyone to be fair as I try to be fair to your side.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Then if the hon. member does not wish to put the member for Katanning in the first category, he can put him in the second. The hon. member says he tries to be fair and I, too, desire to be fair to any hon. member to whose remarks I refer.

Hon. W. J. George: I am sure you do.

Mr. Lindsay: You should not say that a member's statement is not true.

The Minister for Mines: He did not say that, anyhow.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I think I got as near to saying it as the Standing Orders would permit me to do.

Mr. Lindsay: I think you stretched the Standing Orders a bit.

Hon. W. J. George: According to the member for Katanning, the report came from the Registrar of the court.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Last evening reference was made to the Midland railway and the question of its purchase by the Government. I wish to associate myself with the hon. member who claimed that the Midland railway should become a Government concern. It is essential for the proper development of the portion of the State served by that line that the Government who control the rest of the system should control the railway, especially as it forms a link between two portions of the Government system. The difficulties, however, are great. If we were able to arrive at a suitable settlement of the purchase price, it does not need a visionary to realise that rapid progress would occur in that part of the State. With the different links connecting the Midland railway with the Mullewa line, the two

railways would be working under similar conditions and an era of prosperity in the Midland district would result. The question confronting the Government is that of cost. The member for Moore (Mr. Ferguson) last evening mentioned that during its existence of over 30 years the company had not declared a dividend until last year. Yet on each occasion when the company has been approached to allow the Government to become the possessors of the line, the claim it has made would almost indicate that high dividends had been declared year by year from the very inception of the company.

Hon. W. J. George: The company is hopeful with regard to the prospective value.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Yes, and that prospective value has been created by the people, not by the Midland Railway Company.

Hon. W. J. George: I do not deny that at all.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The value is there, but the development of that part of the State is being retarded because the company is restricted in its ability to attend to the necessities of the settlers along its line.

Mr. Mann: The Midland railway assisted development there in the early history of the State.

Mr. KENNEALLY: But the company was fairly slow in the development it achieved. It was given the necessary impetus when a somewhat competing line to Mullewa was constructed by the Government. Apart from the fact that the company each time it is approached speaks with a louder voice on the question of finance, members, and particularly the member for Murray-Wellington, know from experience that if the Government took over the railway to-morrow it would have to face considerable expenditure immediately for alterations, improvements, and re-laying. Doubtless the company attended to the requirements of the settlers in the very early days, and I think some of the rails at present in the track indicate as much. Once the Government took over the railway the Midland settlers would not tolerate from them what they have had to tolerate from the company. In the matter of re-laying, ballasting and replenishing the rolling stock, and in fact in every way, the Government would be faced with tremendous expenditure in order to bring the line somewhere near to the Government standard.

Hon. W. J. George: If the Government were making an offer to the company, they would take all those things into consideration. I would have done so in my time as Commissioner of Railways.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Exactly; and if the other party was prepared to take that into consideration, it might be possible to do business. Not only does the company increase its claim every time the question is raised, but as the years go by the deterioration of the property becomes such as to render it necessary not to increase the price but rather to decrease it.

Hon. W. J. George: But the company's lands may have increased in value.

Mr. KENNEALLY: That might be so, but experience leads me to believe that between the time when the Daiglish Government offered to buy the line and the present time, the eyes of the land have been picked out. Therefore the argument about the improved value of the land will not bear close analysis.

Mr. Ferguson: Do not you think the Midland settlers should be put on the same footing as settlers located along Government lines?

Mr. KENNEALLY: In other words the hon. member is asking that public money should be utilised to inflate the position of a private company.

Mr. Ferguson: Therefore the settlers have to be penalised.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If they are penalised, they are being penalised by a private company. It would be impossible for the Government to remove the anomalies created by every private company in the State.

Mr. Lindsay: But the Government are collecting additional land tax from the Midland people, as well as from other taxpayers, that is being used for reducing railway freights to other settlers.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Settlers in this State are let off pretty lightly in the matter of land taxation.

Mr. Lindsay: But land taxation was imposed to make good a reduction of Government railway freights to the extent of £45,000. The Midland settlers pay the tax but get no reduction.

The Minister for Railways: And the Perth people pay it, too.

The Premier: The proceeds of the tax amounted to only £45,000, so the Midland people's contribution would be small in any event.



Mr. KENNEALLY: Let me repeat that any proposal by the Government to acquire the Midland railway on a reasonable business basis will receive my hearty co-operation and support. I consider it an anomaly that the Government system should be connected at two different points by the line of a private company. Private ownership of that railway has been the cause of considerable industrial unrest in one way and another. The employees of the Midland Railway Company were previously members of the Government Railway Employees' Union, and they have always been regarded as such. In conjunction with the employees of the State railways, they deem it essential that similar conditions and rates of pay should rule on the Midland railway as on the Government railways.

Mr. Lindsay: Similar treatment is all the Midland settlers are asking for. Why not help them to get it?

Mr. KENNEALLY: If the railway could be purchased at a reasonable price, it would solve the difficulty mentioned by the member for Moore, and I think it would also solve a number of industrial difficulties that from time to time threaten to cause industrial unrest. As to workers' homes, we have been told, by way of interjection, that with the inauguration of the Commonwealth housing scheme most of the money, if not all, that can be made available by the State will in future be spent on workers' homes in country districts. I have yet to learn that the Commonwealth housing scheme will confine its operations to the cities. I understand that that scheme will be operated by the same board as are now dealing with war service homes. I admit that there is great necessity for additional workers' homes in country districts; but that necessity exists also in the cities, where it is most difficult for people to obtain housing accommodation. Money spent in providing workers' homes is an investment involving no risk of loss to the State, and such expenditure in cities and towns as well as in the country would give more satisfaction, on the whole to the workers of the State. Unless a definite agreement is reached regarding the number of houses to be built under the Commonwealth scheme, and unless an actual commencement is made with the building of them, I hope the activities of our Workers' Homes Board will not be lessened, but that a greater amount of money will be made available to them, so that they will be able

to provide homes wherever the people need them. My desire is that that money should be available for both leasehold and freehold homes. It appears that operations under the leasehold provision unfortunately—

Hon. G. Taylor: They are not so popular now as they were. Operations under that section are suspended.

Mr. Richardson: That section has broken down of its own weight.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Both hon. members, I believe, are wrong. Applications are now before the Workers' Homes Board for houses under the leasehold provision; unfortunately, funds are not available. I am asking that money should be provided for the purpose.

Hon. G. Taylor: Holders under the leasehold section are trying to get the freehold in most cases. It is no use shutting one's eyes to the truth.

Mr. KENNEALLY: There are applicants for leasehold building, and their applications cannot be granted owing to want of funds. I ask that the necessary action be taken to supply requirements in that respect. It will be doing the member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) a good turn, because possibly some of those applicants may later wish to change from leasehold to freehold.

Hon. G. Taylor: They are all getting out of leasehold.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The main thing is to get these people the housing facilities they require. The other question can be argued afterwards. I have not much to say regarding the Railway Department. It is matter for congratulation that the Midland Junction workshops have shown themselves capable of manufacturing the locomotives needed in this State—good reliable locomotives, and at a cost less than would have been incurred had the engines been imported.

Hon. W. J. George: The Midland Junction workshops have good machinery and good men.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Of course; and that is what we have been preaching for many years. I acknowledge that the member for Murray-Wellington (Hon. W. J. George) also preached the same doctrine. However, he fell into bad company, and so was not permitted to put his doctrine into operation. Since the present Government assumed office, the policy of building locomotives here has been extended, so that the Midland Junction workshops are arriving at the position of building nearly all the locomotives required in the State. I hope that that position will be maintained and extended. There is no

reason why Western Australia should import locomotives. Still, unless a definite plan of construction is laid down—and the matter is now receiving attention—a plan having regard to requirements from year to year, the rapid increase in the volume of our harvests may lead to a situation which will afford some person the opportunity of declaring that time will not allow of the building of some locomotives at Midland Junction and that they had better be imported. I hope also that the various parts of locomotives will be manufactured in Western Australia.

Hon. G. Taylor: Good work has been done by the Midland Junction workshops in wagons and tramcars.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Yes, and presently the hon. member will have an opportunity to praise the Government for that. There is one aspect of railway administration to which I desire to refer, having been associated with railway working for some considerable time. When a move was made to give some measure of authority to those who have to attend to locomotives once they leave the workshops, it was thought that the department were entering on a new era in the matter of locomotive control, embarking on a policy which would permit those having a knowledge of locomotive running to control the locomotives, rather than that the control should rest with those who, by virtue of their calling, are not expected to have, and have not, such knowledge. In pursuance of that policy there was established the branch for the superintendence of locomotive running. Having been brought in touch with that section of the railway service through another position which I hold, I find, however, that there is a difficulty in that respect, the branch having been created but having been given no authority whatever. The position is peculiar. The objection raised previously was that questions regarding locomotive running had to be referred to Midland Junction and dealt with by the Chief Mechanical Engineer, who is not a locomotive-running man. The only difference resulting from the creation of the new branch is that that branch functions in Perth but is subject to the Chief Mechanical Engineer at Midland Junction. Thus, whilst a practical locomotive-running man has been placed in charge of that portion of the work, the old system, in effect, still continues; the practical locomotive-running man is still subject, in all his decisions, to the authority of a man who knows nothing whatever about loco-

motive running. I say that without any disparagement of the latter. Obviously the duty of a Chief Mechanical Engineer is not to attend to a locomotive-running branch. It is nothing to the detriment of our Chief Mechanical Engineer to say that he does not understand the work of the locomotive-running branch. It is not his job.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you think he does not understand it?

Mr. KENNEALLY: I know he does not understand it. I repeat, however, that I would not say so if I thought the statement was to his detriment. Just as the locomotive-running man is not expected to understand the duties of the Chief Mechanical Engineer, so the latter is not expected to understand the duties of the former. As a matter of fact, the Chief Mechanical Engineer's job is to construct locomotives.

Hon. G. Taylor: And he does it well.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Yes. The job of the man who attends to locomotive running is to give attention to the locomotive from the time it leaves the Chief Mechanical Engineer's control until it is sent back to that officer to be repaired. There is no use in leaving the new position in mid-air. There is no use in establishing a branch without giving it authority and control. The branch in question has been established, and a practical man has been put in charge of it. That practical man should have the authority to give decisions, and those decisions should not be subject to ratification by a man who has not a thorough knowledge of locomotive-running work.

Hon. W. J. George: There is the necessity for co-ordination. The Commissioner of Railways cannot attend to that.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Co-ordination is secured by virtue of the fact that the Chief Mechanical Engineer's work is to construct locomotives. Having made a locomotive ready for the road, he hands it over to the locomotive-running branch, saying to that branch, "There is your machine." The running branch takes over the locomotive and attends to its running until such time as it can run no longer, when it is returned to the Chief Mechanical Engineer for repairs. Thus the co-ordination is established, and such co-ordination does not obtain under the present system. Another question which should receive the attention of the Minister for Railways relates to the system operating in regard to promotion of salaried men. I wish

to give an illustration of the working of that system. Applications were called for a position, and various men applied. One man, because he was considered to be the best man for the position, secured priority and was appointed. The men who were not considered as good as he for the vacancy remained in their then positions. One of them, however, went ahead in the matter of salary, so that now he is in receipt of £100 per annum more than the man who was considered the best of the applicants.

Mr. Richardson: That is a remarkable thing.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It is true, remarkable though it be; and it has created dissatisfaction. If the man was entitled to preferment in the first place, surely his ability must be such as to entitle him at least to rank equally with those who were not successful in the contest for the vacancy. I trust that attention will be given to that aspect of the question because I think it is a cause of dissatisfaction in the service. Before getting away from the subject of the Railway Department, I wish to make some reference to the position of the service which is admitted by many members on this side of the House, as well as members on the opposite side, to be as well manned as any in Australia. Hon. members have admitted that there are in the railway service officers who are second to none in the Commonwealth. I wish to repeat what I mentioned to the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) when he was speaking some time ago, that if it be the case that we have such capable men in the service, hon. members will support any Government that will say to these men that they must have conditions second to none in any part of Australia.

Hon. G. Taylor: I think they have got them.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If they have not I assume the hon. member will support me in getting those conditions for them. In Australia, as members know, there are seven Government railway systems, one in each State and one in the Commonwealth. In four States there is a system in operation which does not throw aside a man when he ceases to be able to continue in his position, which does not scrap him by saying, "We have finished with you." Even with regard to ordinary machinery, such as a locomotive, when it can no longer function, there is

provision by which we give it some attention from the point of view of capital. When it comes to the human locomotive, we simply say, "We have finished with you because you can no longer function as a human machine, and therefore you are of no further use in the service; good-bye." The officials then endeavour to do what they can, but the trouble is that they cannot do what is necessary. Four systems out of the seven boast of a superannuation scheme, and I cannot for the life of me understand why a system of superannuation does not exist in Western Australia. The system in the other States is on a contributory basis; the Government contribute so much and the employees so much.

Hon. W. J. George: Something similar should apply to members of Parliament.

Mr. KENNEALLY: That would be a good idea, too.

Hon. W. J. George: Then bring it in quickly.

Mr. KENNEALLY: In my opinion the question of superannuation should not be confined to railway men, but by virtue of the nature of the railway man's employment, there certainly should be some such system. His work has been classed high up on the list of dangerous employment, but while the railway men should receive early consideration in this respect, such a scheme should not be limited to them. When men and women have given good service to the State for a period of years, I think all should be entitled to this consideration between the period of the cessation of their services and the grave.

Hon. G. Taylor: Why not apply it to all workmen?

Mr. KENNEALLY: If the hon. member had not been asleep, he would have heard what I said. I said only a few minutes ago that I considered it should apply to every person, man or woman, who has rendered good service to the State, and who has reached a certain age. I desire now to refer to a few local matters, one of which I think affects a question of general policy. Prior to the time I entered this House there was in East Perth an extension of the tramway system, but whilst it was extended at the one end, a portion of it was taken off at the other end, and so, whilst facilities were granted at one end, certain facilities were also removed from the other. For instance,

the tramway was extended from Lincoln-street to Crawford-road, thus giving additional conveniences to the residents of Maylands. I hope it will shortly be extended further, because that is overdue, too. If the tramways are to be the means of transit for the people, we should not hesitate to extend them, but what I am asking for now is that consideration be given to the question of providing facilities for the people, facilities that the people are entitled to receive. Unfortunately that tramway extension brought in its wake a terminus at what is known as Bridge-street. Previously, when the tram ran only to Lincoln-street, it was possible to travel in it as far as the Barrack-street jetty. Now the residents served by the system are emptied out at Bridge-street. I invite members at a busy hour of the morning to attend at Bridge-street to see the human freight that is emptied out into a thoroughfare that is not at all suitable for a tramway terminus. But what I wish to emphasise is—and this question, I understand is being considered by the Government at the present time—that previously the tram went to the jetty. It enabled the residents of East Perth to go to the junction of any other tram they wanted to join, and if they desired to go, say, to Crawley, they could leave it at the Weld Club corner, or if they wished to cross the river, they could leave the tram at the foot of Barrack-street. Under the present arrangement they must perforce leave the tram on the other side of the city; they have to cross the railway bridge, an admittedly dangerous place, and walk down to the Esplanade, or to the jetty, to take the other tram, or else join another tram and pay an additional fare. But it frequently happens that at the Bridge-street terminus it is out of the question to expect to catch another tram during the busy period, because they are almost invariably crowded. First of all we were told that the terminus was established at Bridge-street because the city was congested. That was when I began to take up the question. Since then I have been told that there was no objection to the terminus at Bridge-street at the time it was first suggested. I have no desire to criticise any of my predecessors, but what I do say is that if congestion is the reason for terminating that service at Bridge-street, I want to analyse the cause of the congestion. First of all, the tramway is not the cause of the congestion because it was there in

the first instance. There has been additional vehicular traffic operating in the city and that may have caused congestion. We know that the people have to be conveyed from place to place, and we know that one tram can move 100 people and that the equivalent in motor cars would be about 20. We must not forget that the tramway is the worker's means of transit.

Hon. G. Taylor: He would not object to a motor car.

Mr. KENNEALLY: He would not, but he cannot afford it, and if the hon. member further reduces the basic wage, the working man will be still further away from the motor car. But, as I have pointed out, it will take 20 motor cars to move 100 passengers that can be carried in one bogie car, and the bogie car occupies only one set of rails. The ideas of the manager of the tramway system probably will be fairly sound 50 years hence.

Hon. G. Taylor: They will be obsolete very soon.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Is the hon. member referring to himself?

Hon. G. Taylor: They are obsolete in other countries.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The hon. member would be. In other parts of the world provision is made for transit by other means. If we adopt the same policy here, the last stage will be worse than the first, because no matter what means we adopt for transit through the city, it will not be a system that will convey passengers with the minimum of congestion, as will happen if the trams remain. A Government of the workers would be the last to be the means of depriving the workers of their transit facilities. That is why I am asking that the means of transit to that portion of the city shall be given back to those from whom it was taken. It may be urged that people who come in from Subiaco are not taken to the river, and that when they come in from Victoria Park they are not taken to the river, but they are landed a lot nearer to it. The system which was in vogue previously lent itself to access to the river. People were taken to the river, but have now been deprived of the opportunity of getting there. I hope the Government will see the necessity for restoring to the people a facility they once enjoyed. When the argument concerning congestion was dropped—I think because it was met—the question of the delays that occurred when trams had to cross over was raised. Under the previous

system, when there was a single line on the Lord-street route, members may have noticed that when a tram that left the city, travelling towards Lord-street had to cross over Newcastle-street, seeing that there was only a single line, a tram which was on the Lord-street section, if it was late, had to put up with a certain amount of delay because of the northern traffic. The tram from the city had to wait until the line was clear before it could get into the other section.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Beaufort-street line.

Mr. KENNEALLY: With a double line that is obviated. There is no need to wait until the tram comes because there is now a double line. The time during which the northern traffic would be delayed would be while the tram was turning the corner. This happens in all the principal cities of the Commonwealth. There are now no difficulties associated with that. It may be said that the Government should have seen ahead, and should not have pulled up the line in Newcastle-street. The traffic that has been handled on that line since the extension was opened has exceeded all expectations.

Mr. Clydesdale: Not mine.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I think I am right in saying it has exceeded the expectations of the hon. member. I have heard him express that opinion, particularly when trying to convince the Government of the necessity for extending it further. It has exceeded expectations. A policy which may not have been warranted when the original idea was conceived and agreed to, can easily be justified later when the fact is realised that the tramway extension has already fully justified itself. As the line is extended, as I hope it will be, I trust the policy of emptying out a number of people at the present terminus, such as has been done since the terminus was established, will not be continued. I hope the Government will see there is no cause for complaint in that respect and that the matter will receive their attention. Another question which affects the East Perth and possibly the Canning electorates is connected with the Swan River improvement Act. We do not require a picture painter to show us that the improvement that will be carried out in accordance with the policy of the Government will cause that portion of the river to be as much sought after as is the present view from Mount Eliza. When the island is made up in the river, with the channel running round it, and the drive that it is proposed to establish is once constructed, one can visualise the

thought of that portion of the river being a rendezvous for the public on Sundays and holidays, vieing in importance with the Mount's Bay drive. I urge that the utmost expedition should be used in the completion of that scheme. It would be something to be proud of if, in the year in which the hundredth birthday of the State was celebrated, we were able to show the large number of people, who should be visiting our shores on that occasion, that we have been able to establish in that portion of the river something that would be well worth the inspection of any visitor. If the work could be expedited, it will be in the interests of the State. Another matter to which I wish to draw attention—it has been brought before the Government and the Minister for Works on two or three occasions—is one which only the lack of funds, which should not operate in the future, prevents from receiving the necessary attention. Whilst we may have the idea of showing people who may visit Western Australia during the Centenary year something worth while, I wish to ensure that the Government will take steps to remove the rubbish tip that would be such an eyesore to visitors when passing through East Perth. This rubbish tip exists because of the lack of a drain extending to the river. The Glyde-street drain ends in a box drain. The City Council cannot cover in the land altogether, because ultimately the Government will build a drain extending from there to the river. The non-completion of the drain has held up from development the whole of that portion of the city. Visitors there can see old boiler tubes and iron lying in a heap. Properties have been flooded on more than one occasion, and the State has had to pay compensation, because the drain has overflowed. It would be economical from the point of view of the Government if they made money available so that the drain might be extended to its natural outlet, the river. The absence of drainage facilities is depriving people in that centre of vehicular communication, because the City Council is waiting until the drain has been extended to construct a road. The street there has to be formed. Until the drain is extended beyond that portion, the Council cannot build a roadway which would enable vehicular traffic to travel through that neighbourhood. When the Estimates come to be dealt with this year I hope some attention will be paid to the

necessity for removing that eyesore, especially in view of the fact that so many visitors are expected to come to Perth during the Centenary year. The City Council has undertaken, as soon as the drain has been extended, to construct a road forthwith. It has also undertaken to create a reserve over the line of the drain for children, when the area I refer to as a rubbish tip has been obliterated. This should serve to induce the Government to make such provision that there will be no necessity for complaint in the future. When it was decided to resume certain properties in East Perth for railway work, it was found necessary to isolate a certain portion of the district from ordinary vehicular traffic. At that time the railway authorities were closing the railway crossing at Summers-street. A promise was made by the then Minister that a vehicular bridge would be built across Summers-street, to provide for those who would otherwise be isolated from other portions of the city. That promise has not been carried out.

Hon. W. J. George: That was years ago.

Mr. KENNEALLY: When it was proposed to build the present footbridge across the street, objection was taken by the residents to it, because it was claimed that once the footbridge was built, there would be no vehicular bridge. The Minister of the day sought to allay these fears by stating that a vehicular bridge would be built for the convenience of the residents in that portion of the city. The bridge, however, is not there yet, neither is there one at Claisebrook-road. If we could capitalise the money which is wasted by people having to cross the railway at East Perth, there is no doubt there would be plenty available for the construction of the bridge. The Government should give consideration to the interests of the people who are engaged in building and in the conveyance of goods, because the less they have access to the ordinary channels of communication, for the carriage of the commodities in which they deal or with which they are connected, the greater will be the cost to them. If attention is not to be given to the question of sinking the railway within the city areas, or diverting it to the outer suburbs, it is time it was given to providing facilities for crossing the line near the city, so that people who, because of their callings have to cross repeatedly, may have an opportunity to do so under reasonable conditions. At some time in the future we shall have to consider

the question of preventing all the produce that comes into the city from passing through the congested areas. That may be done by sending the railway out further from the city, or by creating an outer circle such as is found in other capital cities. The fact remains that the bottle-neck system now in use must come to an end. Produce from the country that is brought long distances should be diverted from the city to its destination without having to cross the overcrowded areas such as is now the case. I trust that attention will be paid to the questions I have raised. When the opportunity occurs, I will deal with the specific items to which I have referred. I trust the Government will continue their good work in regard to the Centenary celebrations, and that the committee controlling the arrangements will receive all possible assistance at the hands of the Government in order that the hundredth birthday of the State may be honoured in a way that we shall all be proud of, and in a manner befitting the reputation and welfare of Western Australia.

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

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [7.30]: The record of the Lands Department during the last year has been one of great activity and unabating progress. The demand for land has been insistent and increasing, and this demand has been met as far as possible. It is, of course, largely confined to wheat and sheep lands, because a great many people in this country, and also in the Eastern States, are desirous of following that occupation in preference to any other occupation on the land. The number of new settlers for the year totals 1,056. There were received 14,017 applications for conditional purchase areas aggregating 3,165,579 acres. The number of applications for pastoral leases was 188, for 15,599,452 acres. The grand total of applications for the year was 14,295, for an aggregate of 18,765,000 acres. Those figures indicate the great demand there is for land in Western Australia, and the great interest that is being taken in its development.

Mr. Richardson: Some of those 14,000 applications would be made by the same people?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Lands thrown open for selection during the year 1927-28 totalled 1,584 blocks, comprising 1,529,996 acres. In addition unsurveyed land was made available for selection to the extent of 520,458 acres. In July of this year 428 additional blocks were made available for selection, and the area embraced by those locations comprised 679,735 acres. Unserved lands made available for selection during the same month totalled 17,028 acres, making a total for last July of 696,763 acres. Considerable progress has been made in regard to survey and classification of land under the migration scheme. The total number of blocks surveyed, including those on which dusted miners have been settled, is 1,122; and 787 of these have been made available for selection, whilst the balance will be gazetted at an early date. Thirteen surveyors are now engaged in classifying the vacant land between Southern Cross and Salmon Gums which it is proposed to develop under the new farms scheme. The work is expected to be completed in about three months from date, when we shall be in a position adequately to design subdivisions and proceed with the survey of the blocks and the necessary roads, etc. All country suitable for settlement, west of the rabbit-proof fence and in the vicinity of Lakes King, Camm, and Carnody, has already been subdivided and thrown open to selection. Much of this area—indeed almost the whole of it—is within the 3,000 farms scheme, and it is expected that the financing of this development will be done under the migration agreement. Three parties are engaged in the classification of country between the terminus of the Bjandring Northward railway and Pindar on the Murchison railway east of Mullewa. A large area of this country has already been classified, and action is now being taken to design subdivisions and survey blocks. I may mention in this regard that it is proposed to place another settlement of Murchison dusted miners on the area between what is known as the wheat belt, and the pastoral areas, thus creating a buffer area. In this district, east of the Wongan Hills railway, the rainfall is probably as good as it is at Merredin or Walgoolan; still, the ground becomes shallower, a conglomerate formation exists a few inches under the ground, the deep soil being met with only in parts. Therefore it is proposed to make 5,000-acre blocks avail-

able for the miners, and their attention will be directed to sheep first. I am sure they will grow wheat on the deep country just as well as at Merredin and Walgoolan, and they have the advantage of fresh water supplies, which can be got at a depth. The country has carried stock for years, and there is no difficulty with regard to poison weed or water. If these people will grow oats and wheat and carry a fair number of sheep, we shall have a profitable settlement there, and one highly beneficial to the dusted miners themselves. The blocks will have to be of 5,000 acres because, as I have said here before, I do not consider 1,000 acres in that locality sufficient, having regard to the shallowness of the soil. Time may prove me wrong; we are all the victims of altering circumstances. In view of the partial shallowness of the soil I consider it necessary to make the area 5,000 acres. After that we come on to the Murchison pastoral areas, which in my opinion are not suitable for agricultural settlement. A senior staff surveyor is closely classifying the lands in the vicinity of Balla and Dartmoor, which is north of Northampton. Progress there is slow owing to dense scrub but as good progress as can be expected in the circumstances is being made. Owing to the special requirements under the migration scheme a considerable amount of survey work is being undertaken, a total of 55 surveyors being now in the field. This I believe to be the largest number of surveyors ever employed in the Lands Department of Western Australia. We have given every surveyor occupation. Quite a number of new surveyors have come into this country, and they have been engaged, because if we are to embark on the scheme and give land to the people who desire it, we must have the country classified and surveyed. The season up to date has been remarkably good, and a splendid harvest is anticipated, although in some districts the farmers are having trouble with rabbits. That difficulty applies to the far eastern belt. The Lands Department are doing everything possible to help the farmers in this respect. Large quantities of wire netting are being purchased for distribution by the department, and a considerable mileage has been supplied to farmers on highly advantageous terms. During the last financial year 2,285 miles of rabbit netting was supplied to farmers at a cost of £104,373. The supply of netting has been going on for some years, and hon. members will realise that considerable pro-

gress is being made in the fencing of the areas in the eastern wheat belt. Very soon, it is hoped, the farmers' areas will be so protected as to permit of the carrying of large numbers of sheep, and the prosperity of the State will be enhanced in consequence. As regards the 3,000 farms scheme, I have noticed in the Press references to a 3,500 scheme, and occasionally 4,000 farms have been mentioned. I have even seen references to the opening up of 34,000,000 acres and so forth. I do not know how many new farms will eventuate; that remains to be seen. A considerable number of farms have already been laid down for selection, and I think we shall obtain a large number of farms in new areas now being opened up. In company with members of the Migration and Development Commission and Mr. Bankes Amery, the British Government representative in Western Australia, I travelled 1,500 miles in that belt recently. Some of it is poor. I am not going to say that quite a lot of it will not come into settlement and operation when served by railways.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: Not poor; only light.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I saw some that was poor, and I did not hesitate to tell the Commission my opinion of it. But I also saw a great deal of magnificent country. I do not think there exists in Western Australia a finer or more continuous belt of agricultural land than that south of Southern Cross to Forrestania. The indications are that a very considerable area of good land will be made available. I believe it is within a reasonable rainfall. We know what the rainfall is at Southern Cross, at Kondinin, at Lake Grace, at Ravens-thorpe, at Salmon Gums, and also at Norseman, though I do not include Norseman in this proposition. Providing the new settlers farm properly, a highly prosperous settlement ought to be opened up there. Here I may say that as regards the miners' settlement at Southern Cross I am insisting that as far as possible no cropping shall be done except under fallowing conditions. We have an experimental farm established at Dampawah, which is on the very edge of the Murchison, on the country I spoke of, the eastern extremity of the South-West Division. We have an experimental farm at Ghooli, which is now in the process of farming operations. We have also an experimental farm at Salmon Gums. At all these farms the cultivation methods will be such

as, I believe, will meet with success in the various districts. If the farmers follow the example set, they cannot fail. I was particularly struck with the good work being done at Ghooli and at Salmon Gums. The miners at Southern Cross are being permitted to put in a small acreage for hay and for seed, but in consultation with the trustees of the Agricultural Bank I have emphasised that there, where we have some control over farming methods, those adopted ought to be the best possible. I believe that with good results at Ghooli and Salmon Gums we can vitalise the new settlement, and the State ought not to make a failure of it. I wish to say explicitly that I am sensible of the great responsibility carried by the present Government with regard to the new scheme. I have not hesitated to tell the Migration Commissioners that whilst I am satisfied about the land, really my greatest fear is with regard to the rainfall. We have to admit that somewhere east we arrive at an area where the rainfall is not sufficient to enable settlers to carry on profitably. The members of the Migration Commission are fully aware of that fact. They were accompanied by their agricultural adviser, Mr. Robertson, who has had considerable experience of agricultural matters in the Eastern States. I believe I am correct in stating that he was perfectly satisfied we can carry on in that area under present rainfall conditions. In fact, he said to me, "If you have any doubt about it, come over to the Eastern States and see what we are doing in South Australia and Victoria." The Minister for Agriculture in South Australia, Mr. Cowan, was also over here and I got him to send me a chart showing the records of rainfall in the South Australian wheat areas. I was surprised to find that over a very considerable area wheat was being profitably grown on a rainfall of 7 inches spread over the growing period. Hon. members will know that is quite possible, provided we get the rain at the requisite periods. Some hon. members in this House have successfully grown wheat with a rainfall of less than 7 inches during the growing period. If I may refer to my own experience, I can tell hon. members that in 1922 I secured 15 bushels from my own farm, with 535 points of rain during the growing period.

Mr. Lindsay: That is, within six months.



**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I confess I was surprised at the result, but the fact remains that I got that return. Provided the rain falls during the growing period, I am satisfied that wheat can be produced satisfactorily in these areas. I hope it will be possible to enter upon this great work soon and I am glad to know, so far as I can ascertain, that all members of Parliament are in favour of that as well. I do not want to commit members to something in respect of which they should not be committed, but I shall be glad indeed if they will give this scheme their fullest consideration. They should take the opportunity to look at the country and to consider the whole scheme. I am desirous that all sections of Parliament shall be satisfied that we are about to embark upon a scheme that will redound to the credit of the State as a whole. The preliminary work is in progress. A sum of £150,000 has been advanced for that work, for providing the necessary roads that will have to be constructed and the water supplies that will have to be installed. The scheme is to be thoroughly investigated, and that task is being undertaken by officers from the various departments concerned, including the Works Department, the Water Supply Department, the Surveyor General, and the Lands Department. All the necessary data are being collected so that the scheme may be placed upon a sound basis, and so that we may know the road along which we shall travel before we enter upon it. A considerable area of new country will be served by the Mollerin extension and by the extension of the Ejdanding Northward railway. For the information of hon. members, I wish to intimate that the Mollerin railway extension will not go beyond the rabbit-proof fence. There was an area surveyed and made available for selection further out, but when I returned from the Murchison I withdrew it, because I did not think it was in the interests of the State at the present juncture to go beyond that point. We are not going north of Southern Cross, or of Bullfinch. I have arranged with the Agricultural Bank trustees to provide money to enable the settlers already there to carry on with reasonable chances of success, but we do not intend to survey any new country further out, nor shall we encourage people to settle in those parts. In fact, I am taking care that people will not be allowed to go out there. In my opinion, there is room for develop-

ment still in the safer areas and we should not risk opening up areas that are yet doubtful. We can yet place settlers on the land east of the Wongan Hills railway and in the Victoria district, in the Southern Cross area as far as Forrestania, and south of the Bremer Ranges to Ravensthorpe and Salmon Gums. In addition there is a considerable area east of the Salmon Gums country. In the development of these areas there will be plenty of work for Parliament in the future. Last night the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) spoke of alleged dummying. He said that in his district persons were holding large areas of pastoral country, but were not complying with the conditions under the Land Act. He further stated that transfers were being given to persons who had secured some of those leases. I must confess that I have been rather harsh about such matters. I have refused transfers, apart from exceptional reasons. There have been cases where I have granted the transfers, but they have been exceptional. Perhaps the husband may have died and the widow and the family have not been able to carry on, or the holder of the lease has been in bad health and he has satisfied me that he could not possibly continue to develop the holding. Had I refused transfers in such instances, I would have indeed been unduly harsh.

Hon. G. Taylor: I do not think instances such as those have been questioned at all.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** There has been a considerable amount of dummying in this State.

Mr. Davy: Has it not been encouraged by the office itself to a considerable extent?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I do not know, but I am not encouraging dummying. Every hon. member, I think, knows that I am not encouraging it because I have taken every possible means to stop it. I have authorised many forfeitures of leases, and that has earned for me the ill-will of some people. I have forfeited leases in some instances in which, had I consulted my own sympathies, I may not have done so. On the other hand, in the interests of the sound development of this State, I have had to carry out my duty, irrespective of whom I displeased. To-day the member for Murchison mentioned a case to me but I was able to tell him that the forfeiture had taken place weeks ago, so that he was rather belated with his charges. There have been instances of returned soldiers and others having taken up leases without the slightest intention of living on their properties. One man was frank

enough to tell me that he had been advised to take up his holding because of the chance of making a few pounds by an immediate sale. Returned soldiers were able to secure leases by virtue of concessions that are extended to them. They were charged a small amount for application fees, but under the concession they did not have to pay a penny for rent for some years. Yet, after a few months, some of them sold their properties! I had no option but to enforce forfeitures in those cases. I can assure hon. members I am doing my best to prevent dummyping. Much of it has gone on in the past, and in furtherance of my desire to do what is right for the State, I hope, with the consent of the Treasurer, to appoint a few temporary officers to act as inspectors for the purpose of making a thorough investigation of conditions throughout the agricultural and pastoral areas. If there are people in possession of land in these days when holdings are eagerly sought by hundreds of applicants, and those people hold their properties under a concession relinquishing them from the necessity to pay rent for a period of years, surely the least we can expect of them is that they shall fulfil their obligations under the Act! There are too many men holding leases to-day without making any attempt to do their duty to the State, and I intend to enforce the conditions applying to their holdings.

Hon. G. Taylor: Has the Minister, or his department, punished anyone who has submitted false declarations?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have hesitated to take action.

Hon. G. Taylor: I have seen some false declarations in your office.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am afraid we shall have to make an example of some of those people who make declarations knowing that they are false.

Hon. G. Taylor: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I believe that of those that have been brought under my notice, 70 per cent. of the declarations have been false. Some people do not seem to have any regard whatever for an oath. In some instances there was not a scintilla of truth in their sworn statements.

Mr. Teesdale: What, 70 liars out of 100!

The Premier: And that percentage was of those only that had been questioned.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Of course, I do not see all the declarations that are submitted.

Mr. Teesdale: Someone else must get the other 30.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have come to the conclusion that the great majority of people whose declarations were brought under my notice have no regard for what is contained in those documents.

Mr. Davy: Only the suspects are brought before you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Perhaps so.

Mr. Davy: Probably the vast majority of them are not brought under your notice at all.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am speaking only of those that come before me. I have found so many inaccuracies in the declarations that I have come to the conclusion that not many people have any regard for the truth. It may be necessary to take action in one or two instances to bring people to a realisation of the fact that there is really something in an oath. They must be taught that they must have some regard for the statements that they swear to. The operations of the Agricultural Bank were actively maintained during the year, during which period 1,983 ordinary loans and 412 applications from ex-soldier borrowers, amounting to £663,100, were approved. Of this amount £441,502 was allocated for the clearing of 403,640 acres of virgin land. The advances made during the same period totalled £645,000 and the loan repayments £338,260, of which £214,225 represented ordinary and £124,038 ex-soldiers' indebtedness. It is very pleasing to know that the settlers to whom advances have been made are making their repayments and meeting their interest charges as well in a great many instances. Hon. members will note that the collections for the year have shown an improvement upon the returns for the previous periods. The amounts repaid by ordinary and ex-soldier settlers represented £232,404 and £267,930 respectively. The total amount owing under mortgages as at the 30th June last was: Ordinary borrowers, £3,698,000; ex-soldiers, £4,643,000. Those figures will indicate to hon. members the great work that is being carried out by the Agricultural Bank trustees in financing the agricultural industry of Western Australia. With the exception of a few instances, the revaluation of soldier settler securities has been completed, the amount written off being £414,312 distributed amongst 1,352 mortgagors. These losses are recoverable from the Common-

wealth grant for that purpose. The limits of the bank's operations have been further extended and its advances liberalised during the year. Full advances are now being made in the area north of Mollerin, and from Southern Cross southwards on approved holdings within a 20-mile radius of an existing or authorised railway. I think hon. members know that in respect of light land propositions, where the security is approved by the bank, financial assistance has been made available to assist settlers in the development of their holdings to the extent of half loans.

Mr. Lindsay: That is where the settler has more than 2,000 acres.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. In my opinion, it is essential that a settler should have more than 2,000 acres in some of the light land areas. In some parts 2,000 acres of light land would be sufficient, but for the most part, it is necessary for settlers to have more than 2,000 acres if they are to be given a chance to farm successfully.

Mr. Lindsay: The trouble is that some of the settlers have slightly smaller holdings and cannot secure any loan from the Agricultural Bank.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Rapid strides are being made by the miners, who have been settled in the Southern Cross district. I was particularly pleased to note the work the miners were doing when I last visited the district. Hon. members will appreciate what I mean when I say that many of the miners were taken from the mines when they had reached the next to last stage of miners' disease. Their next stage would have been tuberculosis. When I saw those miners using the axe on the occasion of my first visit last summer, I felt sorry for them. I felt that if ever men had to go through the ordeal by fire, they were going through it. As the member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) knows, miners who come from their work underground can hardly stand the summer heat above ground. He will appreciate the position of those men when they set to work with the axe with half their lungs gone. Hon. members will realise that it required a lot of grit to do it. Therefore, I felt sorry indeed for those men, although I realised it was for their good.

Mr. Heron: Although their lungs were affected, their hearts were sound.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When I saw those men again early this winter, I was surprised at the marked improvement in their health. One or two whom I had found to be pretty bad in the summer had good wind and heart, and were full of confidence in their ability to establish homes. They had brought their wives and families with them, and had brought even their homes from the fields, and their little boys were helping to clear the forest. The Parliament and Government which gave those men their opportunity have done something of real merit in the development of Western Australia. A good deal has been said about Southern Europeans. I have not much to complain of, for in their remarks Opposition members have not indulged in unfair criticism; but I wish to explain the Government's attitude in this matter. Let me say I have nothing against the Southern European as a man. I have found Southern Europeans in this State very good men indeed, honest and willing to work. It might even be said that some of the best settlers in the country are Southern Europeans. Down in the Manjimup area the Fontanini brothers constitute settlers not to be excelled in Western Australia. I am quite sure that at any ordinary agricultural show, with 50 of their products they could beat almost any other settlers in Western Australia.

Mr. Mann: Then they are not reducing the standard of living.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They are of very fine type; probably there is no better type in the State. But we in this country are developing our wheat areas at a rapid rate, and with every new area we require more credit from the Agricultural Bank, more railways and more water supplies. In this rapid settlement of her lands, Western Australia is being assisted by money supplied under the migration agreement. If that money were not available, much of this settlement could not take place, for the men now being settled on the land could not get bank advances, nor railways, nor water supplies. The advantage of having this money carries with it certain obligations. One of the principal obligations is that we must absorb into this community a certain number of British migrants every year. That agreement was made, not by this Government, but by a former Government. But any Government in office wishing to avail

themselves of the money under the migration agreement must keep the spirit and letter of the compact. When the present Government cease to exist as a Government I shall not be concerned as to what may be done, but whilst in office I have to see to it that the contract between this Government and the Commonwealth Government and the Imperial Government is maintained. When I have talked to farmers in that strain, I have been applauded to the echo. When I travelled with the migration commissioners, Mr. Banks Amery also supported my remarks. I tell hon. members that unless they are prepared to give the British migrants a chance in this country, they cannot expect to get the advantage of constructing farms and railways and water supplies with moneys supplied under the migration agreement.

Mr. Teesdale: Mr. Amery said that 77 per cent. of the settlers on the new farms were Western Australians.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is all right. The migration agreement does not insist that all the British migrants shall be settled on the land. It merely insists that they shall be absorbed into the community. So we have to find opportunities for those who are not going on the land. Still, any member who travels through the new farming areas will be struck with the great number of migrants on the land who are achieving success.

Mr. Teesdale: Hear, hear!

Mr. Davy: Can we afford to have in the community different classes of persons, some who can get a certain class of job while others cannot?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am sorry the Southern Europeans cannot be absorbed in the country. They are good men and they make worthy citizens. I have no objection to seeing them settled on the land; but of course we can only absorb a certain number of people, and with great numbers of young men from the Eastern States, plus the migrants from the Old Country, we cannot absorb all these other people, because we are mainly dependent on primary industries. Mr. Hamersley, speaking in another place a night or two ago, said that clearing work was not fit work for Australians and Britishers, and that it ought to be left to the Southern Europeans. That would be all

right if we had more satisfactory work for the Australians. But we have not. In the whole of the development of Australia the pioneering work has been done by people from the British Empire. If the British migrants are to be absorbed in this country, they certainly must do the same work as the pioneers did. I am not going to say that all the farmers in Western Australia refuse to give preference to Britishers. I want to make this point: I have never insisted that the farmers must not employ Southern Europeans. The only thing we insist upon is that they give preference to Britishers and Australians. If they cannot get either Australians or Britishers, then they are free to employ Southern Europeans. And if ever I find a farmer embarrassed or humbugged by British clearers, I always give him permission to employ Southern Europeans to do the work. It has been said that some of the farmers prefer the Southern European because he is cheaper and can be exploited. I do not say that obtains generally, but I do say that it occurs to a fair extent.

Mr. Lindsay: Not generally.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, not generally.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: The exploitation touches more Britishers than Southern Europeans.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is always to be found in the country a certain class ready to exploit the cheapest labour.

Mr. Davy: You will find blighters in every section of the community.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But I have discovered that quite a number do not want to employ the Britisher, because the Southern European is cheaper. I know that some farmers have received from the Agricultural Bank 25s. per acre for clearing and have paid Southern Europeans £1 per acre to do the work.

Hon. G. Taylor: Are there many instances of that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have a few. I have been told by others that farmers not on the Bank get their clearing done at from 17s. to £1 per acre. I have been told that by farmers. Also I personally have been asked to give Southern Europeans a contract for cutting down at 7s. per acre. I have here a letter sent to me from a clearer at Bruce Rock. To show his bona fides, the

writer enclosed a 1½d. stamp for a reply. The letter reads as follows:—

Dear Sir,—In the "Daily News" issue of Friday, 5th inst., there appeared a leading article entitled "Shortage of Clearers," which stated there was any amount of clearing to be had in various parts of this State, in fact many farmers were unable to get men to clear their land, and so the clearing contracts went begging on that account. On the strength of the above-mentioned article I immediately wrote to the manager of the Agricultural Bank, as I thought he was the most likely person to give me the information I sought, namely, in what part of Western Australia my mate and I were likely to get a clearing contract of 200 acres or thereabouts. But up to now I have not had a reply from him to my letter, and as your name was freely mentioned in that article, I am now taking the liberty of approaching you and asking if you can supply me with the information I asked from the manager of the Agricultural Bank. Yours faithfully, O. Cooper.

P.S.—We are fully equipped for clearing and are prepared to go at once to any part of the State on receipt of definite information as to where clearing is to be got without fail.

Half an hour before I received that letter, a farmer from Muntadgin called upon me. He belongs to an old Dowerin family. He told me he could not possibly get British clearers, and he wanted my permission to employ Southern Europeans. I refused it. He argued about the acreage he could put in if he could get the clearing done, and the magnificent progress he would make. Still I refused. I advised him to go round and see if he could not get some British clearers, saying that if he failed in that mission he could come back and repeat his request. Half an hour later I received the letter I have just read. Through the Agricultural Bank I again got into touch with the farmer who had been unable to find British clearers, and passed the letter on to him. He seemed very disappointed. In our earlier conversation he had said he knew plenty of people not on the Bank who were getting their clearing done for 17s. per acre. When he came to me the second time, he said he had three naturalised Italians who would take on the clearing. Shortly afterwards I wrote to those clearers at Bruce Rock and furnished them with this farmer's address. This was my letter to them:—

Dear Sir,—In reply to yours of the 14th inst., Mr. — of Muntadgin called on me to-day and stated that he was unable to get clearers and asked for permission to employ Southern Europeans. The request was refused. I suggest you immediately get in touch with Mr. — as he stated he has a considerable amount of clearing to be done and is unable to get British and Australian clearers.

The clearers went all the way from Bruce Rock to Muntadgin to see this gentleman, and this is their reply to me:—

I beg to acknowledge your letter of the 14th inst., and in reply I am sending you the following information for your perusal and consideration. In accordance with your advice I wrote to Mr. — about some clearing he wished to have done. I waited a week, and as I received no reply to my letter my mate and I came up to Muntadgin yesterday morning to see Mr. — personally about it. On inquiry we were told that Mr. — seldom lived up here, but had a kind of manager looking after his place. We also found that he, too, was absent from the district for a few days. However, the local storekeeper and postmaster apparently knew Mr. —'s whereabouts, as he got into telephonic communication with him at Northam, and Mr. — distinctly told him that a mistake had been made and that I had been incorrectly informed, that he had all the clearers he required and all Southern Europeans at that, principally Jugo Slavs and Italians, which on inquiry I found to be correct. If that is the case why did Mr. Blank go to your office and tell you that he was unable to secure British or Australian clearers and ask you for permission to allow him to employ Southern Europeans instead, when in reality he already had them on his farm clearing his land. I might have mentioned that he told the storekeeper over the 'phone that they were all naturalised British subjects. All the same, why he should go to you with the request to employ them and seek your permission which you state was refused to him when he already had them, is a question I want to have answered at your earliest convenience. We are naturally both very sore over coming up here on a fool's errand as it appears to be to both of us. Trusting you will see into this matter and favour me with an early reply. In my opinion there was no necessity for him to go to you at all if his clearers were British subjects. I consider his story in a very doubtful light. Yours faithfully, O. Cooper.

Those people have written me since. I made inquiries and ascertained that the man in question had got his clearers three months before he saw me, and that not one of them was naturalised. The clearers who saw me, to show their bona fides, wrote me on the 7th of August as follows—

I beg to acknowledge your letter of the 2nd inst. and in reply I am taking the liberty of informing you that, since I wrote you that letter, we have secured a clearing contract of about 100 acres and five miles of fencing with the largest landholder in this (Muntadgin) district, so our journey up here after all was not in vain. But that does not excuse Mr. —'s rather contemptible action in doing what he did do; in fact I am at a loss to understand his action.

The Premier: Those clearers are a good type.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. I have had two or three such instances, and quite a number of instances in which I know southern Europeans were being employed. Let me point out that the Agricultural Bank rate is intended as an advance to help in the work of clearing so that the owner will be able to do the work himself. Most of the work of clearing used to be done by the settler, who was thus able to maintain himself out of the Agricultural Bank advance. The bank advance, however, is not the maximum. I have always had to pay a few shillings out of my own pocket for any clearing that I got done, and it is worth a few shillings more. Land before it is cleared is of no value at all, but when it is cleared it is worth, not 25s. or 30s. an acre, but £2 or £3 an acre. The man who does the clearing puts that value on the land. I want members to understand the position. I do not say that the instance I have quoted represents the general habit of farmers. I know there are plenty of farmers who are willing to do a fair thing, but in any community there can always be found some men who are out to exploit the cheapest possible labour. The southern Europeans cannot be blamed particularly because they are strangers in a foreign country. They are in the same position as we would be in if we went to their country—without friends and without any knowledge of the country. They have to take the first work offering and they have to take it at any price offering.

Mr. Teesdale: We would be a thundering sight more helpless in their country than they are here.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If we are going to accomplish anything under the migration agreement, we must give preference to our own men.

The Minister for Mines: They should not come into unfair competition with our men.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Whenever they have settled on the land they have become industrious people. A number of Italians have made good in this country and are respected and excellent farmers.

Mr. Davy: I do not like to see you dividing the community into bits.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not like it either, but what is the alternative?

The Premier: The principle reason is to deter the influx of aliens. If they find that it is difficult to get work, they will not come here in such numbers. Otherwise they will flood us out.

The Minister for Mines: We cannot absorb 3,000 a year.

The Premier: We either have to make it difficult for them or else stop British immigration. That is the position.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I wish to speak at some length regarding group settlement, and I hope members will bear with me because I have gone to pains to obtain important figures regarding the scheme. The reconstruction of the groups is practically complete. Though I say practically complete, there are still a few weak spots and it is very difficult to repair them, but a most drastic overhaul has taken place and despite the weak spots still prevailing, I think it can be said that the great majority of the locations are now soundly based. The advisory board that officiated prior to the new board being appointed recommended a reduction of group locations by approximately 516. I think the total number at that time was 2,240. Anyhow, the old board, after an experience of four or five years, recommended a reduction of 516 locations. Since the new board took office in October last, the greater portion of the board's time has been taken up with the work of reconstruction, although the board is giving considerable attention to administration and has endeavoured to get into closer contact with the settler, understand him personally, and understand his needs. I think members who have come into contact with the board as a result of their inquiries will agree with me that the board has given considerable attention to the work and has given very efficient service. The reconstruction has proved a very heavy task and members will realise how heavy it has been when I tell them how it has proceeded. At the inception of the group settlement scheme it was intended that only first-class land should be used, but owing to a conflict with forestry requirements, that could not be done, except in inaccessible localities. To meet the great demand in a limited time, a lot of light land was taken into occupation. Particularly was that the case on the Peel Estate, at the Abba River, South Busselton and at Northcliffe. A partial reconstruction was made at Abba River in 1926, but after extended trials and heavy manuring, the failure of the light land towards the end of 1926 led to a new classification. The reclassification was subsequently extended to all group areas, and even in the first-class country we found that the settlers were handicapped by having been allotted holdings that were too small. In

some of the first-class country the areas were as small as 60 acres and I do not know of any place in Australia, except in the very exceptional localities, established for 70, 80 or 90 years where time and cultivation and fertilisation have brought results, that 60 acres has yet been regarded as a sufficient area for dairy farming. The basis of the reclassification was to permit of each holding, when fully developed, carrying 20 cow units; that is, 20 cows and their progeny, as well as the necessary horses. The standards fixed by the board, after conference with the field officers, were as follows: Peel Estate, 110 acres clay land, alternatively 80 acres clay plus 60 acres minimum of second class, sandy high land rejected; Folly Flats, 70 acres of clay with high land; swamp holdings, that is, Richardson Swamp, 36 acres with high land. That is a particularly good swamp, and given proper working and with luck as regards the drainage, the area should make a very safe holding. At Abba River and South Busselton the standard fixed was 150 acres minimum sandy soil and clay sub-soil; Margaret-Augusta, 150 to 100 acres first-class timbered country or equivalent of first class taking two acres of second class as being equal to one acre of first class; Manjimup-Pemberton, 100 acres first class or equivalent to first class backed by second class; Northcliffe, 100 acres first class or equivalent (timbered), plain country largely rejected; Denmark, 100 acres first class or equivalent (timbered). The reclassification was carried out in each area by selected and specially instructed foremen and senior foremen, and their work was checked by the senior field supervisors, and in other cases by an officer of the Agricultural Bank who had had considerable experience of the locality, and by local farmers, as well as by members of the board. At the Peel Estate the classification was checked by the board and by Messrs. Max, Law and Briggs, both of whom are farmers in the district and are competent to give an opinion. Mr. Briggs is a dairy farmer on land adjoining the estate.

Hon. W. J. George: At Byford.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: At Abba River and South Busselton the classification was first made by Mr. Harold Carter, a well-known farmer of Marybrook, who has been farming there for many years, and later by the officers of the Group Settlement Board and checked by Mr. William Forrest, who has been farming all his life in the Busselton area. At Manjimup and Pemberton the classification was made by

the officers and checked by Mr. Wardle, formerly Agricultural Bank Inspector at Denmark, by the Group Settlement Board and by me. I accompanied the board in that district for three weeks. At Denmark the classification was checked by Mr. Wardle and the board. The member for Sussex (Mr. Barnard) last evening said the reclassification had resulted only in reshuffling. It has been a drastic reconstruction inasmuch as it amounts to a reduction of 820 locations out of a possible 2,442.

Mr. Mann: Just one-third.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Members will realise that the reduction amounts to roughly one-third. I am afraid that even yet there are quite a number of poor locations that will have to be considered for reasons which I need not state here. Members will realise that this work of reclassification and reconstruction has been very onerous. It could not be entered upon without a due sense of responsibility. When the board informed me of its opinion, I felt a bit panicky. I realised that whatever action was taken would have to be justified, and in the recess I spent a good deal of my time, day after day, tramping the locations with members of the board and considering the classifications. I must say that I consider the classifications generally sound. In one or two instances, for special reasons, I allowed certain holdings to be retained and put other holdings out. Sometimes there was a difference of opinion between the board and some of the gentlemen who checked the classification, particularly on the Peel Estate, but when I went out with them and we argued the question, there was not much difference between them. In one or two instances it was held an exceptional settler might make good on a certain rejected location. Unhappily we do not always get exceptional settlers; we have to depend upon the average. I think it is generally admitted in the country that the classification has been fairly sound, and if we cannot work out group settlement to a successful issue now, there is not much hope for the scheme at all. I did not want to occupy time by reading out what the reductions meant, but it might be interesting to have the particulars on record. The Peel Estate originally comprised 492 holdings. On that estate 227 locations have been completely abandoned, and 88 have been linked up with other locations in order

to strengthen them. There remain in the Peel Estate 177 locations, plus nine new locations that were taken into the estate.

Mr. Davy: Do you say that the abandoned locations are useless?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have given them a trial since 1922. On some of the locations, after cultivation and fertilisation year after year that was paid for by the State, we did not reap sufficient to pay for the cost of taking the crops off. That has been our experience and it could not continue indefinitely.

Hon. G. Taylor: What were the crops?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: All sorts of grasses were put in. I do not exaggerate when I say on some of the locations it would be practically impossible to establish any kind of dairy farm. The old board which had been brought into contact with the work for years, and had spent large sums of money on their country, in ploughing, sowing, fertilising and harvesting, could see no possibility of getting results. No matter what exception may be taken to the reconstruction, no Government which pursued any other course would be entitled to the confidence of the country.

Hon. W. J. George: On some of the land less came off in the way of fodder than had come off it before it was ploughed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the land had been left in its natural state better results would have been obtained from it. I think in some cases the cultivation did more injury than good.

Hon. G. Taylor: Was the ploughing too deep?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If you disturb the natural mulch on the top of sandy country and open it to the sun it does it no good. It might have been possible to grow a little in the way of clover on the top of the mulch without any cultivation.

Hon. W. J. George: If it had been ploughed for three inches instead of five, it would have been much better.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would never have been a successful proposition.

Mr. Davy: Was it a case of sand only on the 227 holdings?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Some of the land went salty, and in some cases the drains were faulty. We have had considerable difficulty in the matter of drainage. This year the country has been inundated again. It has been difficult to maintain it because water has been over it three or four times already this year. We have experienced the

greatest difficulty in doing anything with it.

Hon. G. Taylor: Was the drainage faulty?

Mr. Davy: If it can be said to have been drained.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Despite the huge expenditure, drainage has not been entirely successful on that area. Many of the locations were never suitable for dairy farming. Some time in the distant future they may come into occupation when there is a larger community to cater for and a larger market. In my opinion it is not a group settlement proposition. In the Busselton area the original holders comprised 923. Seventy-two of these have since been abandoned, 124 have been linked up, and there remain 727 locations. In addition we have taken up five bank propositions, which, added to the 727, makes a total of 732 in the Busselton-Margaret River-Karridale areas. In the Manjimup-Pemberton area there were 364 holdings, none of which has been abandoned. This is the brightest spot in the group settlement scheme. The country is beautiful, although there are difficulties there also. In some of the areas there is not sufficient summer land. It is high country. In the summer the rainfall for these locations is not as great as we would like it to be. Some of the settlers have not enough country on which to produce and carry their stock. In some areas the acreage is too small. We could not disturb the settlers without good reason. We could not push one settler out when he had spent so many years on his property and built it up, and hand the property over to his neighbour. We shall have to wait until some settlers vacate their holdings before the trouble can be overcome.

Hon. G. Taylor: You think some of the holdings are too small?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am sure of it. I do not say they will be too small in 20 years' time, but they are too small now. At Northcliffe the original holders numbered 374. There have been 135 abandonments. This was plain country on which we had never had success.

Mr. Davy: Do you mean that these holdings have been shared with the others?

The Premier: They have been abandoned altogether.

Mr. Wilson: They were no good.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Eighty-nine holdings have been linked up and there remain 150. In that district we have created 82 new holdings in new and good timber country, and we have removed the settlers



from abandoned holdings to those areas. We have removed the houses and everything else. At Hester the original holders numbered 44 and there have been no abandonments. Fourteen settlers have been linked up, leaving 30 on the estate. We are doing at Hester what Mr. Hugh Brockman recommended when the locality was first surveyed. An officer of the department, who is now dead, said the areas as subdivided were sufficient.

Hon. W. J. George: It was a matter of bad judgment.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In the Denmark area the original holders numbered 245. No blocks have been abandoned, but 40 have been linked up, leaving a total of 205. The position to-day is that out of the 2,442 original holdings, 434 have been completely abandoned, 386 linked up, and there remain 1,622, plus 144 new holdings which have been created in order to provide for the settlers who have been removed from their former locations.

Hon. W. J. George: Will you give anyone an opportunity to take up these blocks?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. That matter will, I hope, soon be determined by Cabinet.

The Premier: We will spend no more Government money upon them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. The total of group settlement locations to-day is 1,766. No doubt the House would like to hear the book value of the locations. There has been expended on the development of 438 abandoned holdings, on general development, buildings, etc., the sum of £970,000. Of this amount £233,000 has been spent on buildings. There may be some salvage there, for we may be able to get buyers for these buildings. I do not say all this is loss. The estimated sum that it is expected to recover from these buildings is £77,000, leaving a loss on the abandoned properties of £892,000. This does not include any losses that may be incurred in the necessary writing down on linked up holdings. Their development has cost about £2,000 per holding. Probably all of this sum will have to be written off. There have been 386 holdings linked up, resulting in an expenditure of approximately £772,000—£2,000 each. I think that expenditure will all have to be written down. I do not see how it is possible to carry on otherwise. The number of cottages removed from these abandoned holdings on to new locations

totals 86, which with the dairy buildings have cost £9,370 to move. In the Busselton area some of the locations have not been provided with cottages, and we are moving buildings there. There still remain 84 houses to be removed to provide for the new locations. The total cost of group settlement to date, including drainage, roads and railways is £7,830,000. The group expenditure including expenditure on stock and plant, etc., amounts to £5,523,000. The drainage amounts approximately to £717,000 and roads to £1,027,000. These roads provide for the development of other than group settlements. The railways which have cost £561,000 provide also for other than group settlement. Both the roads and the railways were, however, undertaken to serve group settlement. Members know that out of the total number of settlers previously on the Peel Estate, 492, we have only 177 left. The settlement there was first established in 1922, and completed in 1923. It has been for five years in occupation, and in some cases more than that. The expenditure on development of the retained holdings amounts to £570,775, and on the abandoned holdings the expenditure was £464,793. The expenditure on the 88 linked-up holdings is estimated at £176,000. The expenditure on the linked-up holdings plus the expenditure on the abandoned holdings, less anticipated salvage on buildings on the abandoned holdings valued at £31,000, amounts to £609,000. The linked-up holdings must be written down to practically nil. There may be a chance of selling some of the abandoned holdings on the Peel Estate. They are handy to the metropolitan area. There may be men working about Fremantle and following occupations there who will be prepared to farm some of these areas and make their homes there. In that way they may gradually be brought into use, and some of the capital expenditure upon them recovered. The expenditure on the retained holdings in Busselton, 727, amounted to £1,672,000, and the expenditure on the abandoned holdings to £195,000 less the anticipated recovery on buildings £19,000, making a total loss of £175,000. In the Northcliffe area the expenditure on the retained holdings, 150, amounted to £339,280, and the expenditure on the abandoned holdings, 135, amounted to £255,140. The expected recovery from the buildings is £18,000, leaving a loss on the groups of £236,000.

These are the outstanding points in the present position of group settlements. The area cleared on group settlements at the 30th June, 1928, was 96,386 acres. The area sown was 71,160 acres, the number of cottages erected was 2,362, dairy buildings erected numbered 1,920, the number of cows on groups was 6,181, and number of bulls 168, the number of heifers 3,675, horses 2,275, and the number of groups equipped with full plant was 108. The value of the equipment on the groups was £130,000. To hon. members that is evidence that a considerable amount of work has been done and that the groups ought to be progressing to the stage when we might well expect the settlers to be able to stand on their own feet. I am sorry the Leader of the Opposition is not present. The other evening he made a statement which I cannot permit to go unchallenged. Speaking on the Address-in-reply the hon. member said—

The difficulties in connection with group settlement are not the land, certainly not the climate, and quite as certainly not the men.

The obvious inference is that there is only one thing wrong with group settlement, and that is the administration. If the Leader of the Opposition were at least fair, I would not feel called upon to resent those remarks. I have no wish to do so. I look upon group settlement as being of such great importance that it ought to be outside the realm of party politics. I cannot help it if from time to time I have to state facts regarding the scheme. The facts may be resented, but they have to be faced. I have no doubt that when the time arrived—as it did arrive upon my becoming Minister for Lands—any Government would have had to face the facts which the present Government have had to face. If my predecessor, Mr. Angwin, had made the changes which I have made, it would have been said that he acted hastily, acted before giving the scheme a chance. He would not have been justified in doing it. But surely after all the years which have passed and after the great sums of money which have been expended, after we have done our utmost, despite mal-administration that there may have been—probably there was a good deal of it everywhere; it could not have been otherwise in a scheme of this kind—the position ought to be faced. The whole of the people of this country ought to be interested, and all parties ought to be interested, in seeing that Western Australia gets the best possible

results from the existing scheme. In passing I have to criticise the statements of the Leader of the Opposition, and I am going to do it more particularly in regard to the land. So far as the Peel Estate is concerned, hon. members can see the position for themselves. They can see the Government's difficulties there, and they can see the results from toil and expenditure over a number of years. In this connection let me say that I have nothing to complain of regarding my treatment as Minister by the member for Murray-Wellington (Hon. W. J. George). That hon. member has never desired to embarrass me. He has always been full of sympathy for the Government's difficulties, which he thoroughly appreciates. We have been perfectly frank in our relationship, and he entirely understands the Government's position with regard to group settlement. He does his duty towards his constituents, and uses his utmost efforts to help them in their difficulties. Portion of the Peel Estate land was condemned long ago. A Royal Commission, the members of which were Mr. J. J. Holmes, who knows that country and was born and bred there—

Mr. Teesdale: There is nothing he does not know, though.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Another member was Mr. Gray, M.L.C., who I will not say knows as much about land as Mr. Holmes does, but who is quite capable of forming a judgment. Then there was Mr. Lovekin, M.L.C., who is also quite capable of forming a judgment. There was also Mr. Rose, M.L.C., and nobody will deny that that gentleman has taken a keen interest in group settlement and is a worthy son of Western Australia. Those gentlemen condemned portion of the Peel Estate. Reporting on the 31st March, 1924, they referred to the utter absence of any scheme and stated that a lot of the land was entirely unsuitable. Hon. members need only read that report to see for themselves.

Hon. W. J. George: Was not that report sent to your Government?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; to Sir James Mitchell.

The Premier: We came in during the first week of April, I think.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Reading that report now, I do not think any hon. member would say that there is much wrong with it. Sir James Mitchell said there was

nothing wrong with the land. Unfortunately for him, he has to contend with people who are thoroughly unbiassed, people who have nothing to gain in the matter, and who never made charges from political motives. When Mr. Collier's Government first came into office, another Royal Commission of inquiry was appointed because the opinion was held, especially in the country, that all was not well with the scheme. The chairman of that Royal Commission was Mr. Walter Harper, and the other members were Hon. T. Moore, Mr. J. Lindsay, Mr. W. D. Johnson, and Mr. C. G. Latham. I do not think it will be contended that any one of these gentlemen was not competent to form an opinion.

The Premier: Individually and collectively a fine body of men.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I ask hon. members whether they would question the good faith of Mr. Walter Harper, who knew the country, had embarked his own capital in it, and had had much experience of it? Mr. Moore lived in that country for years, and he certainly is an honourable man and a man of sound judgment. Mr. Lindsay's capacity is well known in this House. Mr. W. D. Johnson's capacity is also well known, and Mr. Latham's farming experience is unquestionable. Those gentlemen reported, and reading their report to-day one finds their conclusions, as I suggested the other evening, to be absolutely correct.

Mr. Lindsay: They were too optimistic.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In some respects, yes. Their conclusions could not have been otherwise than correct, because no body of competent men who inquired into a subject for months as closely as these gentlemen did could fail to be influenced by what they had seen and heard. These gentlemen practically condemned much of the land. I do not think it is worth while my quoting from their report except the following words from their recommendations—

No. 2.—A considerable area of poor land not suitable for the purpose has been utilised for group settlement.

They stressed that, and they made this allowance for it—

It would appear that in the rush to provide land for the settlers—who at the time were arriving in considerable numbers—the officials have, in some instances, allowed land to be pressed into service which is much inferior to that hitherto utilised in Western Australia.

That was the position all right. There was no well thought out scheme. Settlers were coming here in thousands. Both the Royal Commissions have stressed the fact that settlers were arriving in such great numbers that they were put upon any kind of land merely in order that they might be settled somewhere or other. I am convinced that that haste has been largely responsible for the trouble up to date.

Hon. W. J. George: You must not forget that the matter was pressed by the British Government, who crowded the migrants on to us like one o'clock.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yet other persons gave their experience regarding the land. It was condemned by the old group advisory board, comprising Messrs. McLarty, Sutton and Hampshire. They condemned it after almost five years' experience. I know of no test superior to that experience. In condemning the land these gentlemen recommended a reduction of 516 locations. Let me give just one reference by Mr. William Forrest who checked part of the Busselton area. He said—

I have found on every location that I have inspected that the work of reclassifying has been carefully done, and although the first class areas in some cases appear small, there is really not a great difference between the first and the second class land. It is regrettable that so many of the original holdings have been found unsuitable as farms, and I would advise that in some cases, viz., the Abba River and South Busselton areas, some of the rejected land might be held for experimental purposes. I have been careful to inspect the most doubtful of the proposed holdings, and I feel sure that in every case, with the exception of Locations 2066 and 2067, on Group 49, the settler will have a fair and reasonable chance of making good. On Group 36 it is proposed to transfer 19 settlers, leaving only four. This land should not have been selected for settlement, and appears to me to be more suitable for growing pines . . . . The most disappointing feature of my inspection was that with the exception of the North Margaret groups, the almost total failure of the last sown subterranean clover.

Mr. William Forrest cannot be said to have any party bias so far as the present Government are concerned. He is a well-known resident of Busselton, a member of the old Forrest family, and perfectly competent to give an opinion. I selected men to check the country because I thought they understood the subject and had no prejudices either way. Their evidence does not support Sir James Mitchell's contention that

the land was suitable. There is still another gentleman who will be recognised as being thoroughly unbiassed, and who reported on all the Busselton areas. That is Mr. Harold Carter, of Marybrook. He has been long established there, and is a successful farmer. The old advisory board turned to him for advice. Either they asked the supervisor, Mr. Pullen, who was then in charge, to recommend someone to report, or else Mr. Pullen asked the board to recommend someone. On the 3rd February, 1927, Mr. Pullen wrote—

The disposal of the South Busselton holdings is of such vast importance to the State and so much is involved, that I do most earnestly urge that an officer and an outsider known not only to the department but also to the public be appointed to inspect the holdings and advise the committee. Mr. Harold Carter of Marybrook, Busselton, is a successful farmer, a man of good repute and sound judgment. His advice would be listened to with respect.

The old board appointed Mr. Carter, and Mr. Carter made an inspection. I shall quote from his introductory remarks—

I am not a financier like my brother Tom in Fremantle, only a hard working farmer, and when I get bogged with my wagon and horses. I try just one way and then another to get my wagon out without unloading. It is just the same with this group question and I would go on, linking one, two, three and four blocks if necessary, as it is no use trying to make a farmer unless he has some chance of success.

Mr. Carter, it will be seen, definitely stated at the outset the opinion which has been my opinion and policy. But as regards the land he goes on to state—

A mistake has been made, and the best thing to do is to find a remedy. I would suggest that the big drains be worked for all they are worth even if more men have to be put on, and get your ground drained before you attempt to grow grasses and clovers on water-logged ground.

The Leader of the Opposition contended the other evening that the expenditure was increasing all the time. If the expenditure has been extravagant, that result is largely due to the way in which the scheme was based. As I have pointed out here previously, the settlement of land before drainage had no result. All the time the land has been cultivated and sown and flooded out. Of course money was being wasted year after year, and naturally there was bound to be a great deal of expenditure but this loss can be laid at the door of the Admin-

istration responsible for the settlement. Mr. Carter again stated—

There are so many groups linked up with the drainage, and I cannot understand why all these men were put on the wet land before it was drained. The trouble now is to know what to do with them before making a crash.

That was a few months before I became Minister for Lands. He says, dealing with Group 48—

Here we have the same story. Every block I inspected shows a waste of time. This open wet country should never have had a penny spent on it. You can only link the locations together to get a return.

He further states, reporting on certain areas—

All the country is poor, sandy country and the cattle on Location 2310 are showing signs of cripples. When linked and drained, a man will have a chance to make a living.

Locations 2058 and 2059: On both pastures there is nothing but fog and there is no chance for a man to make a living until linked and drained.

Locations 2060 and 2061: Nothing but Yorkshire fog, and as soon as the maize and millet are consumed, the stock will have nothing to live on when it rains. The young grass will come up and the stock will have nothing but sand.

Group 44: The locations I inspected are all plain, carrying salt and should never have been taken up in the first place.

Locations 2131, etc. in group 40: I inspected these locations on horseback. This plain country is what a farmer calls "the dead finish." I could carry all the maize on my back. These holdings should be linked up; they are all so backward with the drains. The country was so wet last winter that the cattle are showing signs of cripples. It is nearly all plain country carrying salt. These plains when drained will grow couch and some day will be an asset, but to say the single blocks would carry a 20-cow unit is an impossibility. The holdings I inspected should never have been developed.

I shall not waste any more time in quoting these reports. They serve to give the lie direct to the statement that the land was suitable.

Mr. Teesdale: Is that at Busselton?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. The Leader of the Opposition said that the land was all right, the climate was all right and the settlers were all right. As I have already stated, the obvious inference was that the only thing wrong was the present administration. In consequence of that, I have shown the position from the reports. I have no given the House my mere denial. I have

quoted from the reports of men who are unbiassed and competent to express an opinion. They have reported that the group settlers have been placed on land that should never have been taken up in the first instance. Sir James Mitchell said a few nights ago—

My scheme has been departed from, mutilated and abandoned early.

What was the hon. member's scheme? That is something I have been endeavouring to find out. The Royal Commission appointed to investigate group settlement matters reported that there was no scheme. They looked for one, but could not find it.

Mr. Lindsay: They could not find anything of the sort

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I found on the file a letter from Sir James Mitchell to Mr. McLarty, as general manager of group settlement. I published that letter in some correspondence in the Press some time ago, but I will read it to hon. members. It is dated 9th August, 1922, and reads—

I have looked into costs of farm-making with Mr. Richardson and have discussed with Mr. Anketell his side of the work. Both are keen to keep costs down, and both are capable. Costs must be kept down, and every member must help. The fact that they must repay the costs must be made clear to them.

Sir James Mitchell went on to deal with sustenance for the group settlers, and duties on machinery, explosives and so on. Then the letter proceeded—

We must deal with open country and look for such land suitable for drainage, which is cheaper than clearing. We have been dealing with very heavily timbered country to date... We must endeavour to get our average cost down to £750.

This is how Sir James Mitchell arrived at that cost:—

Drainage, £100; buildings, £200; stock, £200; clearing and planting, £150; fencing, £50; and machinery, £50—total £750.

Mr. McLarty replied to that communication, and in the course of his minute he said—

The results achieved to date, especially as regards the work in the lower South-West, are not such as to lead one to believe that the settlement can be effected for anything like £750. As a matter of fact, the clearing costs are so excessive that in all probability the amount stated by you will be required for that work alone. The difficulty is accentuated by the fact that we are placing men on the land who are not only penniless but inexperienced as well. They have to be financed for every

penny of their requirements. The cost of everything is excessive, and it may be accepted that to-day it is costing nearly 100 per cent. more to settle a man than in pre-war times. It is therefore quite impossible to fully establish a man for £750 where any clearing has to be done. The heavy capitalisation involved in establishing a man is a very serious matter, but cannot be avoided.

Mr. McLarty proceeds to refer to open country, and said—

It would certainly be advisable to operate in this class of country, but I fear there is very little available near existing railways which is suitable for settlement. Practically all our land is more or less heavily timbered, and as a rule the plain country is of inferior quality. It is also invariably waterlogged and useless until drained. In my opinion it would be cheaper to buy partly improved land in the upper South-West than to clear green country in the heavily timbered lower South-West.

Mr. McLarty put himself right in that minute and he wrote from his experience. He knew that Sir James Mitchell's proposal was impossible, and he knew the danger of the sand-plain country. However, Sir James simply went straight ahead, and I assure the House that the present Government is not going to accept the responsibility for the waste over four or five years in the efforts made to develop country that was not capable of development under the scheme.

Mr. Davy: Is it not rather natural for us to ask you why, if you had all this information when you came into office, you still went on with it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I did not.

Mr. Davy: Well, your predecessor did.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That will not do! That is not the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition who still insists that the country is all right.

Mr. Davy: But that is my statement.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Leader of the Opposition said the land was all right, the climate was all right and the settlers were all right. If that is the position, it is reasonable to assume that had Sir James Mitchell remained in office—

The Premier: He would have gone on.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, indefinitely. With all due respect to that hon. gentleman, I say that if he had gone on indefinitely with the scheme, I do not think Western Australia would have been able to shoulder the burden.

Mr. Davy: You say that there was no scheme, but yet you have gone on with it!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have been in office for 12 months only.

Mr. Davy: But your predecessor went on with it.

The Premier: The land had to be tested. We could not put the settlers off straight away.

Mr. Davy: The fact remains that you say there was no scheme, but yet you went on with it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We went on with it as we found it, and that is what we are repairing now. There is no evidence apart from the letter I have quoted from the files, to indicate that there was any scheme at all. I am certainly a little resentful of the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition. I know that the Leader of the Opposition has been making that statement about the land, the climate and the settlers when he has been on the group settlements. He has also said that if he had been left in office, and if his scheme had been gone with, things would have been all right. That is not a fair way to represent the question. The Leader of the Opposition is responsible for all the waste and loss, more so than any other person. If he is fair, he will be fairly dealt with. We should not make group settlement matters the subject of party politics. It is too important; it is too big; the responsibility that has to be shouldered by the people of this State is too huge. Sir James Mitchell's programme provided that after 25 acres on a block had been cleared up, the settler would be established and off the scheme.

Hon. W. J. George: Are there no papers setting out that point? Is there not a pamphlet dealing with it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, there is a pamphlet relating to the Peel Estate.

Hon. W. J. George: I am not referring to that one. Is there not a pamphlet dealing with the scheme at its origin?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think so, and I can remember the statement in which that appeared. At any rate, Sir James Mitchell calculated that after 25 acres had been cleared, a settler would be established.

Hon. W. J. George: But Sir James Mitchell must have set that out somewhere.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He did.

Hon. W. J. George: Well, where was it set out?

Mr. Lindsay: That appears in his scheme.

Mr. Mann: Then it is on record; that is the point.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Certainly it is on record. It will be found in the proposition that was put up to the British

and Commonwealth Governments and it also appears in the agreement.

Mr. Lindsay: There is no doubt about that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the only scheme that I can find, plus the instructions to Mr. McLarty.

Mr. Lindsay: That is what we agreed to do for £1,000.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Everyone knows that if the settlers had been put off the scheme after 25 acres on their blocks had been cleaned up, there would not be one settler left to-day. I have already pointed out that 25 acres have produced nothing in many instances. There are some blocks where there are 100 acres cleared to-day and carrying but a few head of stock. Part of our troubles is that we have to find work for men who, if their progress had depended merely upon the clearing of the holdings and sowing them with pastures, should have been established long ago. On the contrary, they have arrived at a stage when they find that their blocks cannot produce sufficient to sustain them and they have to look for work elsewhere. Let hon. members consider the position of the Peel Estate. There are some settlers there with 15 cows and large acreages cleared. Yet they cannot live on the holdings. Only this week the supervisor suggested that those men should be employed cutting firewood to enable them to keep going.

Mr. Lindsay: And they have 15 cows!

Mr. Mann: Do you not find that the personal equation has something to do with it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But the Leader of the Opposition said that the men are all right.

Mr. Mann: But do you not find that what I suggest does apply?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not attempting to discuss that phase.

Mr. Davy: But I thought you said you were going to discuss this matter as a non-party question! Surely that is a fair question!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am replying to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition regarding the land. I say that there is no person in Western Australia who could make a success of some of the group settlement areas.

Mr. Lindsay: It could not be done.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will not blame any individual until his holding is such that it will give him a chance. That is when the personal equation will come in.

Mr. Davy: What is your explanation regarding the men who have 15 cows?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Probably some of their holdings have been flooded. Their pastures may have been destroyed. As the member for Murray-Wellington (Hon. W. J. George) knows, even before the holdings were flooded, the men on the Peel Estate were telling us that they could not possibly make a living on their holdings. They made requests to the Government for employment that would give them a few extra pounds.

Hon. W. J. George: If they have 15 cows, and merely want a little help, they will not chuck up their holdings.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They should not do so. They pay no rent and no interest, except on the cost of stock and equipment. They are relieved from the payment of interest on the capital cost of the holding and any man in that position with 15 cows would be foolish to throw up his holding at the first hurdle. If settlers in the early days had done that, there would be no settlement in this country at all. If the settlers have any vision, they must know that the longer they hold on, the better their prospects will be and that it will be to their advantage to hold on. Sir James Mitchell said in the proposal that he submitted to the British Government, that after 25 acres had been cleared and a house erected, and the equipment provided, the farm was then in the producing stage. But much of it had produced nothing. The country in many cases has been too poor or too wet to respond. For years it was undrained and waterlogged. Seed and manure were put into the ground and washed out again, season after season. This occurred when the Leader of the Opposition was in office. Yet he calmly says he cannot take the blame for the millions expended since he left office. If one Government create settlement on impossible conditions, and another party has to come in after them and take over the work, how ridiculous to say that the Government which inaugurated the scheme is not responsible for disasters as a result of the initial mistakes in settlement. I do not propose to accept such responsibility. My difficulties in this scheme are sufficiently great, without there being thrust upon me a responsibility not of my own making. In addition to other troubles, settlers have been leaving all the time. It must be remembered that there have been 4,344 settlers on 2,400 locations.

The scheme was being utilised as an immigration system. When one settler left, a new and unexperienced settler was put in his place. It was the same old thing over and over again. Many of the settlers had never been taught. They had no experience. In a scheme of this character, largely experimental, there must necessarily have been a great deal of waste and extravagance. It could not be otherwise, for new settlers have to be taught and sustained and trained to their work. I want to say also that for successive years the areas have been re-ploughed, re-sown and re-fertilised, and still we were not able to take enough off it for paying for the cost of harvesting. I said the other night that Sir James Mitchell had never criticised Mr. Angwin's administration. I have had "Hansard" searched over all the period that Mr. Angwin was administering the group settlements, and I can find no evidence of Sir James Mitchell ever criticising Mr. Angwin's methods. If he had done so it would have been decidedly ungenerous; for Mr. Angwin was always generous to Sir James Mitchell, and when he took on the group settlement scheme he used his best endeavours to make of it a success. So although Mr. Angwin is 15,000 miles away, I do not think any member of the House will agree with Sir James Mitchell if he attempts to criticise Mr. Angwin's administration. Sir James Mitchell said the original scheme was abandoned, and a much more expensive one adopted. I have heard that statement repeated on the group settlements also. Sir James Mitchell said he had never been invited to visit the group settlements. Yet I know that he spent a considerable time there. But I have never heard of any statements he made down there to assist me; rather were the statements he made calculated to embarrass me. I discovered that he had been to Manjimup and Northcliffe and Busselton, but I found no evidence of any attempt on his part to help me. On the other hand I found a lot of statements circulated about the ridiculous and foolish things we were doing, and to the effect that his original scheme had been departed from. I have inquired into some of the statements made by him and by his supporters, statements that were not in the slightest degree justified.

Mr. Davy: There is no occasion to attack him in his absence for remarks that others have made.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I said he had been down to the group settlements.

Mr. Davy: You also said you discovered he had been there. Anyone would think he had sneaked down there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He said he had never been invited to the group settlements. I travelled through the Manjimup area after he had been down there, and I found that he was not out to help me, but rather to embarrass me.

Mr. Teesdale: Nobody could say that he is very aggressive or offensive.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He has shown considerable resentment in this business. I do not know why. In my first speech after becoming Minister for Lands I made no attack whatever on him. I felt that he could afford to be perfectly philosophical. He could say, "I am not in office. Nobody will blame me. It is my scheme, but these people in the meantime will have to take all the blame. It cannot react on me. Years hence, when the scheme is successful, my name will be associated with it, and I shall get all the credit." He could be perfectly philosophical about the position. If he wants to help me, I shall be glad to have his help. But he has shown considerable resentment. This Government have attempted to reconstruct the scheme, and I am sure that if Sir James Mitchell were in office now he, too, would find it necessary to reconstruct it.

Mr. Teesdale: He is the last man to accuse of being offensive. It is against his very nature. He has lost his position through not being aggressive or insulting enough.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: What would the hon. member say if he were administering the department and the originator of the scheme declared to him "The land is all right; the settler is all right; the climate is all right." The only interpretation is that, obviously, the administration is all wrong.

Mr. Teesdale: I would not take it to reflect on the administration. He was always optimistic about everything.

Mr. Davy: Anyhow, there have been a lot of mistakes in the administration; not by Ministers, but by subordinate administrators.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but why say the land was all right?

The Premier: The basic difficulty underlying the failure is the land.

Mr. Davy: Did Sir James Mitchell select the land?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Royal Commission in its report states that

because of the great number of settlers coming to this country in haste, there was no option but to put them on this land. Even Mr. Brockman said he never would have put them on some of the land had there been time to get other land. Sir James Mitchell has said the original scheme was abandoned and a much more expensive one adopted. He also said that up to the 30th June, 1924, when he left office £1,050,000 had been spent, and that between June, 1924, and June, 1927, £3,645,000 was spent. What are the facts? Up to the 30th June, 1924, £1,213,000 was spent, and up to the 30th June, 1927, £4,627,000 was spent. Sir James Mitchell stated in the "West Australian" that up to the 7th April, 1924, less than a million pounds was expended on group blocks, and that a great deal of the work necessary to open up the groups had been done. What are the facts? When Sir James Mitchell left office the area cleared was 21,000 acres. I have not the figures showing how much was cleared when Mr. Angwin left office, but in this last year the area cleared was 96,386 acres, or four times as much as when Sir James Mitchell left office. When Sir James Mitchell left office the area sown was 11,900 acres, and when Mr. Angwin left office it was 60,621 acres, or five times as much. When Sir James Mitchell left office 1,140 cottages had been erected, and when Mr. Angwin left office the number had increased to 2,132, or twice as many. When Sir James Mitchell left office no dairy buildings had been erected, but when Mr. Angwin left office 1,811 of these structures were in position. When Sir James Mitchell left office only 20 cows were on the groups, but when Mr. Angwin left office there were 6,402 cows on the groups and 990 unallotted. When Sir James Mitchell left office there were no bulls on the groups, nor were there any heifers, but when Mr. Angwin left office there were 186 bulls on the groups, 54 unallotted, 3,464 heifers on the groups, and 421 unallotted. When Sir James Mitchell left office no horses had been purchased for the settlers, but when Mr. Angwin left office 2,289 horses had been purchased.

Hon. W. J. George: There were horses on the Peel Estate when Sir James Mitchell left office.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But they were Government horses. No horses had been purchased for the settlers. When Sir James Mitchell left office, no groups had been equipped with



plant, but at June, 1928, the value of equipment on the groups was £130,000. Yet Sir James Mitchell said that much of the work had been done. The figures I have quoted show that the work had hardly been started. However, it is futile to make comparisons between the expenditure up to the time Sir James Mitchell left office and the expenditure when Mr. Angwin left office, for Mr. Angwin's administration repeatedly had to plough and sow the area cleared when Sir James Mitchell left office. The work had to be done over and over again. Now Sir James Mitchell says, "We can go into the history of group settlement later on, and we can then apportion the blame." That is what makes me resentful, for the place in which to apportion the blame, if the blame must be apportioned, is now and in this House. I am prepared to stand here and take my responsibility, but it is unfair for any member to say we can go into the history of group settlement later on, and we can then apportion the blame, for he is shirking the responsibility if he does not apportion the blame here now. He can do it either in this House or in the other House. But I am sure he proposes to apportion the blame at the general elections, in the heat of the conflict, when the appeal is made to prejudice and party politics. If the hon. member wants to apportion the blame, he can move a motion here, for this House is where the blame should be apportioned. This is the place where it ought to be discussed.

Hon. G. Taylor: You are not issuing a challenge, are you?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am taking up Sir James Mitchell's challenge. I know what will be done: in a general election, in the heat of party conflict and prejudice, Sir James Mitchell will say, "It is not my scheme; they spoilt my scheme."

Mr. Teesdale: You will not be missing when that is going on.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But I will not have the Press with me.

Mr. Teesdale: Oh, won't you? Oh, jumping Moses, the Press!

Mr. Davy: If there is one man who has a reputation for being politically fair, it is Sir James Mitchell.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Leader of the Opposition spoke of apportioning the blame, and in his speech he did his best to put the blame on the present administration.

Mr. Davy: But he was defending himself.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He has never been attacked.

Mr. Davy: Of course he has.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Leader of the Opposition is the only speaker who has made such statements in the House, and I am not going to allow it to go out to the country that if his scheme had been carried on it would have been all right, but that we have destroyed it. The Leader of the Opposition also said—

I understand that £698 was spent on each group settler last year, and I do not think any of them received £200 worth. I want to know from the Minister where the money has gone.

I shall give the hon. member the facts. I have had the expenditure on group settlement dissected for the year ended the 30th June, 1927. Instead of the expenditure per group settler being £698, it was £615. The Leader of the Opposition went on to say that he had seen one account the other day and the man was charged £308 for overhead expenses—supervision, really. The £615 was not spent on the settler in the way of being actually handed to him. It was spent on the scheme and charged to the scheme. The interest on the scheme amounted to £233,345, which was £114 per settler. The sustenance to the settler and his sons amounted to £528,000, or £258 per settler. The expenditure on cottages erected amounted to £92,340, or £45 per settler: the expenditure for stock and plant was £81,173, or £40 per settler: while the average per settler for seed and manure was £33 and for foremen's wages, fodder, freights, general wages, carting, tools and plant, supervision and sundries it was £91. The Leader of the Opposition knows perfectly well that the £698 quoted by him—the amount was incorrect because it was £615—was not money paid to the settler. He understood the facts and could have obtained the correct figures easily. The amount included the whole of the expenditure on group settlement and was the average per settler. The Leader of the Opposition stated that he had seen one account in which the man was charged £308 for overhead expenses—supervision really. I questioned whether he was able to obtain such information, but I do remember that a settler named Richmond from Manjimup came to the board and asked for particulars of his capitalisation. The board asked me whether the particulars should be supplied, and I replied, "Certainly." I am sure those are

the figures that Sir James Mitchell saw, because he was at Manjimup a while ago and the man concerned is in that locality. There is no charge shown for supervision only. Mr. Richmond is on Group 10 and has a very fine location. If there was one location which struck me as being really splendid, it was this one, and Mr. Richmond should feel happily placed in group settlement. The total expenditure on his block amounts to £2,431 12s. 7d. and it is made up of sustenance, which he received personally, £516; explosives used in the development of his property, £103; engine pulling, £46; buildings, including cottage and dairy, £298; netting, £32; wire, £59; seed, £61; manure, £69; overhead, £308 14s. 1d.; contract, £487; proportion of interest, £438. Sir James Mitchell quoted the exact figure of £308.

Hon. W. J. George: What is the overhead?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Mr. Richmond could have got from the department just what the overhead expenses meant. Here are the items—Fodder supplies for group horses, £96 1s. 8d.; freights, £10 13s. 4d.; general wages, £31 15s. 4d.; horse hire, £17 11s.; tools and plant, £22 6s. 5d.; sundries, £19 8s. 4d.; supervision, £56 1s. 5d. The other night, however, Sir James Mitchell said that supervision had amounted to £308.

Mr. Teesdale: Would the department call those items overhead expenses?

Mr. Davy: "Overhead" is a most extraordinary name to give all those items.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It may be.

Mr. Davy: Well, it is.

Mr. Teesdale: And wages paid to himself?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; general wages charged against the groups. Even so Mr. Richmond could have asked the accountant to tell him what the overhead expenses consisted of.

Hon. W. J. George: But overhead charges usually mean head office charges.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The remaining items include insurance £13, and potato crop, oats, maize, pigs etc., bring the total to £308.

Mr. Teesdale: It is absurd to include those in overhead charges.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not concerned with that; I am concerned about the facts.

Mr. Davy: You cannot complain if people are misled by such items.

Mr. Teesdale: You would be misled, too.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The statement did not say, "supervision."

Mr. Davy: You said, "overhead," which means the same thing.

Mr. Teesdale: And you included wages paid to himself.

Hon. W. J. George: If those particulars had been given to the settlers there would not be the discontent that exists to-day.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Every settler who has asked for a statement has received it.

Hon. W. J. George:; But if the statement showed £308 overhead, he would take it as being an office charge.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: As a matter of fact, Mr. Richmond called at the office and got all he asked for. All he had to do was to ask the accountant what the overhead cost included. He may have got the particulars; I am not aware that he did not.

Hon. W. J. George:; I do not think he did, because I have had a similar complaint myself.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When members realise the facts, they will find that there is not much ground for the complaint.

Mr. Lindsay: You always show the figures in that way. I myself have experienced trouble on the same account.

Hon. W. J. George: It is quite right that I have got similar particulars myself, as you know.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I would not be surprised if supervision had been more costly. The scheme largely was experimental, the country was experimental, the development was largely experimental. The administration was blindly groping in the dark. There was tremendous expenditure on drainage, which has not yet been successful. If members take those factors together, unsuitable country and unprofitable experiments, and the fact that no results have been obtained year after year, they must realise that the expenditure would be great. My only surprise is that the supervision has not been more costly. The Leader of the Opposition also said that everything was all

right when he left office. From that statement one would imagine that there was general contentment among the group settlers. Yet during the short time he was in office no fewer than 686 settlers left the groups. There was no reason for their leaving; there was no problem; they were largely on sustenance.

The Premier: Entirely.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. Yet everything was so satisfactory that 686 settlers left the groups during the short period that Sir James Mitchell continued in office after initiating the scheme.

Hon. W. J. George: A large number might have found that they were not suited for the work.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If that is so, how can the Leader of the Opposition contend that the men were all right? If the men were all right, how came 686 to leave?

Hon. G. Taylor: After all those who were dissatisfied had left, there were not many remaining to make a noise.

Mr. Lindsay: More were always arriving to take their places.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Settlers have been leaving the groups every month.

Hon. G. Taylor: They will continue to do so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There have been 4,344 settlers on the groups and some thousands have left. Unhappily a fair number of the unemployed in Perth are ex-group settlers, and I have quite a number of applications from men who are desirous of getting back on to the groups again. A considerable number left the groups during Mr. Angwin's administration, a total of 1,554, about the same quota annually that left while Sir James Mitchell was in office. During last year 407 left the groups. Settlers are always leaving. Some find that the work does not suit them; some are dissatisfied with the conditions. That will continue until the scheme is soundly based and until settlers are content to stick to it and work out their own destiny. The Leader of the Opposition also said that settlers have not got sufficient stock. What has been the experience of the past? We have been repossessing stock year after year. Last year we repossessed on the Peel Estate alone many head of stock. A settler can carry a fair number of stock for a few months while the feed is good, and then we have had to

repossess them; otherwise the stock would die of starvation.

Hon. W. J. George: You must either do that or supply fodder.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes; we have repossessed the stock. The number of stock repossessed from the Peel Estate alone amounts to 1,402 cows and 807 heifers. We have a large number of stock in the various depots at present. We have depots at Brunswick, Upper Capel, Maranalgo and Avondale, and we have a few head of stock on the coasthills of the Peel Estate also. The member for Sussex (Mr. Barnard) said last evening that we had put stock on to holdings after they had been abandoned. He tried to convey the impression that such locations should not have been abandoned because stock was put on them afterwards. Though those locations would not maintain a settler, we would be stupid if we did not utilise the feed on them when it was available. Consequently we utilised them in that way. We have taken stock from one holding to another to eat up the feed as they went along, but that does not indicate that a location is suitable for a settler. I have no doubt that stock were put on much of the country too early.

Mr. Lindsay: That is quite correct.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: And that did the scheme no good. This year the officials report that the settlers require a fair number of stock. They have said that almost every year. They have said the settlers will want a lot of stock this spring, but experience has shown that beyond the flush period of the spring and early summer they have not carried the stock. It might be said that we have not put on all the stock that could be carried, but I think common sense indicates that we ought to have regard for the future, and before we start pushing stock on to a settler we ought to be satisfied that his holding can carry them. If we give a settler stock that his holding cannot carry, the stock must deteriorate from starvation. We should wait until the feed grows and until there is sufficient feed to carry the stock the whole year. The holding should not be stocked beyond its capacity. More stock may be carried this spring. But we know that we should not purchase cattle and put them upon these areas until we are sure they can carry stock, otherwise we shall have to repossess the cattle and depasture them at the expense of the State at the vari-

ous depots. As a result of starvation in the past, the progeny of high-class bulls turns out to be of no account at all. We have sown large areas of country every year, but have not had the anticipated results. Up to last year 22,480 acres of land were sown with grasses on the Peel Estate. Up to this year on the retained holdings we have sown 14,096 acres, and of this only 7,000 acres have produced pastures, while 7,000 acres have failed. I cannot hope, as a result of these failures, that the Peel Estate will carry many more stock. The same thing has happened to a lesser extent this year in the Margaret River district. Last year, much of the subterranean clover failed. It certainly germinated but went yellow and died off. We have been trying to discover the reason for this. It may be due to the acid in the soil, consequent upon the growth of the heavy timber that has been carried for centuries. When I was at Busselton on the last occasion the supervisor told me that the subterranean clover again showed signs of failure. Can we be held responsible for this expenditure on an endeavour to secure pastures that are absolutely necessary if the development is to proceed, but which results in nothing? Until we elucidate the problems in this experimental country, no one has a right to say that the attempts made to get pasture have resulted in extravagant expenditure.

Hon. W. J. George: Subterranean clover is growing magnificently at Serpentine on land of the same quality as the Peel Estate land.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not of the same quality as some of the Peel Estate land. It has grown magnificently on some of the areas on the Peel Estate, and were it not for the frequent floodings we ought to have been able to get through. The settler would thus have been able to stand on his own resources, and with the proximity to markets to have been able to make a living. On some of the holdings which have been completely developed the settlers cannot be economically employed and they must work elsewhere in order to obtain a living. On the Peel Estate there is at least amongst other highly developed locations one area of 80 acres all cleaned up, another of 150 acres and another of 136 acres. We have thus got far beyond the 25-acre stage, and yet these settlers are able to carry only from four to seven cows. On one area of 160 acres only two cows are being carried, and on another of 130 only two cows.

Mr. Davy: Is that all this land is able to carry?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The supervisor came to me last March and said that the stockman was repossessing stock on the Peel Estate. I asked if they could not possibly be carried and he replied that he did not think so. I saw the foreman on the following Sunday, and he took me round and gave the reasons why the stock should be repossessed. He explained to me that if we did not repossess the stock very shortly, we would have to repossess starving stock, feed them, and attempt to build their condition up again.

Mr. Davy: Do you mean that 100 acres laid down in pasture will not feed two head of cattle?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: These are the facts as given to me.

Hon. G. Taylor: Then the carrying capacity is two beasts to 100 acres?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. There has been a great deal of flooding, and some of the grasses have never germinated. I have had it put up to me that there are so many hundreds of acres of pasture sown on the Peel Estate. The acreage is there all right, but there has been no pasture. It has either been flooded out or in many cases the seed has never germinated. In the circumstances it is not to be wondered at that there has been a great amount of expenditure, which could not be avoided. The causes are to some extent the flooding of the pastures in the winter months, and the subsequent failure of the pastures. These groups were established between September, 1922, and August, 1923.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is this the first year when they have been flooded.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have had them flooded every year.

The Premier: The flooding has been very bad this year.

Mr. Teesdale: I mean since the beginning.

The Premier: The land is flooded every year. The drainage is not a success.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: One of our best areas is at Manjimup. The holdings are small and some fully developed, but the pastures are not sufficient as yet to carry 15 cows to the holding. Only in exceptional areas is it possible to establish pastures in one or two years. It takes time to do that, and these have to be built up over a term of years. I never thought we should be able

to establish the pastures in three or four years. We cannot put stock upon these areas before the country can maintain them.

The Premier: They will eat out the pastures.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would be a retrograde policy to stock the holdings before they were ready. Members will perhaps be able now to appreciate some of the difficulties confronting the administration of the scheme. The drainage at the Peel estate has cost in the vicinity of half a million pounds.

Mr. Teesdale: Have the engineers explained the defects which have occurred?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hydraulic engineer has sent in a report to the Engineer-in-Chief, and the file came under my notice a few days ago. The engineers now suggest a new scheme.

The Premier: They require another large sum of money.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They want £130,000.

The Premier: They asked me last year for £25,000 a year for maintenance.

Mr. Davy: What have you done with the engineers who devised this scheme?

The Premier: They have gone, too. The Lord save Governments from engineers.

Mr. Teesdale: No one could hold the Premier responsible for the drainage. That is far removed from his sphere.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Public Works Department have suggested a new scheme to cost £130,000.

Hon. G. Taylor: And the Treasurer is still smiling.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This scheme is one for the diversion of the water in a westerly direction, towards the ocean, instead of south towards Mandurah.

Hon. W. J. George: Are they going to pump the water into the sea?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Neither the number of holdings nor the quality of the land I am afraid justifies such an expenditure.

Mr. Mann: At the present time.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the problem. I do not know if the Treasurer would like to find £130,000 in addition to the half million already expended.

The Premier: We were assured that the previous expenditure was the last word. Now there is more than another £100,000

wanted. The engineers are asking for £25,000 a year for the maintenance of the drains alone.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have had to remove some of the settlers because of the lack of drainage. It is rather hopeless to expect people to make a living in places where they are flooded out year after year. I am hopeful that the drainage at Russelton will prove very successful. It will improve the country very much. The original cost was estimated at £205,000. The expenditure to date has been only £140,000 and the estimated cost to complete the scheme is £19,000. We are draining some more country down there. Undoubtedly this drainage will add to the capital cost of the groups, and I do not think they will carry it. Other settlers will also get an advantage from the drainage of the land.

Hon. G. Taylor: But they are not paying for it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was proposed that there should be a drainage scheme for Northcliffe, but that area was abandoned. The country was under water for a greater part of the year. It has been said that the rebate or interest concession will recoup us for all losses on group settlement. I have had an estimate made, and I think members should understand the position. For the first five years interest is payable at 1 per cent. by the State, and for the next five years at one-third of the interest rate. There are 1,685 farms which carry an interest concession up to £1,000, but on all expenditure in excess of £1,000 the whole interest must be borne by the State. Eighty-one farms carry an interest concession on £1,500, and the total expenditure on which the interest concession will be given is £1,806,000. The total interest concession over the 10 years will amount to £700,000. In addition there is a concession for losses on stock, but this applies only to losses of stock on holdings held by migrants. A sum of £125 per migrant is allowed provided the amount is not in a greater proportion than £20,000 for every £750,000 expended. We anticipate that on the 1,623 migrants the State will get a total interest concession for loss of stock and equipment amounting to £202,875. The total interest concession would therefore amount to £922,891.

The Premier: Spread over the 10 years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. On all the expenditure over £1,000, and £1,500 per location (and the expenditure far ex-

ceeds that amount), the State has to carry the full responsibility and find the full rate of interest.

The Premier: That explains a good deal regarding the interest figures the member for West Perth was speaking about. On four-fifths of the money we pay the full rate of interest, not the lower rate.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: On the Peel Estate the expenditure for 185 settlers, including everything, amounts to £2,134,000. I cannot say when that expenditure will cease. Much depends upon whether we get the production and satisfactory drainage. The Leader of the Opposition criticised the premiums paid by the group settlement scheme under the Workers' Compensation Act as being excessive.

Mr. Davy: He said they looked a bit excessive.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will quote his reference—

The Auditor General reports that for workers' compensation all Government departments pay £37,395 and State trading concerns £9,962, while group settlements pay £15,476. Probably there are 2,000 group settlers and I suppose they earn £200 a year each, which would give a total of £400,000. The payment to the Workers' Compensation Act Fund on account of group settlements means that provision has been made at the rate of about four per cent. Surely there is something wrong in that.

Well, I will give the facts. The payment of £15,476 for the year 1926-27, represented as constituting a payment of four per cent. on £400,000, does not represent the premium for the year at all, but includes arrears for the previous year. The payment made for 1925-26 was £5,136, and for 1926-27, £15,476, or an average for the two years of £10,306. Advances to settlers and allowances for sustenance approximate £500,000 annually for these years. So the premium rate was two per cent. At first the rate per settler was £4, which increased in July of 1926 to £5. In 1927-28 the premium per settler was increased to £8, and was also charged in respect of settlers' sons employed. The total premiums for 1927-28 were £11,234 on advances for sustenance of £370,000—equal to 3 per cent. The payments by the Government Actuary for 1927-28 totalled £14,000.

The Premier: The rate, moreover, was lower than that charged by the companies.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Until the reconstruction was completed, the policy of putting a settler on his own responsibility could not be attempted. It was impossible

to expect results where the pastures had failed. It would be utterly wrong to blame the settler for conditions on his holding over which he had no control. But the reconstruction has to a great extent resulted in the abandonment of poor country, and by linking up the settler has got better conditions. If, as has been said by Sir James Mitchell, the country was all right in the past, how much better is the settler situated when the poorer country has been eliminated! He ought to be on a much better wicket then. I said in my opening remarks that some of the areas were yet rather small, but I am sure the settlers are now on a sounder basis than they have ever been. Having done so much for the settler, we are now entitled to look to the settler to do something for himself. Up to date the State has paid for every farming operation on the groups. Now that the settler has a larger acreage and his country is capable of carrying additional stock, we think farming operations should be paid for by the settler. Therefore, it is proposed at an early date to capitalise the holdings, and this is a matter which may yet come before Parliament. Until the holding is capitalised, no settler will be content to carry on upon his own responsibility; he will want to know what burden he is going to carry. Naturally I anticipate that there will have to be some considerable writing down. When the settler carries ten cows, he will be off the scheme and will have to finance his own farming operations. Contracts will be given to increase the security under Agricultural Bank conditions; but whether they will be given by the Agricultural Bank or by the Board of Control has yet to be determined. The department will, wherever possible, assist the settler with stock until he reaches the 15-cow stage; and it is hoped that a considerable number will reach the 10-cow stage this spring. On 35 holdings 15 cows are now being carried, and on 93 holdings ten cows. We are hopeful that this coming spring 168 holdings will carry 15 cows, and 283 holdings ten cows. Thus, if our hopes are realised, the scheme ought to be making rapid progress towards ultimate success. I hope that that desirability is in sight. I do not contemplate that the change to be effected will be accomplished without difficulty. I know it is possible that some settlers will say that they cannot live under those conditions. No doubt the statement will then be made that those settlers have been forced off their holdings by the administration. However, I think everybody in the country recog-

nises that the position must be faced, and that after all these years something should be done to establish the settlers permanently. The present system of the Government paying for everything has, in my opinion, been demoralising. It has not been good for the settler and has not been good for the country. In the development of the new territory which is to be opened up we hope to avoid the mistakes of the past. I feel convinced that if the group settlers face the future with a good heart, as settlers have hitherto done in Australia, they will come through in a few years with fine homes and established properties. They have had unstinted support from the taxpayer; they have had the sustained interest and sympathy of all Governments; they have had what the early settlers did not have, a market provided at their doors. It is my opinion that whilst probably some settlers will leave the groups, still a great number will welcome the change. Some have written to me expressing gratification at the proposed change, and those settlers who show a proper spirit will have the support of the administration and of Parliament also. I shall conclude my remarks by a reference to the criticisms uttered by the member for Sussex (Mr. Barnard) last night. The hon. member made a few complaints, all of which I have heard before. There is a reasonable explanation for every one of them. The hon. member stated that one settler with a hundred acres cleared had only sufficient pasture to carry a few cows and was afraid he would not be able to carry on. Regarding this settler Mr. Barnard said the settler has been told that if he cannot do so, he will have to leave the block. I maintain that if that man's block had been worked, and pasture provided and less clearing done, the capitalisation of the block would not have been so heavy and the man would be in a much better position to-day. It is said that while a lot of money has been spent, much has been wasted. It may be so; I do not know what had been done in the past but one hundred acres were cleared, and why? Because no acreage previously cleared would maintain the settler. To maintain the settler until the grasses grew he had been provided with more clearing. That, I think, is the only answer to the criticism. A hundred acres will not sustain the settler, so what are we to do? Either he must look for some other opportunity, or more money must be wasted, to use the expression of

Mr. Barnard, in additional clearing. That settler has 102 acres cleared, and he has made good earnings. I think I know the gentleman. I believe I have called at his place, where he had a nice home and a very nice little motor car.

Mr. Lindsay: Piece workers at Busselton have made up to £70 in a month.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They made big money on contracts. However, that could not go on indefinitely. Anyhow, if I give ear to the criticism of the member for Sussex, I must not go on letting the settler waste more money on clearing land. The settler must give his attention now to farming. The other case is the case of Mr. Teale. It was stated by the member for Sussex that Mr. Teale was forced off his block, though making considerable progress; and the hon. member stated that he had condemned Mr. Teale's holding. He mentioned the case as evidence that the reclassification was unsatisfactory. What are the facts? Mr. Teale's holding was condemned. He is a very good farmer, one of the best farmers I have met in this group country. However, he had three holdings, I think, and they are all condemned. He was transferred to Karidale, and after he got there he was told by some people that the place was no good. So he returned to his former location, despite the wishes of the administration. A lot of money has been spent on his property—I think over £4,000—with very little result. The department are not disposed to spend any more money on it. When he came back we said in effect to him, "Mr. Teale, that is your holding, which we have developed far beyond anything ever contemplated when the scheme was launched. You say it is all right. We say, 'Very well, go on,' but we propose to expend no more money on it." We gave him the alternative. Mr. Teale got no further assistance. Early in the year Mr. Mann, M.L.C., came to see the board about Mr. Teale's position. He said Mr. Teale had a fine block, with a fine crop of maize, a fine hay stack, and had made great progress on the place. When I saw Mr. Teale's land, I was not impressed by it. He said in a letter to Mr. Mann that from cream he had made £31 in one year, £61 the next year, and £150 4s. 8d. the following year. I made it my business to see Mr. Teale personally. I saw the field of maize, and the alleged 25 tons of hay; and I felt sure that I would hear more about Mr.

Teale's case. As a result I took a sample of his hay, and I now produce that sample to the House. Most of it is a grass which grows on salty country and is of little value. He might have got twice as much if he had attempted to cut it. I have no doubt that after it had been cut to hay, the 25 tons would have been reduced to five tons, and very poor stuff at that. I took a number of samples and brought them back with me.

Hon. W. J. George: You had better send them to the Museum.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: After the Board's interview with him, Mr. Teale was not too sure about his position. But in view of the statements he made and the progress he had indicated, I insisted he should not be disturbed. Mr. Teale is a good farmer, and I insisted that he ought to stay, particularly in view of his statement that he could succeed with a little help. This is what he wrote to Mr. Mann, M.L.C.—

If my boy can earn under the regulations—£7 per month for myself and £3 per month for the boy, we shall have sustenance through the winter; and while we are getting ready for next season, I guarantee to ask nothing more from them and accept the department's promise of a final topdressing of pasture at disbandment and trouble them no more.

Mr. Hewby forwarded me the following memo—

The Board, accompanied by the Senior Field Supervisor, interviewed Teale on his holding on the 7th November last, in an endeavour to persuade him to accept a transfer, see page 60, but he definitely informed us that he preferred to stay on his present holding without assistance if necessary. In letter, page 73, he states that if he and his boy were allowed to earn £10 per month on contract work during the approaching winter, and a final topdressing of pasture, he will not ask for anything more.

I then penned the following minute:—

In the communication addressed to Mr. Mann, M.L.C., pages 70-73, Mr. Teale is so emphatic regarding his ability to make good in the very near future and gives such decided evidence of progress, that I am inclined to agree to the proposition he puts forward. I am impressed with the figures he gives with regard to the earnings from stock, namely, £31 9s. 1d. in 1925, £61 in 1926, and £150 4s. 8d. in 1927. At this rate of progress, with a little more assistance, he ought to be independent of any further financial help from the scheme. The Board will be visiting Busseton in the course of a few days, and I suggest they see Mr. Teale and arrive at a decision regarding the future assistance required in order to see him through. I was not very much im-

pressed by the land, nor by the quantity nor quality of hay stored when I visited his area some little time ago, but it is a reasonable business risk to spend from £100 to £200 to save an expenditure of between £4,000 and £5,000. M. F. Troy, Minister, 13/3/28.

I took that risk, and Mr. Teale got what he asked for, and a bit more and is now not satisfied about his holding!

Hon. W. J. George: Is he growling still?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: At the Tuttonup meeting he said that he had now been fixed up in the reclassification.

The Premier: He must have been to the member for Sussex (Mr. Barnard).

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: However, I tried Mr. Teale out. When the meeting at Tuttonup was held, he immediately wanted to argue with me about his unsatisfactory position under the classification. I told him just where he stood and how his position was the result of his own obtuseness and of his own wishes. He asserted that he had not been fixed up. I think I was perfectly justified in trying Mr. Teale out. I did not want to condemn him to his location but he insisted upon staying there. He got what assistance he asked for, and I gave him something in addition as well. Yet he is now growling that he has not been fixed up under the new classification! If that is a sample of the criticism the member for Sussex can hurl at the administration of the group settlement scheme, I think hon. members will agree that there is not much sense in his attack. I propose to give Mr. Teale every chance. If I had not tried him out, I have no doubt that the statement indicating his alleged progress would have got abroad, and it would have been held as evidence that the reclassification had been a ridiculous one. It would have been advanced in support of the contention that settlers had been removed from holdings upon which they had been rapidly making good.

Mr. Davy: You have not told us what has happened to Mr. Teale.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He is still there.

Mr. Davy: Is he going to make good?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He says he is not satisfied.

The Premier: I suppose he will come along next year for another £200 or so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In view of his attitude at the Tuttonup meeting, I think the only way to fix him up is to put



him on a new holding. I know he is a good settler, but was very obstinate.

Hon. W. J. George: Let him lie in peace; do not have another file built up.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Now I have made this statement about group settlement matters, I hope I will not be required to make any more. I want to make this scheme successful. I do not want any political controversy about group settlement. I do not want to be forced into the position of having to defend the past Administration against unfair attacks or to make charges against that Administration. That sort of thing will not do the group settlements any good, nor will it do any good to the State. On the other hand, I will not shirk the conflict if it is forced upon me. I will not be forced to accept the responsibility for wasteful expenditure and maladministration in the past. I am prepared to say that there has been waste and extravagance; it could not in the circumstances be otherwise. We are trying to get away from some of it, and we are dismissing foremen as fast as possible. We do not want too many officials in charge of the work. Our idea is to put the settlers on their feet and to free them from all restriction. We want to give them the same opportunities that other settlers have in other parts of the State.

Mr. Lindsay: Hear, hear! That should have been done long ago.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We shall be only too happy to make a success of the scheme. If we have the support of all sections of the community, the settlers will have their opportunity, and I know the scheme will make good. I am sorry that the Leader of the Opposition is not present and that I have been forced to discuss this question in his absence. I commend this philosophy to him. There is no need for him to worry. He has at present no official responsibility. I am satisfied that in years to come the group settlement scheme will be a success, always provided that the settlers will stick. If they do not stick—

Mr. Mann: Others will take their places.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. Western Australia is committed to the scheme. We have put our hand to the plough. We cannot afford to allow the work to go back. We must help the settlers to make good. In most instances I believe the settlers will make good. It may cost the State some millions, but if we establish the

dairying industry in the South-West and assure the permanency of our settlers, it will give the South-West a reputation for production, wealth and prosperity that will be a great advertisement for Western Australia and will attract further settlers to the South-West in the years to come. Sir James Mitchell need not worry. Despite the heavy losses he will get the credit for the initiation of the scheme. I do not want it, but I will not accept blame that I am not entitled to. In years to come it will still be known as Sir James Mitchell's scheme, and I shall not have the slightest objection to that. On the other hand, I shall feel that during the time I was Minister in charge of group settlements, I did my best for the scheme and that the changes made by me had much to do with its success. I was glad to hear during the discussion the appreciative references that were made to the Group Settlement Board. In the selection of that board, party considerations did not weigh. I believe the board has the confidence of the general community. A scheme of this description could not be administered except by such a board.

The Premier: And the members of the board are hard working.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. The board members have knowledge and experience, and therefore I was glad to hear the commendations of hon. members. It is true that a lot of money will be lost on the scheme, but that may not matter so much 10 or 20 years hence when an industry has been built up, and the country will be on a sounder basis. I do not want to further condemn the absence of any definite scheme at the inception of the settlement. I do not want to bring that matter up again; I am prepared to accept things as they are.

Hon. G. Taylor: You do not think the Leader of the Opposition would be justified in allowing your statement to-night to go by the board?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. If the Leader of the Opposition will move a motion in this House in order to place the responsibility where it should be, and apportion it as it should be, I shall welcome the opportunity. That duty should rest with the House; I am not concerned about it. I will not shirk the job.

Hon. G. Taylor: Neither will he shirk his responsibility.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: While I will not shirk that responsibility, I believe that with the support of all parties in Par-

liament and a recognition of its difficulties, the scheme will prove successful. If that attitude is adopted by all parties in the House, they will not find me critical of what has been done in the past. I have not the slightest desire to make the group settlements a party matter. I am not attempting to do so in my administration of the scheme. I have considered no one and nothing except what I thought was just. I have done justice to all, and so has the board.

Mr. Davy: I should hope so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is my attitude.

Mr. Davy: It is not conceivable that any Minister would take up any other attitude.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I shall welcome the assistance of the Leader of the Opposition and of all parties in this House, and if I get that, I feel sure that in the years to come the scheme will make good. That will undoubtedly be the result if the settlers do their part. If they will accept their responsibilities now in good heart, in a few years' time we shall have established a successful industry and a thriving community, and the prosperity of Western Australia will be greatly enhanced in consequence.

On motion by Mr. Richardson, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.27 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Tuesday, 21st August, 1928.*

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

### PAPERS—SOUTH PROVINCE ELECTION.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell ordered: That all papers relating to correspondence between Messrs. G. H. Rainsford, James Cornell, J. J. Lawler, C. B. Williams, and the Chief Electoral Officer, in regard to polling

places and postal vote officers for the South Province Election, 1928, also all papers relating to the cancellation of appointments of H. S. Buzacott and R. R. Judge as postal vote officers and their re-appointment, be laid on the Table of the House.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Eighth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 16th August.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [4.35]: I have always understood that the fifth wheel of the coach can be very useful. I find exemplification of it to-day, since I have taken the place of somebody else rather unexpectedly, owing, I believe, to a little indisposition. Still, I had intended to make a few remarks to-morrow, however much they may have been stated before; for at this stage of the debate very little can be said that has not been already mentioned. At the risk of repetition, I intend to refer to two or three subjects. If I cannot succeed in making myself interesting, at all events I will offer compensation by being brief. The Speech puts me in mind of our weather prophet at the Observatory in that, while most excellent in records, it is a little weak in forecast. However, I suppose the Government have availed themselves of that wise old maxim that we should not hide our light under a bushel. The first item I propose to deal with is that referring to our wheat production. As my text I take from the Speech this excerpt—

It is estimated that a further big advance will be made for the current season, and a campaign has been initiated for the production of 50,000,000 bushels of wheat during the centenary year (1929-30).

This has given me a great deal of food for reflection, because it is impossible for us to produce that quantity of wheat unless we have the necessary labour. That brings us back to the disputed question of land clearing, which is fundamental in the production of wheat. Unless we have labour available for the clearing of the land, it will be impossible to increase the acreage we have already under crop. During the last week or two I have been away in the country, where I have had exceptional opportunities for seeing the result of land clearing and the utilisation of the various classes of labour. Not long ago