

work has been done on our country roads with the money we have had out of the petrol tax. I think about 2½d. per gallon has been paid to the State. It would be monstrous if the Commonwealth Government took a greater share of the tax into revenue. Already motor vehicles and petrol carry sufficient taxation. Our railway people hardly know how well off they are in respect to competition from motor transport. A vehicle which costs £100 in the United States fetches £300 in this State. We are paying from 1s. 7d. to 1s. 8d. a gallon for petrol in the metropolitan area, and considerably more than that in the country districts, whereas it is sold at the bowser in the United States for about 4d. To take more out of the tax than is now being paid and give the States less for road making would be monstrous. I hope the Government of this State will take a long view of the circumstances generally, and will attempt to place the essential industries of the country upon a sound foundation. Mining is a wonderful industry. It may last from 10 to 30 years, but inevitably it must decline. Many of the works on which we are spending loan money to-day will have vanished in a year or two, without creating any additional employment. On the other hand, agriculture, in spite of all the great industrial developments throughout the world, is still the source of livelihood for two-thirds of the people of the world. It is the one stable and abiding industry. By restoring prosperity to agriculture in this State we shall be laying the foundation for permanent prosperity in every other branch of industry in which the community is interested.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.27 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 22nd August, 1935.*

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

### QUESTION—BARRACKS BUILDING.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, What was the cost connected with maintenance and improvement of the Old Barracks building from the 1st July, 1933, to the 30th June, 1935? 2, What is the estimated cost for the current financial year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, £1,534 6s. 8d. for all buildings on Old Barracks reserve. 2, £578 3s. 4d. to complete present work.

### QUESTION—WHOLE MILK BOARD LICENSES.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What is the number of licensed producers under the Whole Milk Board supplying milk to the metropolitan area? 2, What is the number of licensed distributors under the Whole Milk Board—(a) producer-retailers; (b) vendors? 3, How many milk depots are licensed in the metropolitan area under the Whole Milk Act?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, 481. 2, (a) 226; (b) 1,007. 3, 26.

### QUESTION—WATER TANK, BEEBEEGYNING.

Mr. WARNER asked the Minister for Water Supplies: 1, What is the reason for the delay in the delivery of materials for

the erection of Beebeeyning tank? 2. Is it a fact that the two trucks at the work have made repeated trips to Bencubbin, a distance of 16 miles, and have been obliged to return empty, owing to non-arrival of the necessary material? 3. Has the material required for the reinforcing of the concrete work yet been forwarded? 4. Is it a fact that "Imperial" cement is being used on this work? 5. If so, why?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Minister for Water Supplies) replied: 1, Steel for reinforcement must be obtained from Newcastle, New South Wales. 2, No information available; inquiries being made. 3, No; but due to arrive at Fremantle at an early date. 4, Yes. 5, Because local cement was not available.

### QUESTION—WORKERS' HOMES, INTEREST.

Mr. TONKIN asked the Premier: 1, What reduction in the rate of interest charged on advances to purchasers of workers' homes has been granted by the Government because of the saving effected as a result of the conversion of its loans during the past four years? 2, What is the rate of interest at present being charged to purchasers of workers' homes? 3, Will he give consideration to the possibility of reducing the rate in the near future?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (for the Premier) replied: 1, Two reductions, each of one-half per cent. The first was made in 1931, and the second on 1st January, 1935. 2, Five and a half per cent. 3, Unless there are further substantial reductions in the interest rates paid by the Government, it will not be possible to make further reductions in the rate charged by the Workers' Homes Board to its clients.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Tenth Day—Conclusion.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [1.34]: There is one sentiment in the speech of the Acting Leader of the Opposition which I can re-echo—the expression of regret that the season has opened inauspiciously. However, I am glad to say that prospects have improved, and that during the present month the

greater portion of the State has enjoyed bountiful rains. In fact, those areas which until last week were the more sorely afflicted, have received excellent rains, averaging from two inches to 2½ inches. This has brought about a decided improvement, and the prospects have brightened in consequence. But we are not by any means out of the wood. The season started very late, and a great deal more rain will be required if we are to have a season at all. However, my hope is that the season will prove a late one, and that as the result we shall have a bountiful harvest. I am told the loss already incurred in some districts cannot be repaired during this season. I am indeed sorry to hear that, but I hope our worst fears will not be realised.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It might be repaired by some method, surely.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Sheep have been turned on to wheat crops in some districts.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The first complaint of the Acting Leader of the Country Party was that no mention had been made in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech of the need for organised marketing of our primary products. I just desire to remind the members of the Country Party—who may have forgotten the fact—that a most comprehensive measure for the organisation of marketing of all our primary products was introduced into this Assembly by the Collier Government in 1925. That measure was based on the Queensland Act, and indeed represented an improvement on that Act. Our Bill provided for the requirements of every primary industry in Western Australia, and it put the organisation of marketing entirely in the hands of the producers themselves. The Country Party have no cause whatever for complaint, because not one solitary member of that party voted for the Bill, either in this House or in another place.

Mr. Sampson: What about giving the Bill another try?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is true that the hon. member interjecting supported the Bill, but then he was a Nationalist.

Mr. Moloney: That hon. member is always broadminded.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In another place the Bill was defeated by only one vote. If one solitary member of the Country Party in that House had voted for

the measure, it would have passed. It passed this Chamber by virtue of the support given to it by Government supporters and by some members of the National Party, although Sir James Mitchell, then Leader of the Opposition, and Mr. J. H. Smith voted against it. Having been passed here by a substantial majority, the Bill was defeated by one vote in the Upper House. It is wonderful that its opponents comprised members of the Country Party and that no member of the Country Party supported it. So the Country Party have no ground at all for complaint. Ten years later they wake up and discover that they want the Bill. That is remarkable, but such has been our experience more than once. They always wake up too late to realise what they have missed.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: But you would not deprive the producers of the privilege because of that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That has been the situation for the last ten years. I do not think that in this House there is any objection to legislation providing for the orderly marketing of primary products, but there may be some doubt in the minds of hon. members as to whether they are prepared to give statutory power to the organised primary producers to fix the prices which they consider ought to be fixed. We know that the Country Party talk a lot about arbitration and the necessity for standing to the law and for respecting the law. But we also know that for the men they themselves employ they will not have arbitration. They have always succeeded in having their industry exempted from the operations of the Arbitration Act. They insist that the workers they employ shall have no rights under the laws of the country at all. They desire to debar them from having the privileges and rights that workers in other industries enjoy under the laws of the State. So the doubt we have in our mind is whether the farming community could be trusted with legislation to accomplish what they are pleased to call "orderly marketing." We have had experience of members opposite. What they want is not orderly marketing, but legislation that will give them power to fix a price for their product that they can demand from the rest of the community. There is no man in this country who will agree to that. The worker has his labour to sell, and the primary producer

has his products to sell. The worker can go to the Arbitration Court, and he is bound by the Arbitration Court award. Let the farmers go to the Arbitration Court and be bound by the award the court will deliver. But will they do that? Not they! What they want is parliamentary sanction, in their interests, to enable them to impose their will on the rest of the community, whether their will be reasonable or otherwise. If the members of the Country Party are prepared to place their case before the Arbitration Court and abide by the same principle as applies to workers in other sections of the community, there will be no objection to orderly marketing. That is the attitude I am prepared to adopt. If the farming community are prepared to lay their cards on the table, set out the facts and let the matter be decided by an independent tribunal, well and good, but unless they are prepared to do so, there will be no legislative sanction for orderly marketing. There is grave doubt in the minds of most people as to how the farming community would react if that power were made available. Under existing conditions, they have no right to ask for it. They have no right to ask for more than the application of the principle that applies legislatively to other sections of the community. So much for orderly marketing. The assurance I give that if they submit their case to the Arbitration Court, I will be prepared to support them, stands as far as I am concerned personally: I do not bind anyone else. The Acting Leader of the Opposition expressed gratification at the results of the South Fremantle and Avon by-elections. We have no objection to the hon. member's attitude at all. The Labour candidate did remarkably well in the Avon electorate and if I had any complaint to make against him, it is that he was too modest. He underestimated his ability and his capacity and to that extent I think he was wrong. I am sure the successful candidate, who now represents the Avon electorate, Mr. Boyle, did not do that, for he is not built that way. It should be remembered that, in that electorate, the Wheatgrowers' Union opposed Mr. Griffiths and many of them supported the Labour candidate. At the recent by-election, they supported Mr. Boyle, because he was their champion for the time being. In fact, Mr. Boyle secured a vote in the back portions of his electorate that no other

member of the Country Party could have obtained. Nevertheless, if the Country Party are satisfied with the result, well and good. Labour has not held the Avon seat for many years.

Mr. Stubbs: And is not likely to in the future; it is a Country Party seat.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: One can never tell, and certainly, at the hon. member's age, he is foolish to make prophecies.

Mr. Stubbs: Why bring that up?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Even the political representation of the Wagin electorate may one day change, when the hon. member departs. As for the South Fremantle seat, Labour won it and will win it again. Still, if the result gave any satisfaction to the Acting Leader of the Opposition, I do not care.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Should you prophesy at your age?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Acting Leader of the Opposition said that the mining industry had absorbed the unemployed and was responsible for the whole of the improvement with regard to the unemployment difficulty in this State. I desire to point out to the Acting Leader of the Opposition that a large percentage of the men who have been absorbed in the industry came from the farming areas. They left the agricultural districts and have returned to the goldfields. Then, again, a large number of the young men on the goldfields are recent arrivals from the Eastern States. I was struck by the fact that history is repeating itself. When the goldfields were discovered in the nineties, thousands of men came to Western Australia from the Eastern States. Hence I was struck by the similar position that is apparent on the goldfields to-day. Thousands of young men are filtering through from the Eastern States, and so the majority of the young men on the goldfields to-day were not drawn from those who were unemployed in Western Australia but came from South Australia in particular.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: In fact, South Australia is worried about the position.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We cannot cavil at the position, for the young men are Australians and are entitled to come here. After all, men who are prepared to leave their homes, who have the grit to leave their accustomed surroundings and to take a chance in a new State, are the type

worth having. We should be grateful for their presence. Men who stay behind and want Governments to provide for them represent the type that we do not want. Those who are prepared to go outback with a determination to strike out for themselves in a new country are those we should welcome, because they represent men of enterprise, and they are the men we want in this State. A great many farmers have gone back to the goldfields. Recently the Lieutenant-Governor paid a visit to Mt. Magnet and, as is his custom, he visited the local school. The teacher stated that 50 per cent. of the children were recent arrivals from the agricultural areas. In every part of the goldfields there are hundreds who have left the agricultural areas and have started out afresh on the fields. It is only natural. If a man finds he is working in an industry from which he cannot secure a living, he will change over to another industry that will provide him with a living. Nothing can stop that sort of thing. On the other hand, should the agricultural industry revive, many of them will go back to that industry. This is no new experience. It has always been so in every country. It is impossible to tie men down exclusively to one industry. If they find they are not doing well, they will embark upon other activities that will give them a better living. The mining industry has not, as the member for Irwin-Moore suggested, been wholly responsible for the absorption of the unemployed. I have explained the real position. Last night the Premier pointed out that the Government are entitled to some recognition respecting the prosperity that is enjoyed in the mining industry. By means of the prospecting scheme 2,000 young men were absorbed, and they have done well. It was an assisted prospector who made the gold discovery at Yellowdine, and a great many of these young men have been absorbed in the mining industry as employees. That is very satisfactory from the State's standpoint. When members compare that policy with the one pursued by the previous Administration of which the Acting Leader of the Opposition was a member, under which men were herded in a concentration camp at Blackboy, it will be agreed that the method adopted by the Labour Government is much to be preferred. Men formerly were herded under the worst and most vicious condi-

tions, for in such a camp the best of the men were likely to be dragged down to the condition of the worst. Under such conditions the best do not build up the worst, but the worst pull down the best. Such a state of affairs was detrimental to the best interests of the State. When we compare such conditions with those that obtain to-day, under which men are sent out into the back country to mix with prospectors who are enterprising men, we see a vast difference. Those men work a show and, should it prove a failure, they make no complaint; they merely move on and have another try. Such a system must tend to create initiative, enterprise and courage, and that must be all to the good. Under such a system, men gain confidence in themselves. They see what others can do and they emulate them. That is a good thing for the country, and the Government responsible for the scheme should be given the recognition that is their due. The Acting Leader of the Opposition and other members referred to the recent strike on the goldfields and, as one who played some part in it, I propose to make merely a brief reference to it. Members sitting on the Government side of the House have justified the Government's effort, whereas Opposition members have condemned it. It is a conspicuous fact that not one goldfields member of the National Party in the Legislative Council condemned the Government; they approved of the Government's action. And so if the National Party feel that the Government are worthy of condemnation, we must not be surprised that they condemn us. I believe I can say the action of the Government was unanimously approved on the goldfields, that the goldfields people, no matter of what political colour, regarded the holding up of the industry by the Chamber of Mines as altogether foolish and bad for the country. Those people thought the industry, which was so prosperous, should be kept going and they were pleased that the Government should have taken the same view and acted accordingly. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said the miners had got all they asked for from the court. They did not get anything of the sort, and for my part I was surprised that they were not given what they asked for.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I never said that at all.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They got a few shillings increase per week, whereas they should have got an increase to £1 per shift. They were told by the court that they could not get any more than the court gave them, although they deserved it. On this occasion the industry could have well afforded to grant the requests made, gold having increased in value by more than 100 per cent. In my opinion the Chamber of Mines was very ill advised to exercise their option and try to force the miners 2,000 and 3,000 feet down the mines for 48 hours in any one week. And that was the unanimous opinion of the people on the goldfields. I had met the Chamber of Mines on a previous occasion, and what struck me when meeting them on this last occasion was the lack of any change in their attitude. Ever since the war, writers, clergymen, philosophers and other thinkers have declared that people were hanging together and showing a better understanding of each other. When on this last occasion I met the Chamber of Mines I remembered having met them in a similar way 25 years ago, and I found on this occasion that they had not changed their attitude one iota. They are still maintaining the same attitude towards the miners, no matter what the writers, philosophers, clergymen and others may say. Members of the Chamber of Mines have not changed their outlook; they are just as stupid now as they were 25 years ago. It suggested to me that it was not possible for those people to learn anything by reason. I am convinced that the majority of the mine managers did not want the 48-hour week. So far as I know, only one mine wanted it. But the Chamber of Mines were responsible for it, standing as they do between the mine managers and the men, and I say and the people of the goldfields say the Chamber of Mines were to be condemned for their attitude. They were very lucky that the Arbitration Court did not award a 40-hour week. In Broken Hill the miners work only 35 hours per week underground. Our underground miners at Kalgoorlie have to work 2,000 and 3,000 feet down in the earth, and the great majority of them have contracted an incurable disease, for the air down below is filled with dust and disease. It must be conceded that no Government have the right to force men to work underground for an undue length of time. Certainly this Government will

not do it, and we say definitely that if the Opposition want to make that the spear-head of their attack at the coming elections we will welcome it. As the Premier has pointed out, this is not the first time the Government have intervened and perhaps it will not be the last time. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said there was only one goldfields member of this House who had been game to tell the miners the true position, and that he had had an unfortunate experience in a subsequent free selection ballot. That was news to us. Who was he?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: The member for Kalgoorlie.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But the member for Kalgoorlie did not oppose the Government's attitude. He supported the Government. Where did the Deputy Leader of the Opposition get that extraordinary information? There is not a scintilla of truth in it, for the member for Kalgoorlie endorsed the Government's attitude. Then the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said the Minister for Mines had been sent to England in an attempt to repair the damage done by the trouble at Kalgoorlie. That, of course, was not so. Most members receive copies of the "Financial Times." In a recent copy that paper reported the speeches made at a dinner given to the Minister for Mines. I might say that at that dinner there were represented all the principal mining interests in England. Yet not one of the speakers made reference to the mining dispute in this State; in fact, this Government were acclaimed as being the best friends of the mining industry. And that is a fact, as all mining people know. Moreover, immediately after the dispute three flotations were made in London, the first three flotations in 12 months, and they were six times over-subscribed, one of them being six times over-subscribed within five minutes. So it cannot be said that the people in England were influenced by the mining dispute here. I am surprised that the "West Australian" should have given such prominence to the trouble. Probably it is only because one person connected with the "West Australian" is associated also with the mining industry. Nevertheless I question his wisdom in giving it such prominence, for on the facts themselves he was not entitled to do so. What is of more interest to the mining

industry in this country is the rake-off which lots of people get when floating mines in Western Australia. That is what is doing harm to the industry, not what increases might be given to the miners themselves. For unless those men go down the mines the industry cannot be maintained, because they are the men who are giving results every day they work in the mines. It is not the granting of a 44-hour week that will injure the industry, but the rake-off that certain people get whenever a Western Australian proposition is floated. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that the law had been broken and that the Government had taken no action to prevent it. The same sort of thing occurred when the hon. member was a Minister. I remember well when the dairy farmers and others infringed the law, and cream intended for the markets was destroyed. Yet the Government of the day, of which the hon. member was a Minister, took no action. Of course not. It would have been very unwise to do so, for people will express their feelings on occasions, and any Government that is wise will take the best way out. The hon. member said there had been a lot of criticism in recent years of the control of the Bank by the former trustees, Messrs. McLarty, Moran and Maley. There has never been any criticism in this House of the Bank as controlled by those three gentlemen. All the criticism of the Bank came from the Royal Commission, and as I pointed out in this House on a previous occasion, the Royal Commission, in every recommendation made, based its findings on the evidence of the Bank officials. If any member will look at the report of the Royal Commission he will realise that everything the Commission said was not based on the opinion of outside persons but was based on the evidence of officers of the Bank. In that respect I consider the report of the Royal Commission conspicuous. I propose to speak about the Bank at a later stage, but in passing let me say that the present commissioners of the Bank might or might not have experience equal to that of their predecessors, but I do not think that any member of this House or any man in this State has had better experience of farming in the South-West than Mr. Clarke possesses, or has done more than Mr. Clarke has achieved in his short life. If it comes to a matter of experience, whom would the Acting Leader of the Country

Party put up against that gentleman? We all knew Mr. McCallum in this House; we know his strength and capacity, and although some members might question the method of his appointment, they do not question his appointment. After all, that is the main point. It does not matter how the appointment was made: the important point is that the appointment was a right one. Complaints have been made that the commissioners of the Bank refuse to see members of Parliament. This is not the only Act under which the administrators refuse to see members of Parliament. The Commissioner of Railways is prohibited from seeing members of Parliament. He might receive them out of courtesy, but he need not do so. Members who represent the country may always see the manager of the Bank. The commissioners have not informed members that the manager will not see them. Would not that be their experience if they went to a private bank? Would any member, acting on behalf of a farmer, demand to see the director of a private bank? Of course not. He would see the manager, the inspector, or the accountant. He might not even be able to see the manager. Consequently, in matters concerning the Agricultural Bank, members of Parliament may see the manager. Having seen the manager and put the facts to him, why should they wish to see the commissioners? An hon. member said last night that members wished to see the commissioners. Why should they wish to do so, except to influence the commissioners? There can be no other desire. The manager is the man who manages the Bank, and if members see him, there can be no reason for their wishing to see the commissioners. In my opinion, the commissioners have adopted the correct attitude. They have plenty of work to do, and it would be wrong if members of Parliament were permitted to take up the time of the commissioners when they can be better employed. I know the amount of time that a Minister has to give up to members, and the difficulty in which the Minister finds himself to compass his own work. The Acting Leader of the Opposition stated that over 2,000 Agricultural Bank properties were vacant, and that unless satisfaction were obtainable by settlers, more men would leave their properties. What satisfaction does the hon. member seek? Later on I will explain what the Government have done and are doing for settlers. But what is the par-

ticular satisfaction they require? Is it something we owe them? The hon. member should be a little more explicit. If he wishes to emphasise the fact that 2,000 Agricultural Bank farms are vacant, let me remind him that a lot of farms were vacant in his time. When the hon. member left office there were 1,215 properties on the hands of the Bank, and 640 had been forfeited in that year. Hence the previous Government had a pretty good record during their short term of office. Did those people leave their holdings because they did not get satisfaction? Of the 1,215 who left their farms on which the Bank had granted advances, how many left because they did not get satisfaction? And if they did not get satisfaction, who was responsible for it? Was the hon. member, with his agricultural conscience, responsible? That is a question which must be answered, but I think he would find it very difficult to answer. Those settlers left their farms during the time their party were in power. The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) stressed the number of men who were leaving their farms during the term of the previous Government. What have members opposite to say to that? Did they give satisfaction? The facts indicate that they did not. The hon. member also said that the rural industries were in a desperate plight as regards wheat and wool. We know that applies to wheat; everyone knows it. But the wool industry is not in a desperate plight. Apart from the fact that in the back country and the central Murchison there have been bad seasons for years, and pastoralists have suffered severely, if the outlook for the industry is not bright, the outlook as regards price is bright. Last year the outlook for price was bad, but this year I consider it is bright, and we may hope that wool this year will bring a payable price to the people engaged in the industry. There is one thing I would say for the hon. member, namely, that if the industry is in a desperate plight, he did not blame the Government. The pastoralist and the prospector represent two types in this country who get little and who expect little from the Government. They are men of initiative and enterprise. When bad seasons come, the squatter might mention the fact, but he does not squeal about it. Neither does he say, "The Government are responsible; what are the Government going to do?" It would do no harm if other sections of the community followed the example of pastoralists and prospectors in that respect.

Members opposite would be doing a greater service, too, if they tried to inculcate that spirit into other sections of the community rather than make the statements which they utter in this House and which are no compliment to the people they represent. I do not think that the farmer is of the type they represent. They tell us that the farmer is down and out, that he is complaining, that he will do this and that, and that he is losing his character and morale. I believe the farmer is a better man than that. Pursuing the policy that they do here, members opposite would lead us to believe that the farmer is the poorest type in this country, but by so doing they are paying him no compliment. They do not represent his case properly. At least they ought to represent the fact that he is striving to do his best, and facing the future courageously, and at least they should suggest that despite all his difficulties he will win through. I hope it will not be long before he does win through. The hon. member quoted from the report of the Federal Royal Commission on Wheat and Flour as proof of what he stated in the House. He said that the world position in wheat made it difficult for the Commission to take an optimistic view of the prospects of the industry in the next few years, and he pointed out how badly off the industry was, and how bad the prospects were. The Federal Government are in possession of that report, and they should act upon it. Because the elections were approaching the Federal Government became so anxious about the situation that they would not wait for the report. They demanded a preliminary report, and on that justification they proceeded to make promises at the elections. They promised a sum of £20,000,000 on the eve of the elections for assistance to the industry. They also published a manifesto asking the electors to vote for Country Party candidates. They published the manifesto in this State in the "Primary Producer." It was in the form of an advertisement headed "Bank of Commerce." This was published on the 6th September just before the election. In that advertisement they said "On the 15th September the electors can cash this cheque." Could there be a greater attempt to corrupt the electors than that? They followed this with a blank cheque form on the Bank of Commerce, to pay 50,000 farmers

the sum of £20,000,000. It was signed as being authorised by A. J. Monger and J. S. Teasdale. Could anything be more contemptible or savour more of corrupting the electors? What did the Federal Government do? They provided a miserable £10,000,000, and some time later are going to provide £2,000,000. They do this after attempting to corrupt the electors by telling them that on the 15th September, the day of the elections, 50,000 farmers can cash a cheque for £20,000,000. The hon. member talks about an agricultural conscience. What kind of conscience have these men? This State with a population of 400,000 people, men women and children, cannot save the agricultural industry by keeping 10,000 odd farmers going in Western Australia. It is due to the Commonwealth Government that they should keep their promises, and the Commonwealth Government are made up of the Lyons-Page Party. The hon. member talks about an agricultural conscience! What about their conscience? They have none. Is it not somewhat impertinent, in view of the facts, that the hon. member should talk about the State Government lacking in agricultural conscience? The Federal Government have no conscience whatever. Quite possibly the wheat-growing industry may be in for a bad time. I always thought it was in for a period of low prices. I thought that at the time when the depression first occurred. I was at a meeting in the Y.A.L. Hall on one occasion. The farmers were then demanding at once 5s. a bushel. Someone asked me to speak. If I had spoken I would have said, "Go to your homes and face the situation. Act as carefully as you can." Experience comes to all people in all walks of life. I do not know that life promises any continued term of prosperity to anyone. I am sure it does not. The old maxim that insists upon people making provision for this or that eventuality is as sound as ever. There can be no continuous era of prosperity in this or in any other industry. The wheels still go round, and that which is on top will go under. The agricultural industry did enjoy a period of prosperous years between 1916 and 1929. I am sure we are in for a poor time for some years to come, because of conditions over which we have no control. Nevertheless, I trust the situation will improve. People will have to face the position, and will have to look



for such help as can be obtained from the Federal as well as from the State Governments. The Commonwealth Government have the resources, and ought to act. We have no resources. If the industry does not improve in the next few years, say 10 years hence, the Country Party will find themselves in a serious position. They promised so much. The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) cannot now talk about things as he did, for now he has a responsibility for the future. If the position does not improve quickly, and the Country Party take their share of Government in years to come, all their promises will be brought before them. There will be no escape. It is not given to us to be able to escape. We cannot pursue an extreme policy in the House, and, when we take the responsibility, escape the whirlwind that will follow.

Mr. Thorn: What promises have been made?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** There is nothing they did not promise if they took over the reins of office. Their claim is that the Government have done nothing, that this and that ought to have been done. They asked for things they could not and would not do themselves, and certainly did not do when they had the opportunity. The party of which the Acting Leader of the Opposition is a member, had three years of office. They were blamed throughout every agricultural area in the State because they had fallen down on their job. They had made promises they did not keep. What happened before will happen again. They will not escape the consequences of those utterances which they broadcast among the primary producers of the country.

Mr. Thorn: They carried out a lot of useful work.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** The farmer is not the only person in trouble to-day. We know what the unemployed have been through. There are many men in this and other countries who do not get a full day's work. No doubt many farmers are in trouble. That is the case with people in other industries as well, because of conditions over which they have no control. The farmer who took up land in comparatively recent times never had a chance to get on his feet. For that type of farmer I have a lot of sympathy and will ever do what I can to put him on a more substantial footing. The Acting Leader of the Opposition quoted the statement made by Sir Her-

bert Gepp that the earnings from individual effort in the industry had been out of conformity with those of other industries. I would like members who represent mainly secondary industries to take particular notice of that passage of the report. The Acting Leader of the Opposition said that it flatly contradicted the Premier's statement that farmers do not work one bit harder than men who work 44 hours in other industries. I never heard the Premier make such a statement. Farmers are like everyone else. Some work strenuously and some do not. Some are more energetic than others, but I doubt if they work at the same pace and take the same risks to life and limb as do men in some other industries. In the mines at Kalgoorlie we see men with machines as heavy as they can carry, perched up and working those machines, naked to the waist, and perspiration pouring out of their bodies. Those men have to work very hard. Thus it is bad for anyone to make such comparisons. The hon. member declared that the Premier had said that men in factories worked as hard as those on farms. No such statement was ever made. Men who have come from the fields and taken up farms experience the difficulties connected with farming. They, therefore, become aware of two aspects of life and they will not regard themselves as being the only oppressed people. The Acting Leader of the Opposition quoted these remarks of Sir Herbert Gepp—

During this tour, more than ever before, I have become convinced that farming is more than a business; it is a way of life. It is the hereditary land instinct in our farmers that prevents them calculating the man per hour cost of much of their labour. In my opinion if it were not for the attitude of mind that remark implies we would have encountered a much greater resentment against conditions as they operate at present in the wheat country.

Of course farming is a hard life for the man who does not like it and who never engaged in it. The member for Beverley (Mr. Mann) complained about farmers' sons leaving the farms. That is only natural. A farmer may have five sons. How many of those are suitable to take up the occupation that he follows? Probably two, and the others will leave. It is the case all over the world that cities recruit people from the country. You cannot tie young men down if they want to go elsewhere. Farming is all right for those who like it. In my opinion a man puts up with all the difficulties on a farm

in the hope of gaining an independence, of one day being his own master and not being at the beck and call of everyone. In the Eastern States many farmers have secured independence. It is a goal worth striving for, that of being able to call no man your master. That is what men strive for when they become farmers, and there is more opportunity of achieving that on a farm than in any other occupation a man can pursue. How can you compare a man who works on a farm with a man who works in a factory? A man working in a factory could never obtain independence. Therefore, is it not worth fighting for on the part of the farmer? The complaint was made at the Primary Producers' Conference, and a bitter complaint it was, that the Bank was ejecting settlers. If there were not some expectation of it, would there have been any complaints about evictions? Of course not. Those who are engaged in the farming industry want to be their own masters, they want to make a competency, and they know that they can do so provided the conditions are reasonably favourable. I have always expressed the belief that those farmers in Western Australia who are determined to do so will in the end be able to secure a competency. The statement was also made by the Acting Leader of the Opposition that South Australia was the most prosperous State of the Commonwealth. That assertion is so puerile that it is hardly worth replying to. We all know that where there are political advantages prosperity must follow. So I say that Queensland is to-day the most prosperous State. There is not the slightest doubt about that, because a number of the industries in that State enjoy bonuses paid by the Commonwealth Government. The Australian policy protects those industries, and of course the country is prosperous in consequence. Members will know, from the grants made by the Commonwealth Government, that Queensland gets less than any other State, and the population of Queensland is twice as great as that of Western Australia. It gets less money in this direction because the State does not need it. Therefore, that State must be better off than any other, and so it can be regarded as the most prosperous State. The Acting Leader of the Opposition said that in recent years the South Australian Government had made available from £400,000 to £700,000 per annum by way

of assistance to necessitous farmers in that State. Not in recent years has the South Australian Government ever given anything like £700,000 for assistance to farmers. The hon. member's statement was not correct. I wrote to the South Australian Minister for Agriculture, and received from him a statement showing what had actually been distributed amongst necessitous farmers. In 1931 the State advanced £394,000; in 1932, £527,000; in 1933, £559,000; and in 1934, £527,000. The greater part of this money was advanced by the Commonwealth Government, so where is the £700,000 the hon. member spoke of? Of course it is not a fact. But this is a fact, that whereas complaint has been made about Sections 51 and 52 of the Agricultural Bank Act of this State, the South Australian legislation provides that advances are a charge on everything the farm produces. The board in South Australia insists upon a farmer submitting a return showing everything he sells and then they demand the money. They get it, too. That is the position in South Australia. The hon. member further said—

The truth is that in South Australia there exists an agricultural conscience, which is shared by the Government there and the Government of Australia, but unfortunately is not shared by the Government of Western Australia.

Knowing the hon. member as I do, I do not think he coined that phrase. It may have come from the editor of the "Primary Producer," or from Mr. Teasdale. The hon. member himself does not use phrases of that kind. But the assertion is a most unfortunate one for him, because it cannot be justified at all. The hon. member referred to the Royal Commission report which showed the debts of the farmers of Australia as totalling £151,000,000, to meet part of which the Commonwealth Government have provided £12,000,000. We shall discuss that matter later on. I do not know what the hon. member thinks of that loan of £12,000,000. It would be unfair to ask him to anticipate his remarks on a subject with which we shall be dealing very soon. However, I for my part regard that loan as a gesture of gratitude to the banking and financial institutions from the Commonwealth for the support received from those institutions at the last election. For, really, that money is not advanced in the interests of the farmers. If it is expended in the manner laid down by the Commonwealth Government, un-

doubtedly the banking and financial institutions will get an investment of £12,000,000 on the best security in Australia, and all the money will come back by way of overdrafts within three months. And this is called relief to the farmers, and farmers' legislation! It leaves the farmer just where he is—in the ditch. He is still in that ditch, and the banks have £12,000,000 invested on excellent security, I may say the best security in the world. Furthermore, the banks have the money back in a few months after advancing it. That is the fair view of the transaction. This is the best the Commonwealth Government can do—the Commonwealth Administration with its agricultural conscience and led by Dr. Earle Page, the leader-in-chief. I suppose we shall be told that the political party who do that have an agricultural conscience. The hon. member also complained that the destruction being caused to crops and pastures by the rabbit pest did not seem to be appreciated. Is there anything he did not complain of? He said that country properties were all being destroyed by the rabbit nowadays, and that he wished members of Parliament representing metropolitan and suburban constituencies could visit the country areas and see for themselves the devastation caused by the rabbit. But the rabbits have been a plague in Western Australia for 20 years.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Not like they are to-day.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Of course, nothing was like it is to-day. The rabbits have been a plague in the most settled portions of Western Australia for 20 years past. Last year, owing to the early season and the abundance of feed, the rabbits propagated freely. While the feed was there, the farmer could not see the rabbits for the feed; but when the season ended and the feed went off, he could see the rabbits in their multitudes. This year there has been a long dry summer, one of the longest on record; and so this was the time to strike the rabbits effectively. Some farmers are destroying the rabbits. In the "West Australian" of a few days ago I read a report from Popanyinning, stating that from the higher type of rabbit skins farmers were making good money. I do not say farmers could do that all the time and still attend to their properties. But they could do some of it, and their sons could

do some of it. After a long dry season such as that we have recently passed through is the time to strike the rabbit most effectively. The rabbit must have starved badly throughout the greater portion of the agricultural areas. It is a fact that in many portions of our agricultural areas after a dry season the rabbit disappeared almost completely. The hon. member said that the abandoned farms were a menace to the country unless they were managed. I admit they can be managed, but my experience is that abandoned farms grow little feed. It is a peculiar feature of Western Australia that immediately one leaves off fertilising either for grain or for pasture, the pasture ceases to grow. On a recent tour I was struck by the fact that the abandoned farms had no feed on them. The rabbit will not stay where there is no feed. The rabbit lives on the farm where feed is abundant, where the best feed is. It is no use telling me the tale that abandoned farms breed rabbits. I live adjacent to 100,000 acres of sandplain, extending between 30 and 40 miles, and 15 miles broad. I live on the edge of that sandplain. The rabbit does not breed on the sandplain, but he breeds on my place because the feed is there. Does anyone think the rabbit is such a fool as to go out on the sandplain to breed? He breeds on the farm. The tale about abandoned farms as breeding-grounds for rabbits is therefore largely overdone.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: In many cases the Agricultural Bank have let abandoned farms to adjoining farmers for the feed that is on them.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Then let the adjoining farmers clean up those abandoned farms. There are some districts, for example the district of the hon. member interjecting, containing rich natural grazing areas: but they are taken up. All such areas have been taken up by farmers. When a farmer takes up an area, he is responsible for seeing that vermin is eradicated. Existing legislation gives the local vermin boards the fullest possible power to ensure destruction of rabbits. The local vermin board can come on my farm and spend money for the destruction of rabbits, and charge that expenditure to me and obtain repayment of it from me.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: What about Agricultural Bank properties?

**The MINISTER FOR LANDS:** The Government sent numbers of unemployed last year and this year to various centres in the South-West to clean up the rabbits. I was in the South-West last February 12 months, and I saw rabbits in great numbers. I said to Mr. McLarty, "The rabbits will take possession of that country." However, he was not concerned. When settlers are not concerned, I am not concerned. They have their own local authority for dealing with the pest; and if the authority is not concerned, whose concern can it be? However, the Government had to step in later on. We sent numbers of unemployed into the South-West, and they killed thousands of rabbits, cleaning the pest up in a few months. But what has happened since? Have the farmers followed up what the Government did? They may have done so, but I do not think they have. What position shall we arrive at? People who own properties demand security and support. They even call upon the Government for everything they can possibly want. It must be realised that the Government are really themselves; and the Government have not the resources to enable them to meet all their demands. In many instances, the Government ought not to do it. On the other hand, some time ago the Government supplied men and 13 poison carts for the eastern districts, and placed them under the control of the inspector of the local vermin board. He was to supervise all that the men did with the poison carts. It will be seen, therefore, that the Government have done their share, and have done it very effectively. But the farmer must do his share as well. The Acting Leader of the Opposition also suggested that the vermin boards should be supplied with poison and fumigants free of charge. The boards have displayed no desire to be supplied with those requirements free of charge. I do not say that if any such application were made, it would be granted; in fact, I do not think it would be granted. The fact remains that no applications have been made along those lines. The hon. member also complained that the Government were not providing wire netting to farmers. During the course of his speech, he said that if the Commonwealth Government did not provide that wire netting, the State Government and the people of the State, who were mainly interested, should keep hammering at the Commonwealth Government until the latter

were convinced that their earlier decision was a mistake. We have been hammering at the Commonwealth Government. We have entered into correspondence, on many occasions, with the Federal Government in an endeavour to convince them that the supplying of wire netting was desirable. The Minister for Agriculture raised the matter at the recent Agricultural Conference, but was unable to get anywhere with the proposal. Will the Acting Leader of the Opposition tell me why there should be any necessity for keeping on hammering at a Commonwealth Government that is largely comprised of Country Party members, who, I suppose, possess an agricultural conscience?

**Hon. P. D. Ferguson:** They are not satisfied with the importance of the matter, whereas we are.

**The MINISTER FOR LANDS:** The Commonwealth Government are not interested. Then again, he suggested that the Government should accept the Commonwealth's proposals to make money available for the purchase of wire netting, in respect of which the Federal authorities offered a concession of one per cent. off the interest rates. We will not do that.

**Hon. P. D. Ferguson:** Then why are they doing it in New South Wales?

**The MINISTER FOR LANDS:** The concession of that one per cent. reduction would not pay administrative costs. In addition to that, the State would have to bear all the losses when farmers were unable to make repayments. Up to December last, the State Government had paid the Commonwealth Government in instalments of interest on account of wire netting supplied no less than £41,000 more than the State received from the farmers. Already the arrears of interest owing by farmers and due to the Commonwealth Government exceed £80,000. In view of that fact, of what avail to the State is the miserable concession of one per cent.? In the circumstances, the State Government will not accept the responsibility of carrying the losses. We have shouldered the losses so far, but we do not propose to find the money and shoulder the losses as well. We are prepared to continue operating the scheme under which the Commonwealth Government provided the money and we guaranteed repayment. So far we have already paid £40,000 to the Commonwealth Government and will soon have to pay an additional £40,000, and I think that will be regarded as a fair thing. The Acting Leader of the Opposition is not a Seces-

sionist if he thinks otherwise, and considers that we should continue to take over more responsibilities from the Commonwealth Government. I claim that the Labour Government have done good work in supplying netting, better work than the hon. member's Government did. In their three years of office they supplied wire netting to farmers of a value of £70,000, whereas in two years the Labour Government have supplied netting valued at £80,000.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: And there has been five times greater demand.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Is that so? I know there is a minute on the departmental file directing that wire netting must not be provided unless the farmer makes his payments. There have been plenty of applications, but all of them were not agreed to, because the security was not good enough. The Acting Leader of the Opposition asked why the State Government could not take advantage of the wire netting scheme, as the Government of New South Wales have done. New South Wales has not availed itself of the Commonwealth scheme; only Queensland and Western Australia have done so, Queensland to the extent of £243,000, and Western Australia £429,000.

The Minister for Agriculture: And Queensland would not support the same scheme recently.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: New South Wales provided £236,000 for wire netting for farmers.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Spread over many years.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: No, two or three years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: New South Wales has a revenue of £50,000,000 a year and Western Australia a revenue of about £9,000,000 a year. What a ridiculous comparison! New South Wales is a wealthy country, with magnificent secondary industries and many independent farmers and pastoralists. That is the result of establishment in industry for more than a hundred years, compared with Western Australia.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Why should they borrow money if they are independent?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is a comparison that should not be made. The hon. member also opposed the application fees charged when a farmer makes application for wire netting. He said he could not understand why a farmer should be

asked to pay £1 per mile instead of an application fee of £1. Here again the Labour Government are doing what the hon. member's Government did; yet he cannot understand it! Was his understanding as blank as all that when he was a member of the Mitchell Government? Did he not understand then that these charges were levied?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I was not aware of it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Now that another Government are in power, he has an understanding of the position. Another complaint the hon. member made was that the Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank now demand a guarantee from the private banks before wire netting supplies can be made available to clients of those banks. I regard that as quite reasonable. I endeavoured to apply that principle when I was administering the Wire and Wire Netting Act. I endeavoured to insist that the private banks should guarantee repayments on the part of their clients. That surely is logical. Wire netting is purchased and erected in order to make the security better. Farmers have written to me and said that if they secured wire netting supplies, they could make their properties pay. If wire netting improves the security, why should not the banks pay? It will provide the banks with better returns, so why should those institutions loaf on the State? The banks reap the benefit, and they are profit-making concerns. A few days ago a report in the Press showed that the liabilities of the private banks had been reduced by some millions of pounds. Does the Acting Leader of the Opposition call himself a patriot and claim that he truly represents the interests of the community when he can suggest that the Government must find the money, and provide wire netting to improve the security in the interests of the private banks? Is that what the hon. member suggested?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: No.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Well, then, what is the complaint about? There is no cause for complaint. The Agricultural Bank will not do it. Let the private banks do it, for it is their property, their security, and it is their business to safeguard their own security. Certainly the State will not do it. I think the hon. member must have gone through all the highways and byways searching for com-

plaints against the Government. Some of them a schoolboy should not have brought forward, let alone the Acting Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Yet they seem to be worrying you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I listened with pleasure last night to the speech made by the member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick). It revealed a well-informed, thoughtful mind. That hon. member was above bringing along these piffling complaints. The Acting Leader of the Opposition criticised some evidence given to the Royal Commission on Bulk Handling by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox). In doing so he said he wished to be fair and not misrepresent the member for South Fremantle. Yet the Acting Leader of the Opposition recently told the House a ridiculous story about some person being sent up to poison rabbits on an abandoned farm on which there was a caretaker. His criticism was puerile; merely some piffling gossip he had heard and which he thought he would get some profit out of by repeating it in the House. In any case, was there any harm in giving the caretaker of an abandoned farm a hand in his work? The hon. member gave no name by which the instance could be traced, but this is not the first time he has made statements in which there is not one tittle of truth. In March last he addressed a meeting at Ballidu at which he attacked the Government for what he called their vicious opposition to the bulk handling scheme which had been so helpful to farmers. He said it was the only instance in his experience in which a Government had refused to accept a loan of £150,000 to provide a convenience for the benefit of the people. This is the man who wants to be fair and not misrepresent anybody! He goes out to Ballidu and makes a statement which was not at all fair. It is true that a Government refused a loan of £150,000 to enable the Fremantle Harbour Trust to erect bulk handling facilities. Mr. Thomson, the Manager of Westralian Farmers, and Mr. J. S. Teasdale, the President of the Primary Producers, both made the statement in evidence before the Bulk Handling Commission in March and April last. But it was the previous Government, in which the hon. member was Minister for Agriculture, which refused that sum, notwith-

standing which the hon. member talked to a meeting of Ballidu people about the vicious opposition of the present Government in refusing £150,000 to be spent in the interests of the farmers. Now, I do not dislike the hon. member at all.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I am glad to know that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not dislike him, but I want him to understand that he cannot indulge in such tactics if he wishes to be regarded as fair. As Acting Leader of the Opposition in this House he certainly ought to be fair. I should say that the only possible excuse he could offer for that statement was that he made it in ignorance. But he makes no such explanation; he just sits there and says nothing. I certainly advise him to admit that he made it in ignorance of the facts. The hon. member also declared that the farmers' interests were being neglected while the Government were spending huge sums of money in the metropolitan area. That was dealt with by the Premier last night, and so I will not say anything about it, except to remark that I heard that statement in the Avon electorate. Of course that unfair statement was made for a purpose, in order to induce the farmers to believe that the Government were neglecting them and looking after metropolitan interests. He spoke of the many thousands of pounds being spent on the improvement of the foreshore in Perth Water. Well, members of this House know exactly what is being done. It is a magnificent work, and it will result in a very large area of reclaimed land which will be worth hundreds of thousands of pounds. If the hon. member had first said to himself that he was opposed to the project, and therefore did not like to see the Government embarking upon the work, and if in order to be fair he went along and had a look at what was being done, he could not have failed to see how estimable a work it is. To-day we have virtually no land at all in the metropolitan area: it has all been taken up, but this reclamation work in Perth Water will produce a large area of land of high value, and it will all be the property of the State. The cost, namely £1,000 per month, is a cheap price to pay for the land that is being created. Despite what the hon. member has said, it is a wonderful work. In New Zealand is a city a part of

which is built on reclaimed land which to-day is worth millions of pounds. Yet the hon. member complains of the expenditure of a miserable £1,000 per month upon reclaiming land which will belong to the people of the State. Hon. members must know that it would have been a foolish statement for anybody to make, let alone the Acting Leader of the Opposition. During the Avon by-election the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. C. G. Latham) made some extraordinary statements. Amongst other things, he said that the farmers paid all the taxes; they paid for everything. That is by no means correct, but I will deal with that point later. The hon. member proceeded to say that unless the Government gave more consideration to the farmers, the farmers would not pay for the beautification scheme being carried out on the Swan River. If the farmer is down and out, and paying no taxation, how can he be paying for that scheme? How can an individual who has nothing, and pays no taxation, pay for any scheme? Would it not be more correct to say that the people on the goldfields are paying for that scheme? Such a statement is not made by goldfields members, because they would not be guilty of uttering anything so puerile. It is true that remarks of that kind sometimes win elections. The Leader of the National Party once won an election on the goldfields on the strength of his criticism of Government expenditure on a snakehouse at the Zoo. The Government were spending a couple of hundred pounds on that work. Another Government who built the ballroom at Government House were defeated on that issue at an election. The ballroom, however, has proved very useful and we have all enjoyed ourselves there. The Acting Leader of the Opposition concluded his speech in a very amiable vein. He had complained of everything and condemned everything that the Government had done, and then finished in a most amiable mood. I suppose he knew that his turn to be criticised was coming. He said that he had tried to be fair in his criticism and had criticised the Government where he thought they were entitled to it, and had commended them where he thought commendation was justified. He went on to say that, as he had not the slightest desire to be unfair, he had endeavoured to be, and thought he had succeeded in being, fair in his criticism of the Government.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Why do not you reciprocate?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member trusted that members would exhibit that spirit of sweet reasonableness and compromise regarding the legislation to be placed before them, which was absolutely necessary if our labours were to be crowned with success. I have read his speech and have failed to find anything like sweet reasonableness or compromise in it. I wish now to reply to a few statements made by the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) during the course of his speech. He stated that I had informed a deputation that the Government would not consider the farmers because the farmers had never supported the Government. There is not a tittle of truth in that statement. The statement that was made last evening was correct. The hon. member, when he came to me, was always accompanied by a pressman and always came to get an advertisement, but no pressman has ever recorded that statement. It is true that when Mr. Bradley asked me about Mr. Collier's promise, I replied, "Well, you reject a policy and then you demand it." If anyone rejects a certain policy, he is not logically entitled to it, and that is what I told Mr. Bradley. It was the logical reply. But the Government have never adopted that attitude. If we had adopted that attitude, we would not have done for the farmers the things that we have done.

Mr. Boyle: I have corroboration: I was not alone.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The corroboration the hon. member would bring I would suspect.

Mr. Boyle: Of course you would.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member, on that deputation, brought a pressman without having consulted me. The hon. member was there to get an advertisement, but although there was a pressman present, the hon. member's own newspaper did not publish it. The paper quoted what I said to Mr. Bradley, which was correct. Now I have to apologise to the member for Sussex (Mr. Brockman). When I entered the House the other night and heard the hon. member saying he had been informed that I had said certain things regarding his activities, I understood he was supporting the reference made by the member for Avon. I denied his statement by interjection and made him withdraw it. Now I propose to give the facts. The hon. member was right and I was wrong. In my office I was in-

formed that the hon. member had been speaking to settlers and had advised them not to pay, and I said it was a very foolish attitude for the hon. member to adopt. That information came to me officially. It was stated to me on the very best authority. What Mr. Brockman complained of is a fact; I did say it. It was not said maliciously, as Mr. Brockman knows. Consequently, the statement that I denied the other night through a misapprehension should not have been denied. As I have already stated, I thought at the time that the hon. member was repeating the statement that had been made by Mr. Boyle. The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) says he will bring corroboration. Where does the corroboration come in? Only a few months ago in this very House the Leader of the party to which he belongs said that the hon. member's word was no good. He went even further and said that his oath was no good. This appears in "Hansard."

Mr. Boyle: That is not to say the remark is true.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Look at the company the hon. member is keeping! If his leader can say that sort of thing about him, what else can he be but suspect? A little later on that leader was on the same platform as the hon. member and was supporting him. What worse thing could be said about any hon. member than was said about the member for Avon by his own leader, and yet a few weeks later at Merredin his leader was on the same platform with him. I do not want to say any more about that. We found it very difficult to understand the hon. member's attitude in general. He admitted last night he had stated publicly that the Country Party had never done anything for the farmers, and that the Labour Party had done everything. What is he doing there, and what was he doing when he opposed a Labour candidate? What was he doing when he supported a party which he said had done nothing for the farmers, and opposed a party which he said had done everything?

Mr. Boyle: I have been a member of this party for 15 years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In view of his remarks, why did he oppose the Labour Party? The words were almost straight from his mouth at the time when he took the platform as a Country Party candidate. He now says that I stated cer-

tain things. I have denied that. At all times I have had the courage to admit it when I have been in the wrong. I deny the statements he has made, but I did say the things the member for Greenough (Mr. Patriek) declared last night I had said. If the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) continues to make statements in this House such as he has already made, there will be a lot of trouble coming to him. Last night the Premier told the House what the Government had done for the farmers, and replied to the charge that we have no agricultural conscience. What he said is correct. It is all on record. The Government are still behind the agricultural industry. I take this attitude concerning the member for Avon. I never believed for a moment that his support of the Labour Party was genuine. Members generally know my point of view. When the hon. member came to see me I always gave him to understand that whatever the Government did or were proposing to do would not be influenced by him or his organisation, that whatever we did it was our duty to do. I gave him to understand that if he and his friends had proposals to submit to us we were prepared to listen to them with respect, but were not necessarily going to accept them. That is the policy we pursued. The hon. member referred various matters to me and I listened to him, but I knew perfectly well that at the first opportunity he would be where I see him to-night.

Mr. Boyle: You were a good judge.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The record of the Government in agricultural achievements has not been equalled in this or any other State. The Premier last night gave the record of the Government in railway construction. In a few short years the Collier Government constructed 500 miles of railway. The member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) knows what the Scaddan Government did. The present Government also entered upon a great programme of water supplies, the cost of which was £673,000. Those schemes which to-day are of very great advantage to people who were sorely beset for the want of water are still being carried on. If we have no agricultural conscience why are we harnessing the granite rocks and boring in dozens of parts of the agricultural areas for water? In the Pingelly electorate I have seen some of the magnificent work that is being carried out



by the Government in conformity with their policy. If we had no agricultural conscience, should we be establishing water supplies in the area covered by the 3,500 farms scheme? The Government are providing magnificent water supplies throughout the farming areas, and are still pursuing that policy.

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

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I wish to place on record the achievements of the Collier Government in regard to farmers' legislation which has been of vast benefit to the State. It was the Labour Party which established the first Agricultural College in Western Australia. The matter had been discussed for many years, but it is to the credit of this party that the Agricultural College exists. There are now five experimental farms in Western Australia; previously there were six. Three were established by the last Collier Government. I could claim that we established the Wongan Hills experimental farm, because the previous Government merely selected the land; but I have no desire to do that. The three experimental farms established by this Government are at Dampewah, Ghooli near Southern Cross, and Salmon Gums: that is to say, in the localities where they ought to be established. When the braxy-like disease appeared in this country, the Director of Agriculture appointed Dr. Bennetts, and gave him this particular work. Dr. Bennetts solved the problem. No direct attention had ever been given to the question of that disease until Labour took office. As regards legislation, the Primary Products Marketing Bill was introduced, but failed to become law because of the hostility of the party opposite. The Cattle Compensation Act was passed to compensate owners whose stock had been destroyed because of tuberculosis, and who, prior to the passing of the measure, had no means whatever of obtaining compensation. Again, the Labour Government passed an Act to provide a fund for the destruction of vermin. If the administration of that Act is without funds to-day, that is largely due to the want of foresight displayed by the board into whose hands the administration of the fund was given. We re-organised the group settlements. Although the Government were criticised for abandoning 800 locations, not more than ten, I think, of

those abandoned locations have been taken up again, and in every case they have been promptly dropped again. Hon. members who doubt that should go and see what has happened in those localities. Even the abandoned holdings on the Peel Estate which might be of some value because of their nearness to the city remain abandoned, which is proof that the Government's action was fully justified. Another Administration spent 2½ million pounds there, and I say nothing more than that members can see the result for themselves. At Herdsman's Lake the National Government spent £200,000. It is most surprising that when they purchased the lake, they did not also purchase the foreshore. The thing is beyond my comprehension, but there it is. The locality is only an hour's journey from the city, and yet the National Government, while purchasing the lake, did not purchase the foreshore. So the Labour Government had to set about obtaining the foreshore. I can claim, too, that the Labour Government established the abattoirs at Midland Junction, and made them comprehensive. There the matter was in our hands; and we fixed the fees, when times were good and people had plenty of money, so that the expenditure incurred might come back quickly. We spent £100,000 on those abattoirs, and the capital was returned. The charges were reduced with safety, because the establishment was in a sound position. The Agricultural Bank Act as amended last year, gave the Commissioners power to write down or suspend debts, and the administration has already started on the reorganisation of group settlement. I hope that the powers given to the Agricultural Bank Commissioners will be used wisely in the interests of the country and of the farmer as well. Last year we amended the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act so as to provide that debts should be compulsorily written down if four-fifths of the creditors in value agreed to that course. The Dairy Products Marketing Act introduced by the former Minister for Agriculture gives the butter producers the control of their industry, with the result that whereas last year butter fat realised 10d. per lb., this year it has realised 12½d. per lb.

Mr. Thorn: That is organised marketing, is it not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Mr. Thorn: Carry on with it: continue the good work.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** The Dried Fruits Marketing Act was introduced by a Labour Government, and the hon. member interjecting exists and thrives by it. That was due to the present Labour Government. The Land Act was consolidated since we took office, and provision was made under it to extend the term for the payment of rents from 25 years to 30 years. I acknowledge the assistance I received from members of the Country Party with regard to that particular legislation, and more particularly from their Leader, Hon. C. G. Latham. Power was also taken under the Land Act last year to revalue repurchased estates, and the interest rate on discharged soldier settlement properties in repurchased estates was reduced from 6 per cent. to 4½ per cent. as from the 1st January, 1934. The rate of interest charged to selectors on the value of improvements existing at the time of selection was reduced from 7 per cent. to 5 per cent. That was legislation that the Government which members opposite supported could have passed, but failed to do so. As further evidence of practical administration on the part of the present Government, attention has been given to the problem of alkali-affected areas, and a comprehensive soil survey of the whole of the Salmon Gums-Esperance area was undertaken. Dr. Teakle and his staff have been engaged on that work for two years, ever since the present Government assumed office. The whole of that area has been investigated, and the work is now nearing completion. The Agricultural Bank will, I am sure, deal with the area on the basis of the investigations that have been carried out. The whole work has been carried out on a systematic basis. Every farm has been examined and the whole area mapped, showing the locations where crops cannot be grown, where grasses will flourish, and where crops can be grown with safety. It will therefore be seen that the whole area has been properly classified so that people who desire to take up land or already have holdings, now know just where it is dangerous to attempt to grow crops and where they can grow grasses. It has been a most comprehensive undertaking. While it may mean that there will be a reduction to 150 settlers where hundreds have been allowed to take up holdings, I

think it will be agreed that the adoption of the steps I have indicated, provides the only method by which the mallee country can be retained and converted into a satisfactory farming proposition.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Do you say that that work has been proceeding for two years only?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Yes.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Dr. Teakle started his work in my time.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I instructed Dr. Teakle to undertake the work. Prior to that, he was sent here and there, north, south and east, and I protested against such a procedure.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Dr. Teakle was in the Salmon Gums area before the last elections.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I protested against his services being utilised in such an indiscriminate and unsatisfactory manner, and I instructed him to proceed on a definite line of investigation. If the hon. member contests that statement, I will place the files on the table.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I know he was doing that class of work before.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I directed that he should proceed upon a properly laid-out plan of operations. When the work I have referred to has been completed, it is proposed to continue this policy in other settled portions of the State, where signs of alkali threaten the agricultural industry. It is true that prior to this, Dr. Teakle investigated the position on individual farms in various localities. The practice was that if a farmer wrote to the Department saying that salt was making its appearance on his holding, Dr. Teakle was sent to the farm to carry out investigations. Since the advent of the Labour Government, Dr. Teakle proceeded on a comprehensive investigation of a district for the first time. That system will be continued in other areas in order to put settlement on a more satisfactory basis. By this means there will be orderly, consistent progress, from which we may expect to obtain the best results. We have been told by members of the Opposition—their Leader, Hon. C. G. Latham emphasised the point at Merredin—that the farmers paid all the taxes, and that taxation had been increased. The present Government have not increased any tax the farmer pays. The man on the land does

not pay any land tax. As members know that impost has been suspended. With regard to the income tax, the amount paid by the farmers is infinitesimal. Of £115,000 received last year under the heading of "Income Tax," farmers paid £3,287. That is all. There are slightly over 10,000 wheat farmers in Western Australia, and last year 10,337 wheat bounty claims were submitted for payment. Only 76 of these were rejected, because the farmers concerned had a taxable income.

Mr. Patrick: That refers to the Federal tax.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Despite the fact that only 76 farmers possessed taxable incomes last year, we have been told that the farmers provide all the money for everything. I propose to tell members something of what the Government are doing for the farmers, and about the money they are paying for, or on behalf of, the farmers. I do not propose to take into account the amounts paid in sustenance or the guarantees by the Agricultural Bank for fertiliser and other supplies. The latter itself represents a substantial amount. The interest owing to the Agricultural Bank has fallen into arrears by an additional £900,000 since the present Government assumed office, and the Government have to find money to pay interest on loans borrowed for agricultural development, which the farmers are unable to pay. The arrears of interest to the 30th June last amounted to £3,063,457, and to finance this leeway at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., the Government are required to find, on behalf of the farmers, an additional £138,000 per annum. That money is needed to pay interest not on Agricultural Bank loans, but on arrears of interest. I have not calculated what the Government are called upon to pay on the total expenditure; I will go into that later on. Then again, vast sums have been spent in providing water supplies in the agricultural areas, and water rates are in arrears to the extent of £150,000. I have already told the House that we have paid the Commonwealth Government £41,000 in excess of the money paid by the farmers for wire-netting supplies, and another payment is due in December. The latter will amount to another £40,000 odd, making a total of £80,000 owing under that head. Outstanding land rents now amount to £996,000, of which £164,000 represents rent due in respect of soldier settlement on repurchased estates, and on ordinary repurchased estates, £108,000 is owing. While these outstand-

ing rents may have an influence on the revenue that the Government would ordinarily receive, that phase does not represent such a handicap as the outstanding rents on repurchased estates, because interest has to be paid on money that has actually been paid out in respect of those repurchased estates. The Government have not received money respecting the other estates, although we may some day obtain it. The figures I have given do not include expenditure on group settlement at all, respecting which we have not received anything. That expenditure amounts to £7,000,000, and we get practically no return for that. Now I think I have told the House something of what the Government have done for the farmers. I could tell much more, but it would not be fair to take up the time of the House.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Oh, go on.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, it would only weary members, and I think that would be unfair. Complaint has been made about the refusal of the Agricultural Bank Commissioners to meet members. I must protest against the statement made by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn).

Mr. Thorn: Why not cut that out, too?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Also I protest against the statement of the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney), who ought to know better. He criticised the Agricultural Bank Commissioners on their administration. He was once an officer of the Bank and if he had any knowledge at all, he would be aware that it is unfair to expect the commissioners to declare a policy in the absence of facts. Those commissioners have a most gigantic scheme of settlement to handle, and they are entitled to get a grip of the position, which will take some time. But it would be extremely foolish for them to announce their policy before they know all the facts, and I say that no member is justified in threatening the commissioners in order to stampede them into an action which might result prejudicially to the State.

Mr. Doney: I did not threaten them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I feel sure the House will not tolerate members attacking the commissioners unfairly. If those commissioners do their job right by this country, they will deserve the thanks of the country, but they must have time in which to do it. There are people in the country—not members of Parliament—who

are staging an agitation in order to get publicity in the Press and to repeat what they have done in the past, namely, force the hands of the Bank authorities, but I feel sure they will not be able to do it with the present commissioners, who undoubtedly will act fairly and justly.

Mr. Doney: We have not questioned that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: To-day they are having stock taken of all the securities of the Bank and are considering the valuations, which, of course, will take time. They have announced their policy in regard to group settlement, and the best friends of the group settlers will advise them to endeavour to meet the expectations of the commissioners. The member for Sussex (Mr. Brockman) engaged in some criticism to which I propose to reply briefly. He referred to stock being sold at very low prices and stated, that this was due to the operation of Sections 51 and 52 of the Agricultural Bank Act, 1934. Those sections give the Bank a lien on all stock, including that privately acquired, but the commissioners have not required any stock to be sold on that account. They have offered the settlers the privilege of removing and selling it, after obtaining consent, with replacement by Bank stock, or, alternatively, retaining it and the value to be credited to either their principal or their interest account. What could be more reasonable? Yet we are told that Sections 51 and 52 of the Agricultural Bank Act are compelling the settlers to sell their stock. I want members in their own interests not to take too much notice of this agitation which is going on. The commissioners are interpreting those two sections of the Act generously, and political agitation to prevent them carrying out the decision of Parliament can have no beneficial result. If a settler sells his good stock, what sort of a settler is he? If the settlers sell good stock rather than have it taken over by the commissioners and the value credited to the interest on their holdings, then they have no interest in their properties. No man who wants to progress would sell his stock to escape any portion of his just liabilities. I had a personal experience when the slump occurred. My bank asked me for more security on my stock. I reminded the bank that they had never had any trouble with me, but they said it was an instruction, and that more security must be provided. I

complied, but did not sell my good stock. What can the House think of a settler who sells his good stock instead of giving security? The Bank will credit the value in interest, so what could be more reasonable? As I say, the settler who sells his stock in preference to paying his debts is not much of a settler. The hon. member said that some of the settlers had sold surplus stock at half-a-crown per head. It is well known that the improved land in the South-West will not maintain very many cattle. There is no getting away from that, and so, of course, some of the stock may have to be sold. I have seen starved stock down there for which I would not give 5s. per head, and, of course, if the pasture is insufficient some of the stock must be sold. On the Murchison I have seen thousands of stock for sale, and if the situation had not been saved by a good season they would have been sold, some of them at 1s. a head. There is always an explanation for things of that sort, and members will realise that there must be justification for them. Then the hon. member stated that three men were being employed by the Government at a depot at a remuneration of 15s. per week, excluding keep. He said this was a very nice action on the part of the Government. However, the statement is denied point blank by the commissioners of the Agricultural Bank; they say they employ no men whatever to milk cows. I was aware of that, but nevertheless, I made inquiries. It is true that at some depots the Bank employs one caretaker, and when he milks 20 or more cows, he receives £6 per month minimum plus 50 per cent. of the excess proceeds with a monthly maximum payment of £11. The caretaker may employ men to milk, which is his own business, but the statement that three men were employed to milk 35 cows, which gave only five gallons of milk, is obviously absurd. Remembering that a kerosene tin contains four gallons, let members visualise the position: Three men employed to milk 35 cows, which produce only a kerosene tin and a quarter of milk! It is so highly improbable that I can only think the hon. member must have been dreaming. What man in his right mind would employ three men to milk 35 cows, giving only 5 gallons of milk? We have heard some tall stories in the House, but that beats all. The Leader of the National Party indulged in

some criticism regarding the mining laws and mining administration. He protested against companies floating properties which were worthless. He knows all about it, and he knows what has happened before, and what will always happen when everything is prosperous. The same sort of thing happened here when the land boom was on, in the good times. I know people in this State who took up sandplain along the Midland line and hawked it about Adelaide, telling people there that advances in respect to it would be made by the Agricultural Bank, and some of those unfortunate people gave their houses as a deposit on the land. It is very difficult to combat that sort of thing. The Mines Department could not do as the hon. member desires. The hon. member suggested that a scientific examination should be made of a mine.

Hon. N. Keenan: No, I said it would be impossible.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, the hon. member said that in the second breath. I am taking it from the hon. member's speech; he said it ought to be done and then he said it was impossible. A mine might be examined to-day and have the hall-mark of approval placed on it, but a month hence it might not be a mine at all. Then it would be contended that the Government had misled investors, and there would be claims for compensation. The Government could not possibly place themselves in that position. The hon. member also spoke of giving the warden power to forfeit. That cannot be done either. The warden can only recommend; the forfeiture must be a matter for the Minister. Otherwise grave doubts would arise as to security of tenure, and that would be highly disadvantageous in the mining industry. What the mining companies seek is security of tenure and that power could not possibly be vested in the warden. It must be left to the administration. Regarding reservations, I have some sympathy with the hon. member's complaints. I am only Acting Minister for Mines, but every second man who comes to the office wants to see me about a reservation and I do not want to see him. Reservations in some instances are justified; in other instances they are unjustified. I admit that I have granted two reservations, but in both instances I asked the mining in-

spector to consult the prospectors in the vicinity, and they gave their approval. They said they wanted the ground tried out. The reservations must be defined. Many of the complaints received were that strips of country were taken up as reservations, and that when a prospector discovered a show, he was told that it was on somebody's reservation. To-day the reservation has to be defined and pegs have to be put down. Thus that controversy will be ended. The policy of reservations began with the Government of which the hon. member was a member. In fact, it flourished during his administration. All the major reservations that exist to-day were granted by the Mitchell-Latham Government. There are 38 reservations in all, and they include all the major reservations of which complaint is being made. They were granted in the year 1930-31 when the member for Nedlands was a Cabinet Minister. Though I am merely acting Minister for Mines, I should like people to understand that it is of little use their coming to me for reservations. I am not at all keen about granting them. Still, the policy of granting reservations has not been without good results. Many of the mines floated in this State during the last year or two have resulted from investigations on reservations. The Leader of the National Party was not correct in doubting whether the Minister had power to grant reservations. Under the Mining Act the Minister would not have power to grant authority to carry on mining operations, but reservations are granted to permit of investigations being carried out. Immediately the investigations have been completed, the holders of the reservation apply for a lease and then begin mining operations. Hence the Minister had power to do all that has been done. I wish now to give attention to some complaints voiced by the member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick). I wish to compliment the hon. member on the thoughtful speech he delivered last night, a speech that every member enjoyed.

Members: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was the sort of speech that I would expect from him. I have known the hon. member for over 30 years and I can say that where he is now, he always was, and where I am now I always have been. He complained that the administration of the relief provided by the Commonwealth Government for farmers

in necessitous circumstances was being carried out unfairly. If that is so, I plead that I am acting legally. I do not claim to be morally correct, but I do claim that my interpretation is backed by the legal authority, not only of Western Australia, but of the Commonwealth. I am not going to have the Auditor General complain that the money has been administered contrary to the Federal Act and have it said of me, as was recently said by the Federal Attorney General, that the Government had done something which it had no legal right to do, even though it had a moral right. I will not take that risk. I am abiding by the decision of the law officers of the State and of the Commonwealth. Last year the Commonwealth Government provided £4,000,000 to assist the wheatgrowers, and of that amount £500,000 was retained to meet the needs of farmers in necessitous circumstances. Of the total, £137,000 was granted to Western Australia. Of the £4,000,000 provided in the first instance, Western Australia received £1,300,000, and from that we paid to all farmers, irrespective of their financial position, a bonus of 3s. per acre and 3d. per bushel. I know the intention of the Federal Government; no man knows it better. I attended the conference at Canberra when the matter was decided in December last. I know the discussion that took place, and I know that the decision arrived at between the representatives of the States and the Prime Minister was that £500,000 should be provided for necessitous farmers only. Furthermore, I gave that information to the Press when I returned to this State. The President of the Primary Producers' Association, Mr. Teasdale, later questioned my interpretation and said the association would see that every wheatgrower participated, regardless of his financial position. He further stated that they would influence their representatives in the Federal Parliament to ensure that every wheatgrower should participate. I admit that the Bill, as introduced into the Federal Parliament, providing for the distribution of the £500,000 in Australia, of which £137,000 was allotted to Western Australia, left it open to the Minister to exercise his judgment, or, as the member for Greenough would say, his own common sense. When the Bill was before the Federal Parliament, however, it was amended to apply to the wheatgrowers in the State who satisfied the prescribed authority of the State that they were in adverse

financial circumstances and that, in the production of crops from wheat sown by them during the year 1934, they had suffered serious loss by reason of (a) specially adverse seasonal conditions; or (b) extensive damage to those crops arising from the prevalence of pests or disease. It must be borne in mind that not only must they be in adverse circumstances but must also have suffered losses from drought or other causes. The fact that they are in adverse circumstances is not sufficient qualification; that they are in adverse financial circumstances and have also suffered through drought, disease, etc., is the only justification. Dr. Page was over here recently and I discussed this matter with him. He said my interpretation was the right and only one. I ask the member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) what he has to say in the face of these facts? He ought not to complain. If the Act had been administered as he suggested, there would have been very little money to distribute throughout the State, and his own electors would have suffered with the electors of other districts.

Mr. Patrick: They could still have come in under the second part.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They had to satisfy the prescribed authority that they were in adverse financial circumstances, and that in that year they had suffered losses through drought, pests, etc. They had to do both those things.

Mr. Patrick: I was referring mostly to the second part.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Those are the facts. I have to comply with the law; otherwise people would want to know why I had not done so. I have the confirmation of Dr. Page, as published in the Press by him, that he endorses my interpretation of the Act. What have members opposite to say about that? Furthermore, it is the commonsense interpretation. This money is raised by a flour tax, which is imposed upon people in other walks of life in necessitous circumstances. Would it be fair, as Mr. Teasdale endeavoured to have it, that this money which comes from people in other walks of life in necessitous circumstances, should be used to provide special assistance for people who are not in necessitous circumstances or financially embarrassed?

Mr. Patrick: A flour tax applies to all.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It will not be done in that way. The Act will be administered according to the advice of the Crown Law Department and of the Federal Government. Of all members of the House the member for Greenough has less cause for complaint than any other. Of the amount retained from necessitous cases his constituents have received most, because of my interpretation, and it has been paid not as a dole but in very substantial amounts. One other complaint of the hon. member deserves mention, and that refers to the appointment of commissioners of the Agricultural Bank. He does not complain regarding the personnel of the commission, for I think he approves of it, but he said the Government should have called for applications and that he objected to the method by which the appointments were made. Can the House understand anything more fatuous than that applications should be invited for positions of such responsibility, positions that had to be filled by men possessing exceptional qualifications? If applications had been invited we would have had a committee of the House still sitting to deliberate upon them. The matter was the cause of great anxiety to the Government. A member of the hon. member's own executive could have had a position as commissioner. He was invited to accept such a position, but I regret to say he declined to do so. So fair were the Government that we even offered one of those positions to a member of the hon. member's own executive. Nothing could have been fairer. It is not a question of the method adopted, for the important thing is that the appointments were the right ones. Who is there to cavil at in the appointees? We all know Mr. McCallum. Members have made up their minds regarding him. I discussed Mr. Clarke's qualifications with members representing the South-West. There was nothing underhand about the appointment, and they approved of it. I think they told me he was the best man in the South-West. I do not know whether he is or not. His farming experience has been sound and profitable. As chairman of the South-West Co-operative Dairy Products, Ltd., he helped to organise the butter industry. He made that a success. Not only has he had experience as a farmer, but he has had business experience

as well. He has shown all-round capacity. What could be better than that? The Government did not make party appointments but we took the best men available. We did not appoint Mr. McCallum because he was incompetent and might have lost his seat in Parliament, but we selected the best men, and that is all that could be expected of any Government. I would conclude by saying that whilst the position of the industries administered by the Lands Department might be better and happier for those engaged in them, I do not think there is any reason, apart from exceptional circumstances that may arise, why those people should be discouraged. I read with interest the reports of the Primary Producers' Conference last week. Whilst I disagreed with many of the recommendations and much of what was said there, I have to congratulate members of the Country Party upon their silence. They did not give themselves away. In that respect they "played safe." It is, in my opinion, beyond the capacity of this small population to pay all the debts of the farmers, and put them in the satisfactory position they think they ought to occupy. In paying their interest, in allowing their dues to stand over, in giving them protective legislation and affording them a helpful hand at every turn, we are doing our best. They must look forward to the day when prosperity will return to the industry. The wheels must go round. Mining is on top one day—it was on top years ago, and went down—and other industries come round to the top, in turn. In this country it is no use side-stepping the position. We as farmers have to produce all we can on our holdings to maintain ourselves upon them, to maintain our home life and our families. We always have some little side-lines to sell. Successful farming in this country was never carried out by concentration on one line alone. A Pressman, representing a certain newspaper, said to me the other day that the wheatgrower ought to grow wheat, and nothing else. I do not hold with that policy. The man who does that must collapse. The man who will succeed on his farm is he who will grow wheat, rear sheep, cattle, pigs and poultry, and have his garden. He must exercise proper household economy, spend as little as possible, and buy as little as possible. He is the man who will make the farm support him. He will always have something to sell. That is the only way in which the farmer can safely face the future in this country.

**HON. W. D. JOHNSON** (Guildford-Midland) [8.20]: I have been somewhat slow in taking part in this annual Parliamentary marathon. It is not because I am out of form: it was purely because the work has been going on so persistently and so ably in the cleaning-up of our friends on the Opposition benches that I came to the conclusion there was very little need for me to take a hand. The Minister for Lands has just completed a very able reply to our friends in Opposition. He has given the House a fund of information that has proved highly interesting to every member. I desire to congratulate the Minister for Lands on his speech of this evening. It is one of the best I have heard him make for many a long day. The speech was called for, as we are approaching the period when the facts must become known. The Minister must not let the Opposition get away with any misapprehensions or mis-statements, because of the effect they might have in some quarters. Therefore the Government acted wisely in replying to the criticisms levelled at them. However, there are one or two matters on which I desire to comment. In the first place I wish to cross swords with the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) in regard to his observations on the failure of the Secession delegation. The hon. member evidently hears the echo of his speeches and the opinions he so frequently expressed just previously to the last general election. He conveyed the idea then that Western Australia merely had to put its case before the Parliament of Westminster for that Parliament to fall over itself in its eagerness to grant Dominion status to Western Australia by amending the Commonwealth Constitution Act. That was the impression I gathered from his frequent speeches during the period when the subject of secession was receiving so much public attention. It is true the hon. gentleman did express other views, but that phase has already been narrated. We know that on one occasion in this House the hon. member expressed diametrically contrary opinions. Before the delegation went to London many people, with just as much claim to speak authoritatively on Constitutional matters, expressed an opinion opposed to that expressed by the member for Nedlands. Those people maintained that it would be constitutionally improper for the Parliament of Westminster to intervene in something which it would be bound to regard as a purely domestic dispute confined to

Australia, and Australia alone. The hon. member ridicules those who express such views, and now tries to convey that his opinions are still sound and that the mistake in regard to the failure of the secession delegation is due to neglect on the part of the British Parliament. I think the hon. gentleman was needlessly extravagant in the language he used. It seemed to me that he desired to get right behind that delegate who expressed in London views seeking not only to attack the British Government but also to cast reflections on the capacity of the House of Commons. The member for Nedlands was equally extravagant in his contention that all he had said regarding this matter was substantially correct, irrespective of what had been stated by the joint committee of the two Houses appointed to consider the question.

Member: Did not the Premier concur in that?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Partly; and there was some part of what the member for Nedlands said with which I agree. However, I realise that I am not competent to argue a constitutional question of this nature. Still, I maintain that it is wrong for the hon. member's views to get into "Hansard" without some reply to his contention also being placed there. In order that I might be able to furnish a reply—knowing full well that any utterance of mine on this subject would not be taken very seriously—I got into touch with Professor Beasley, of our University. I discussed with that gentleman the actual position, and ultimately he was good enough to say that he would write out his views on the matter. I now ask hon. members to bear with me while I read the opinions of the professor, who must be recognised as an authority upon constitutional matters. He writes—

The Parliament at Westminster was invited to act as a jury in the trial of an action for dissolution of partnership brought by Western Australia against the Commonwealth; and annoyance is expressed when that Parliament refused to act in any such capacity. The Joint Select Committee appointed by the Imperial Parliament was not composed of nonentities whose one idea was to escape an unpleasant task at all costs. This Committee did not deny that there exists in the King's subjects a somewhat vague right to petition His Majesty in his Parliament for the redress of their grievances; but the Committee was very careful to point out that there are some cases in which Parliament is incapable of giving any redress. It emphasised once more that the British Con-



stitution is not confined within the four corners of an Act of Parliament. It is a living, developing thing; its lack of the rigidity which we have become accustomed to associate with a written Constitution has enabled it to be moulded to meet changing circumstances and altered conditions, and has made it possible for that adaptation to take place with the minimum of delay and the minimum of friction.

The Parliament at Westminster is still legally supreme over all the King's dominions; no one denies that; no declaration such as that which is associated with the name of the late Lord Balfour—I am referring to the definition of Dominion status laid down at the Imperial Conference of 1926—and no Statute of Westminster can alter or detract from that legal supremacy. The Parliament which passed the Statute of Westminster can repeal it tomorrow; such a repeal might well be regarded as a breach of faith; it might even lead to the disruption of the Empire, but no court in any part of the British Dominions could declare such a repeal to be illegal. Nearly forty years ago, when the Bill to set up a federal system of government in Australia was about to be introduced into the House of Commons, the attitude of the Secretary of State for the Colonies (the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain) was perfectly clear. In effect he said to the people of Australia: "The time has long past since we in England think that we have the right to tell you what form of government to adopt. That is for you to decide; and now that you have decided to establish a federation, all that we have to do is to give to your proposals the formal sanction of an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It is not for us here to alter one word of your proposals, except where, in an excess of enthusiasm or, perhaps, by inadvertence, you have trespassed on what we regard as our sphere of action: subject to that one reservation, we cordially co-operate with you in bringing into effect the Constitution Bill—the whole Bill and nothing but the Bill." That was the attitude of all British statesmen and of all writers on constitutional law in 1899, that the self-governing Dominions of the Crown ought to be regarded as self-governing in every sense of the word, subject to the preservation of their common allegiance to the King and to the survival of the legal right of Parliament at Westminster to legislate for them—a right which it would not, and ought not, to exercise save in the most exceptional circumstances. But constitutional development proceeded very rapidly after 1899: within the next decade there were four great self-governing dominions of the Crown—the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Union of South Africa, and the Dominion of New Zealand—all of which felt that they should be masters in their own houses, a contention with which British statesmen never showed the slightest desire to quarrel. A constitutional convention rapidly grew up that the Parliament at Westminster would not exercise its legal right to legislate for any of the self-governing dominions except at their express request; and although it was in fact highly desirable that there should be uniformity of legislation throughout the British Em-

pire on certain topics such as naturalisation, copyright, and so on, yet it was felt to be equally desirable that such uniformity should come from the independent action of the various parts, and not be imposed upon them from Westminster. It was never suggested that the Constitution of the self-governing dominions should be exempted from the operation of this convention. It was true that all those Constitutions were contained in Acts of the Parliament at Westminster, and equally true that some of them—for example, the British North America Act of 1867 which created the Dominion of Canada—made no provision for their amendment except by Act of the Parliament which had enacted them. Nevertheless no dominion statesman, even twenty years ago, would have had the temerity to suggest that the Constitution of his country should be alterable except at the request of his country and in the manner and to the extent required by it. It cannot be said that this constitutional convention was adopted surreptitiously, without the knowledge or approval of the peoples of the self-governing dominions; on the contrary, they felt themselves fully capable of dealing unaided with their own problems and would have strongly resented any suggestion of outside interference, even from the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

The war gave a great impetus to the growth of a sentiment of nationhood in the self-governing dominions; and in Australia we came to think of ourselves as Australians first and foremost. Of course we were also British subjects; that went without saying, and we were proud of it and fully appreciated the privileges which those words connote; but we never referred to ourselves in that way, we took pride in calling ourselves Australians. Surely that insistence upon our new found nationhood meant that we were determined to be captains of our soul, masters of our own destiny; we still believed that in union lies strength, but that, so far as the British Empire is concerned, it was henceforth to be the union of equals. Australia was represented at the Imperial Conference of 1926 which was responsible for the definition of the self-governing dominions as "autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations." There was no uproar in Australia when that definition was published; no objection was raised that it did not correctly sum up the existing constitutional relationship between the members of the Imperial partnership; on the contrary, to judge from the lack of comment in Australia, the Balfour declaration contained nothing new but merely expressed in a concise form what everybody already believed to be the case.

Again there was no suggestion that the autonomy of the self-governing dominions did not go so far as to give them sole control over their constitutional enactments; in actual fact, the conference admitted that in some cases at least the legal position did not coincide with constitutional practice, and therefore it recom-

mended that steps should be taken to assimilate the two. When the Balfour declaration was drawn up in 1926, there was little talk in Western Australia of secession from the Commonwealth; and we in Western Australia would have been just as surprised and indignant as any of the other States if we had then been told that, no matter what the Balfour declaration might say, the Parliament at Westminster still had power to alter the Federal Constitution, and might conceivably do so without reference to all the States which had brought that Constitution into being. I think it is no exaggeration to say that if British statesmen, at that time, had added a reservation to the Balfour declaration that the Parliament at Westminster must still be deemed to have the right to vary the Constitution of a self-governing dominion, there would have been as much resentment in Western Australia as anywhere else. But since that time some of us have come to the conclusion that Western Australia might be better off if it cut adrift altogether from the Commonwealth; but in order to do that we should either have to persuade the other States to release us from the federal bond, or we should have to resurrect the doctrine of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament which had been buried so long that most people thought there was no doubt at all about its being well and truly dead. We chose to adopt the second course first; and there are those who express surprise and not a little indignation because the Imperial Parliament refuses to join with us in becoming grave-diggers. It had its answer ready for the delegation which I still think we were misguided enough to send, and that was: "It is true that we have the legal power to amend the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act; we have the legal power to repeal that Act and destroy federation, just in the same way as we have the legal power to repeal your Constitution Act (1890), and make you revert to the status of a Crown colony. But between the existence of a legal power and its exercise, there is often a very wide gap; things which are legally possible are often practically and politically impossible; and we have said time and time again—and you never raised any objections to our saying it—that we are not going to use our legal power to amend the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act unless we are asked to do so by all the parties who asked us to pass that Act in the first place. It may, unfortunately, be quite true that the Constitution has not worked out in practice as you expected it to do; but may we remind you that the Constitution was not of our making, that it was worked out in detail by you and by your associated partners in Australia, and that it is for you and them to make or recommend the changes which you think necessary in order to improve the federal scheme. It is all very well for you to come and ask us now to throw overboard a constitutional convention of non-interference because it suits your present purpose that we should interfere; but if we listened to your arguments and amended the Commonwealth of Australian Constitution Act so as to put you outside the federation altogether, you would subsequently be the first to complain if we proposed to alter the Constitution Act of

1890 and split up Western Australia because some dissatisfied minority within your own borders thought it would be better off if it had independence. It cannot be done; any variation of the Australian partnership known as the Commonwealth of Australia is a matter that concerns Australia, and we have said on more occasions than one that we are not going to interfere in Australian affairs until Australia asks us to do so. Your petition asks us to amend the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act; we no longer have the power to do so, because of a well recognised convention of non-interference; therefore we cannot receive a petition which asks us to exercise a power which we have already disclaimed."

That to my mind is a contribution towards consideration of our relationship of States and Commonwealth which is well worth recording in "Hansard." The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) may hold the view that the joint select committee of the Imperial Parliament were not justified in coming to the conclusion they did. But I think, realising the whole of the circumstances, and after reading this view expressed by Professor Beasley, we can come to no other conclusion than that we were ill-advised in going to the expense of sending the delegation to England, that it was bound to fail before it left, because it was asking for something which it was not possible to obtain from the Imperial Parliament. Now that the effort has been made to an extent, I trust the member for Nedlands and all other members will get behind the Premier in his determination to have the matter settled in Australia. It is true the State has suffered and is suffering as the result of the Federal policy, but we are not alone in that suffering. Ours may be more acute than the suffering of other States, but other States have grievances like our own, and therefore what we have to do is to support the Premier in his desire to get South Australia, Tasmania and possibly Queensland to associate with him so as to secure a definite policy of reform in the relations between Commonwealth and State, so that uniform representations can be made for an alteration that will give more general satisfaction to the various States. We want, of course, to strengthen our National Parliament. I will never take part in unduly weakening the National Parliament. Still I want to see justice done to the States, and particularly do I want to see that those States which are backward in development receive special consideration. After all, we require to be just in our criticism and re-

member that the Federal Government have given and are giving consideration to our conditions. The grants that have been made for roads and for agricultural assistance, all the bonuses that have been granted of material assistance to Western Australia, have not been given to this State on a population basis, but special consideration has been shown to our undeveloped conditions, our isolation, and therefore we have to be just. I think that to-day we are going about it in a wise way, by the State submitting its case to careful preparation by a special committee consisting of Treasury officials and Mr. Curtin, M.H.R., who have submitted that case to the Disabilities Commission, enumerating our special needs and disabilities. Gradually, but surely, I believe a common understanding will be arrived at. I could not quite follow the reasoning of the member for Nedlands in regard to this. He went to a great deal of trouble to point out the parlous condition of our agricultural industry. I think he rather over-painted the disabilities, but I think also the Minister for Lands has replied fairly effectively to the hon. member's comment that our industry is largely down and out. Still, the member for Nedlands went to some trouble to explain the particularly parlous condition of the wheatgrowers, and practically conveyed to the Federal people that our assets were depleted and that really we had no security to offer to anyone. Then he went on to say that the authority that controlled our loan indebtedness was lending us too much money. It is not very sound in the first place to say that the securities we relied upon in the past no longer exist and that on the depleted securities we should be able to get more money. It does not convey that we have got the sympathetic consideration of those administering the Commonwealth. Cannot we say that the loan indebtedness is not as directed by Parliament or by the Government of the day, that it has to be approved by the Loan Council, that we cannot borrow money without the approval of the Loan Council? The hon. gentleman correctly pointed out that we are in a hopeless minority when it comes to a vote at the Loan Council. That body is supreme. The Commonwealth, with the association of New South Wales and Victoria, dominate the situation. Yet with all their power, they do not dominate, but they give consideration

and help the State in its development by allowing us to build up a debt per head of the population that is high as compared with the debt of other States. Suppose the fears of the hon. member were true and that by our borrowing of to-day we are overloading posterity. I do not know who is worrying about posterity to-day. At times we used to worry whether we could pay our debts, but I do not know that anybody, except the member for Nedlands, is worrying about it at the moment. Suppose we are overloading posterity and borrowing beyond our capacity to pay, we are not alone in that. It is not this State alone that is rushing into that kind of policy; it is the Loan Council that is condoning it and assisting us in that regard, and if bankruptcy does take place, if we do go too far, it will be with the consent of those people who have to pay the bill. After all, it is the Commonwealth that is loaning us the money, and it is the Commonwealth that will have to pay if it ever happens that we are unable to meet our obligations. We have to bear in mind that there are two sides to this question, and that we are not going to help our case one bit by constantly inferring that the Commonwealth Parliament and the Commonwealth Government have no soul in regard to the isolated and undeveloped States, but that their one consideration is for New South Wales and Victoria. Of course, those States have to receive consideration in proportion to their population and to their rights, but at the same time the policy of the Commonwealth does dictate that those largely-populated States, as compared with ours, must give some of their wealth to help the undeveloped States, and that they must accept liability for the loan indebtedness that has increased as the hon. member pointed out. I long to see Western Australia get greater consideration from the Commonwealth, but I am not going to ask them to extend further consideration to us with a total disregard of what has already been done for us. I could not be expected to resume my seat without saying a word on marketing. I have been irritated by the misconceptions about marketing reform. The member for Nedlands knows nothing about it, and I am sorry to say that the Minister for Works to-night took the wrong point of view entirely. When we speak of the need for orderly marketing I would remind members that no one ever suggested

that we want it for the purpose of getting control of the local market. There is no need to organise the local market except in very isolated instances. What we want organised marketing for is for export products, and the reason we want it is not, as the member for Nedlands conveyed, to hold the stuff off the market and allow accumulations to occur so that ultimately, as in Canada, it would be necessary to unload on the market, and what little was gained to-day by keeping off the market would be lost to-morrow by going on the market. Whoever has spoken of a silly business proposition of that kind? It has never succeeded, and never will succeed.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That would not be judicious marketing.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No. What we want is statutory authority or assistance to stop competitive marketing. It is competitive marketing that is doing the harm to Western Australia. The "West Australian," in a sub-leader the other morning dealt with the unloading of wealth by Mr. Rockefeller, of the Standard Oil Trust. He unloaded a tremendous amount of his wealth for special reasons, but the newspaper outlined how he had accumulated that wealth. He accumulated it by eliminating competitive selling. He controlled a certain part of a necessary commodity that was saleable throughout the world, but just when he had created a market, competitors came in and murdered the market. He went from country to country, and each time he did something successful in the way of marketing his product, a competitor came along and undermined him. Then he set to work and, in his own country, started to get control of the output of the commodity, and gradually but surely he closed up his competitors and secured control. He did not stop the sale of the commodity: so far as my reading goes, sales were increased and expedited. He was able to test markets and create markets, knowing full well that some competitor would not be able to come along and take possession of them. What he created was his own. So he went on building up that huge Standard Oil Trust. That is the sublime; let us look at the ridiculous. When the "West Australian" newspaper wants to sell its waste-paper, it does not enter into competition with the "Sunday Times" and "Daily News." The three get together and

eliminate competitive selling by pooling all their waste paper and disposing of it through one selling organisation. So it goes on. Every successful marketing operation is achieved by organising so that disastrous competition is eliminated.

Mr. Tonkin: In other words, by creating a monopoly.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member may call it a monopoly if he likes. I believe the worker has a right to a monopoly of his labour. I believe that minorities should be crushed. I believe that the policy of preference to unionists is sound. I do not think that the large majority of workers should be undermined by those who are not loyal to principle, or by those who, in selling their labour below its value, are undermining the standard of living for others. I say it is quite right to pool and control in order to get collective bargaining in the most effective manner. Though I have subscribed to that policy and have assisted to establish it and have taken advantage of it, I am not selfish enough to say it should apply only to me or to my commodity. I say it is quite sound to eliminate competition in selling and to ensure that the disposal of any particular commodity in the export markets—I am dealing with export alone, for only with export are we concerned—shall not be liable to have values undermined and make it difficult for us to compete. Such competition should be eliminated at the earliest possible moment. I do not know whether members have any idea of the enormous number of commodities that we export. We export wool, gold, wheat, beef, flour, timber, fruit (fresh and dried), butter, fat lambs, eggs, pork, bacon, wine, pearlshell, sandalwood, kangaroo skins, and hides. I will take sleepers that are being marketed. At one stage we had an understanding in regard to the marketing of our timbers overseas. We did not allow competition to undermine the value of that commodity. We successfully established markets by understandings, so that one exporter would not take advantage of the other, and, if there were expenses due to the establishment of some new market by reason of a delegation visiting any particular part of the world, these would be borne by all, and the marketing was done in such a manner that one person would not murder the other in competition. Those days are gone. The trouble in the timber industry

is that everyone is trying to market timber, and trying to be an exporter. They are competing together in a limited market, and selling at reduced prices. The standard of living in the timber industry will continue to cause trouble whilst that prevails. The workers will have just cause for complaint, because the timber industry requires to be organised. We want to cut out the competition that is going on to-day in the limited market, and so arrange things that one producer of sleepers will not murder another. Take our butter. Some organisation is required there, compared with what we have. Some attempt has been made to organise the dairying industry. The trouble to-day is that we have such an enormous number of factories that it is apparently impossible for the Agricultural Department effectively to police them. Because there is such a limited market available to these factories they resort to all manner of schemes for the selling of their commodity. Inferior butter is made, and second-grade cream is paid for as first-grade in order to get that particular supplier to patronise a given factory. All these things are done because the industry is overloaded. The overheads are too great. If we organised industry on a sensible basis we would register our butter factories so that we would not have a multiplicity of them, all struggling against each other. When the State demanded an improvement in the quality of accommodation in hotels, and that the hotels themselves should give greater attention to the needs of the travelling public, how did we set about it? We said we could not do that to-day because there were too many hotels, and the patronage for each was not sufficient to enable all to do justice to it. We said the first thing to do was to wipe out a number of the hotels. We then guaranteed to give a sufficient number in proportion to the needs of the population. We also guaranteed that each one would give an adequate service to its clients. We know what has been accomplished. Western Australia stands out in the Commonwealth as the country where hotel accommodation is superior to that in any other part of Australia. It is the comment of visitors that we have been able to create a standard of which the State has reason to be proud. That was done by organisation. It was effected by cutting down the murderous competition that was going on, and enabling the surviving hotels to give service on a reasonable basis. I deal with these matters

regularly. With regard to the export of commodities in which I am interested, we try to give service to the producers, but are faced with grave difficulties. We are not doing all we might do with respect to our fat lambs. We have created a really good market, but that market will not and cannot be maintained under the existing system. The local market is absorbing quite a number of the best of the lambs which should be exported. It is impossible to organise the market on a basis that will give the best competing opportunity on the other side of the globe, and at the same time give a proper organised return to the producers at this end. That industry is crying out for reform. These things can only be effected by legislation. We have accomplished something in the dried fruit industry. That is on a satisfactory basis now. The local price has not been interfered with. It is reasonable and comparable with that in any other part of Australia. I do not think anyone complains of the price of dried fruit in this State. We have organised the industry, and have established something that is an advantage to the producer. The export trade to-day is organised so that the producer sends a quota of his production out of the State. He markets his products now under organised and regulated conditions. I ask the House to assist the Government to consider this question of marketing. I assure the Minister for Lands there is no need to interfere with local marketing. There may be local cases of need for interference, such as in the milk industry. As we go along we may find circumstances of that kind that will justify an alteration of the existing system. We can only bring about organised marketing by legislation which will enable the producers to control the system in such a way that they will not be murdered by competition. I say to the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) that compulsory pooling is purely for the purpose of getting away from competitive selling. The Flour Millers' Association of Western Australia does not indulge in competitive selling. It arranges its own selling. And so the thing goes on. The wheat buyers in England do not compete in the purchase of their wheat. They have one central buying organisation which purchases the requirements of flour millers in Great Britain. The buyer organises by eliminating competition. He sees to it that he does not compete with his col-

leagues, or pay unduly for the products he requires because of the competition for the commodity that is presented for sale. The sad part of it is that while they combine to buy, they depreciate the value of their products by selling in competition against one another. That is the practice we desire to stop. When we talk about compulsory pooling and organised marketing, it is in order to get away from murderous competition that is undermining the value of our commodities and penalising producers to-day.

**MR. SLEEMAN** (Fremantle) [9.11]: I trust that if I, in the course of my remarks, get away from the four corners of my electorate, I will not be taken to task as was the member for Canning (Mr. Cross) the other evening. Members of this House are entitled to do what they think is in the interests of the State as a whole, and is for the good of the country. When listening to the speech of the member for Canning, I thought he made a very fine effort, but unfortunately he was taken to task for going outside the confines of his electorate, and trespassing, as some members seemed to think, on their preserves.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Every member represents the whole of the State.

**Mr. SLEEMAN**: Of course. In reply to an interjection of mine, the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) said that I would be better employed in finding some healthful occupation for men who might be displaced from their work than in endeavouring to oppose the mechanisation of industry. That may be all right from one standpoint, but the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie did not proceed very far in his remarks before he proved conclusively that he stood for the mechanisation of industry only so far as it applied to certain parts of his electorate. When he referred to bulk handling of wheat, he was in favour of the mechanisation of industry, but he showed that he was opposed to it when he was considering the interests of another section of his electorate because some people, in attempting to further mechanise the industry, used oil instead of firewood available at Kurrawang. This is a petrol age, and instead of endeavouring to block the use of petrol in industry on the goldfields, we should endeavour to find some way of producing that commodity locally. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin)

said, the other evening, that this State should use every endeavour to discover oil within its boundaries. I agree with what he said, and I consider we should go further. If we are unable to secure supplies of petrol from the bowels of the earth, we should proceed with the manufacture of petrol. I am informed that it can be manufactured from many sources. In Ireland petrol is being produced from potatoes. That demonstrates that it is not hard to secure supplies of the fuel. In this State we have our coalfields and supplies of shale. Even if it came to the worst, we could grow potatoes to promote the industry. Instead of endeavouring to prohibit the use of petrol, we should try to manufacture the commodity, and so build up another industry. The day may come, in view of the war clouds that have been hovering during past weeks, when our petrol supplies may be cut off. We should give consideration to the matter as the Prime Minister of the Irish Free State did when he said he did not intend to wake up one morning and find that country's supplies of petrol cut off. In order to obviate that possibility, he promoted the manufacture of petrol from potatoes. This State should certainly take steps to deal with the problem. As regards the bulk handling of wheat—

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Go slow, now!

**Mr. SLEEMAN**: I do not agree with the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie, who claimed that bulk handling would prove of advantage to the State as a whole. The system may be all right from one point of view, but not all the farmers are in favour of it.

**Mr. Thorn**: Of course they are.

**Mr. SLEEMAN**: They do not all favour the system of bulk handling as recommended by the Royal Commission.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Royal Commission could not find anyone who was opposed to it.

**Mr. SLEEMAN**: They could, and I could easily find some for the hon. member. I would like to know whether it is the intention of the Government to adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commission. It would be of assistance to members if they had some knowledge in that respect. I do not think the Government should adopt those recommendations, because there are many matters to be considered before doing so. While bulk handling has been in-

augurated to a certain extent, if the recommendations of the Royal Commission are adopted, the system may prove to have a detrimental effect on the health of the workers, just as has been the experience in the mining industry. If that be so, in a few years' time we will find that men engaged in loading wheat in bulk will suffer from dust, as the miners have suffered. I believe that that will be the experience, and, in the circumstances, I think the industry should at this early stage make provision for the men whose health will be adversely affected through loading bulk wheat.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Is that the position in New South Wales?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not know; the system there may be better than the Charlie Chaplin system in operation in this State. I understand there is an orthodox bulk handling system, and we have had much argument about it in this Chamber. Some farmers are in favour of that system, whereas others advocate the unorthodox system that has been adopted so far. Opposition members who are farmers talk a lot about bulk handling now, but when they were in power and had a majority in this House, we had the spectacle of that party being divided on the question. Some were not in favour of the Bill that was introduced because they wanted an orthodox system, whereas others wanted the unorthodox scheme. As a result of the dissension, they were unable to get any scheme, notwithstanding that the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) gave excellent support, and stuck to them like a leech.

Mr. Thorn: The interests of the State come first with the member for Guildford-Midland.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Apparently that was not so with some members of the Country Party, because they did not approve of the proposed legislation when they ascertained how it would affect their pockets.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We will have an orthodox silo erected at Fremantle.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The adoption of the bulk handling scheme will throw many men out of work, not only at Fremantle but at Geraldton and Bunbury, as well as in the country districts. Already the system has caused some men to be unemployed and if the scheme is fully adopted, wheat lumpers at the various sidings will be out of employment. If the Government in their wis-

dom consider that bulk handling will be of benefit to the State as a whole, it might pay them, in view of the displacement of labour that will follow, to subsidise the farmers rather than adopt bulk handling at the present juncture. In these days we are endeavouring to place men in employment and not throw them out of work. The adoption of the bulk handling system will throw thousands of men out of employment. God knows, we have enough men out of work at present, and the Government are at their wits' end to find employment for them. Are the difficulties of the Government not great enough already, without contemplating an action that will increase those difficulties? The Government should proceed very carefully. One member of the Country Party warned the Government of what would happen if they did not adopt the bulk handling system. I warn the Government that if they adopt the system, they will find thousands of men on their hands, for whom provision will have to be made. I do not think anything should be done until we see that the people, who will be displaced from work, are to be adequately compensated or amply provided for. It is the practice in every part of Australia that those who are displaced from industry are compensated. Are the Government willing to compensate the workers who will be displaced if bulk handling becomes operative in this State? If the Government do decide to adopt the bulk handling system, and even though they agree to compensate the workers who are displaced from employment, is it their intention to grant a monopoly to the company handling the system at present? I do not think that even the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) would agree to that. I know he stands for socialisation.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: These people do not want a monopoly.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The hon. member would be the first to support the Government in seeing that the thing is run properly by the people for the people.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I want the system created by the wheatgrowers and run by the wheatgrowers on behalf of the wheatgrowers.

Mr. SLEEMAN: We want industrial arbitration similarly controlled by the workers for the workers in the interests of the workers. However, one cannot have a thing both ways. The only trouble about

industrial arbitration is that the workers have not enough representation on it. On the other hand, the farmers want the whole of the representation. Let me point out that a lot of expenditure will be entailed on the Government if the bulk-handling scheme puts so many men out of employment. The fact that the people running the pool are prepared to put up shandygaff silos at the sidings does not dispose of all that will have to be done. Railway rolling stock will require alteration, especially in view of the grievous state of neglect in which it was left by the previous Government. Are the wheatgrowers going to provide bulk-wheat trucks? According to the member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn), the farmers will provide all the funds needed for bulk handling; but of course that is not so. It is asserted that all the farmers are in favour of bulk handling, but I have here a cutting which shows the contrary. The cutting reads—

In general session of the annual conference of the Primary Producers' Association yesterday, Mr. Argus (Quairading) secured the suspension of standing orders to move a motion relating to the bulk handling of wheat. The president of the Wheatgrowers' Union (Mr. Powell) he said, seemed to consider that bulk handling was not at present under control that was best suited to the growers, and he proposed that a board be appointed by the Government, to consist of one Government representative, and other representatives. To appoint such a board and eliminate the existing control would give the Government the opportunity to take control of the system which would probably be made a taxing medium. "Under the existing system," Mr. Argus added, "we are as near control by the growers as we can get. If the Government got control, it would be a calamity." He moved—

That conference dissociates itself from the attitude of the president of the Wheatgrowers' Union with regard to bulk handling control, and is of opinion that the present system of control will serve the growers' interests much better than any Government-appointed board.

The motion was agreed to unanimously.

There is a fairly large body, the Wheatgrowers' Union, who do not support the present system of bulk handling. The pool want to do everything; they are going to manage the lot. If the Government give the country a fair deal, they will appoint a Government board to control bulk handling. That system should not be introduced until the Government are satisfied, firstly, that bulk handling is good for the country as a whole; secondly, that compensation on

an ample scale is available for displaced workers; and thirdly, that the system will be run, not by one section of the people, but by a Government board representing all sections of the community.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I should have let you speak first. I would have done so, had I known that you were going to attack me.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am not attacking the hon. member. I regard him as an admirable member. He stands for the same principle as I stand for—the socialisation of labour, production, distribution and exchange. If bulk handling is not a part of production, distribution and exchange, I do not know what is. I believe the hon. member will support me in my demand for the appointment of a Government board to control bulk handling.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You will not get a board if I have any say in the matter.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Not only do the people representing the Pool want to run the whole show, but they also want the adoption of the Royal Commission's report insofar as it suits them. They do not believe in paying shunting charges, for instance, or extra freight on bulk wheat. Practically all the Commissioners of Railways in Australia agree that the haulage of bulk wheat costs more than the haulage of bagged wheat, and that therefore bulk wheat should pay a higher freight. I am certain that except as regards Queensland, the Commissioners of Railways in all the Australian States are agreed that bulk haulage is more costly.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: The Commissioners do not charge more for hauling bulk wheat.

Mr. SLEEMAN: No; but they say it costs more. The Acting Leader of the Opposition wants a bulk-handling scheme that will not cost anything. He does not desire the adoption of that part of the scheme which involves a charge on the wheat-growers. Moreover, there is a loss on certain phases of bulk handling. As I stated last year, in a shipment of 8,000 tons of bulk wheat there was a loss of 800 tons. The Acting Leader of the Opposition will not deny that. Further, on an 8,000-ton shipment of bagged wheat there was a gain of 800 tons; and with a few wet bags in the shipment the increase would be even greater.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You were lucky in picking out just the one boat that was short.



Mr. SLEEMAN: The hon. member should know better. In fact, he must know better. The Japanese have been experimenting for many years to discover where and how the loss occurs. Up to date neither the Japanese nor the member for Guildford-Midland nor anybody else knows where the deficiency goes to, but it does go.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: There is no 800 tons shortage in payment.

Mr. SLEEMAN: If there is 800 tons loss in grain, there must be a financial loss to that extent.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No; we are not losing money.

Mr. SLEEMAN: As long as the hon. member is satisfied, he can have it his own way. Let us see what Mr. Poynton says on the subject.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: When did he say what you are going to quote? Has he not changed his mind since?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Mr. Poynton has not changed his mind. Here is an extract from Mr. McCallum's speech, which will be found on page 1084 of "Hansard" of the 11th October, 1932. Mr. McCallum quoted Mr. Poynton, manager of the Midland Railway Company, as follows:—

Sidings would need expensive alterations. Transport efficiency would be affected by largely increased empty haulage of additional tare weight represented by the converted wagons. Shunting costs would rise. There would be greater train mileage without a corresponding increase in paying business. These factors, expensive as they may be, are yet superable. It is only a question of money and of whether the expected savings would be sufficient, and would be available as an offset.

Now I think I will leave bulk handling. Apparently it is to be extended if the Government see that it is in the best interests of the country as a whole, but I sincerely trust nothing will be done in that direction before the men who are to be displaced are provided for. When on the Opposition side we fought for that, and even put it into the motion moved by the then Minister for Works, and I do not think we can alter our opinion now we are on this side. Before anything else is done, the men who are to be displaced ought to be compensated. When, on the 7th September, 1932, Mr. Lindsay, the then Minister for Works, moved for leave to introduce the Bulk Handling Bill, Mr. McCallum moved that the following words be added:—

And to provide for the securing and financing in employment of those who lose their posi-

tions through the establishment of such system.

Therefore, if it can be shown that bulk handling is in the best interests of the country, so long as the men to be displaced are provided for, I will have no further objection, but otherwise I object strongly to any extension of the bulk handling system. The mechanisation of industry has been long in evidence, and year after year labour-saving devices have been introduced without the workers being any the better for it. We cannot keep back progress, but I say the introduction of all these labour-saving appliances is wrong unless the workers are to get some benefit from it. The hours of labour are not reduced in accordance with the time saved by machines, but men are displaced and thrown on the scrap-heap, which is distinctly wrong. The member for Mt. Marshall (Mr. Warner) the other night suggested that those displaced men should be sent to abandoned farms on the wheat belt. It is a wonder he did not suggest that they should be taken out and shot, or some such thing, for he knows that people accustomed to farming have failed to make a living on those abandoned farms, many of them on sandplain country; so how can he expect that displaced men from the metropolitan area will be able to make a living up there? Yet that was the suggestion of the hon. member. Referring to men on Government relief work and sustenance, whilst I realise that the Government have done a lot for them during the past two years, I do hope that before the year is out the Government will be able to effect still further improvements in the lot of those men. It would be much better if we could put the majority of them on full-time instead of having so many on half-time, as we have at present. I believe the number of men who would be on full-time would make work for quite a lot of other workers in various industries. Unfortunately at the present time the spending power of those men is not sufficient to make further work for other people. I would be prepared to put a large proportion of them on full-time, and put the remainder on sustenance for the time being, believing that under that system before very long all the men would be on full-time. It is interesting to note that our friends opposite are getting ready to attempt to break down the standard of living. In another place a few evenings ago one of our friends objected to single

men being paid 30s. for two days' work, and said they should be made to work for three or four days in order to earn 30s. I hope that will never come about, that the single men in this country who have gone out into the bush to tide over the depression will never be asked to work for less than the basic wage rate. I was surprised to find that an hon. member should have the temerity to suggest that single men should be made to work four days in a week for 30s. He said that would serve to drive them onto a number of farms where their services were required. We know that many farmers cannot or will not pay their men when they get them on the farm, and numbers of men have had to walk or jump the train to get back to the city because they could not collect their wages. Yet a member of the Opposition in another place wants to make men work four days a week in order to earn 30s.

Mr. McLarty: They have no party in another place.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Oh, no! Again, our friends opposite have not forgotten the setback they received when they attempted to break down workers' compensation. I was surprised when they made the move, but evidently one of them saw the error of their ways, and had it corrected. At their conference, they carried a resolution that the Workers' Compensation Act should be abolished, but later they thought better of it as being dangerous at such a time, and simply struck out from the resolution the word "Act." They agreed to have workers' compensation, but not the Act. That proves they have not forgotten the Bill introduced by the then Minister for Works in the previous Government when he wanted to cut down the compensation so that the loss of a finger in a sausage machine would not be of any importance.

Mr. Thorn: Who were "they"?

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Primary Producers' Association conference. Recognising that where there is smoke there is fire, I have been interested in the recent talk about resuming migration to Australia. I feel sure that something is likely to be done in the near future. Mr. Lyons went Home—it is not Home to me, but is considered as Home by some people—and had a talk with friends there, and there seems to be a definite intention to bring more migrants to this country. I am not going to agree to any more migrants being brought here at the present

time. I consider that we already have too many of a certain type. Some of the men here at present should be sent Home for their own good; others should be sent Home for the country's good. Mr. Crutchley, the representative of the British Government in Canberra, is about to return to the Old Country, and another gentleman is coming out to take his place. I do not know whether it is the fault of Mr. Crutchley or of the Commonwealth Government or of the British Government, but what is going on at the present time is a disgrace. A few men have been O.K'd. by the State Government to be sent back to England, but owing to action by Mr. Crutchley or the Commonwealth Government or the Imperial Government, they are not to be sent. They should never have been sent to Australia. One half of the men O.K'd. to come here were not suitable. They were bad in health and of poor physique and not fit for the work they were asked to do, and I will not let up in my resistance to migration unless I can be assured that there is ample work and reasonable pay, and that the work is such as can be done by the migrants. Many of the people sent here were a disgrace to the country, and Australian doctors had something to do with their being sent out. I hope that the British Government, through Mr. Crutchley, will alter their views and allow those people whose return to England has been approved to be sent back. There is a family at Fremantle whose repatriation to England will cost the State Government about £150, but if they are kept here, by the time the children are reared and off the hands of the Government, they will have cost the State nearer to £2,000. The man will never be able to do any work and the children are young. Friends and relatives in England would be only too pleased to have them returned, but owing to the hold-up by the British and Commonwealth Governments, those people are prevented from leaving. A London telegram published in the "West Australian" a few days ago under the headings "Migration Prospects," "Keen London Interest," stated—

Nothing from Australia, said the "Times," would be more welcome in Britain than such a possibility, but the Commonwealth and States remain the final judges of material conditions, and Australian Labour is a formidable political obstacle. The Commonwealth would do well to seek external assurances for the expanding production resulting from migration must find a market. Nevertheless, the inclusion of migration in practical discussion is welcome. Sir

Geoffrey Granville Whiskard's appointment as British High Commissioner in Australia is regarded in Canberra as significant. It is a good augury for still more harmonious relations between the British and Australian Governments.

The "Daily Telegraph" welcoming Mr. Lyons's statement and recalling Sir Geoffrey Whiskard's association with migration as vice-chairman of the Oversea Settlement Committee, states—The Australian Labour Party which hitherto has been a great obstacle to migration, is now thoroughly discredited.

They might consider that we have been discredited, but there will be no greater opponent to migrants being brought to this State than I shall be. If it were possible for me to go to the other side of the world and migration were mooted, I would willingly stump the country to tell the people how they would be treated here. Thousands of people were brought here, and were neglected, underfed, and even starved, mainly because they could not do the work they were sent to do. Many of them were physically unfit for laborious work. When Mr. Angwin was Minister for Lands, I accompanied him on a visit to the groups. We met one group settler who had been blown up with a shell from a big gun. Mr. Angwin ask him how he had managed to get here, and his reply was, "They told me that Australia was the place for me, and that all I would have to do would be to feed a few chickens and drive a horse." That was not the only case of its kind. As I have said, there are instances of people having been brought here and proved unsuitable, of the State having investigated their cases and being willing to pay their fares back to England, and of the Commonwealth and British authorities preventing their departure.

Mr. Thorn: Quite right.

Mr. SLEEMAN: You agree with that?

Mr. Thorn: I do.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: You ought to quote what the "Morning Post" said regarding migration.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The other night the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) complained about the price of offal. When reading a copy of the "Australasian Baker," I came across a few facts that I thought would interest the hon. member. I found that the prices in Adelaide of flour, bran and pollard were much lower than those in Western Australia, and I suggested to the member for Swan that probably a State flour mill would be of some advantage. Of course the hon. member

would not have a State flour mill. After obtaining that information, I wired to Adelaide to obtain figures so that I could check up the prices in the two States on the same day. I telegraphed on Tuesday last and the figures for the two States were—

Adelaide—

Wheat—3s. 2½d.

Flour—£8 17s. 6d., plus Federal tax.

Bran—£5.

Pollard—£5 2s. 6d., less 5s.

Perth—

Wheat—3s. 3d. to 3s. 6d.

Flour—£9 2s. 6d.

Bran—£6, less 5s. for cash for offal.

Pollard—£6.

In Perth a small quantity of wheat was sold for 3s. 3d., but the bulk of the wheat to millers was sold for 3s. 6d. This indicates that our wheatgrowers must be getting a fairly considerable benefit, and one section of the primary producers seems to be responsible for another section having to pay so much more for offal. Evidently somebody is getting a rake-off somewhere. Whereas wheat in South Australia was being sold to millers for 3s. 2½d., in Western Australia it was costing millers 3s. 6d.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Are you sure those figures are correct?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Yes.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Where did you get the 3s. 6d.?

Mr. SLEEMAN: From the millers on Tuesday last.

Mr. Patrick: They get wheat at the market price from the Pool.

Mr. SLEEMAN: As I have explained, a small quantity was sold at 3s. 3s. on that day, but the rest was sold at 3s. 6d. It seems that the time has come for an inquiry to be made. The higher price being paid for milling-wheat here must affect the price of bread as well as the price of offal required by a section of our primary producers. If wheat can be sold for 3s. 2½d. in South Australia, I cannot see why it cannot be sold for that price here. I am still of the opinion that a State flour mill would do no harm, and would be the means of producing cheaper offal for our poultry farms.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That would not make flour any cheaper. State hotels do not sell beer cheaper than privately owned hotels.

Mr. SLEEMAN: There has been a lot of talk about reservations on the goldfields. I do not agree with reservations, and spoke

on the motion moved by the member for Murchison last session. I was, however, surprised to learn that not only are reservations given in goldmining areas, but also in the iron-producing areas. Certain people in Fremantle have been interested in the iron industry, only to find that not only have the two main islands at Yampi been taken over by two companies, but that an area within a radius of 25 miles of Yampi has also been reserved. I can see no necessity for such a reserve being granted. The companies in question have enough iron to last them where they are for many years. The only reason that can be advanced for giving this 25-mile reserve is that it is to keep other people out of the industry.

Mr. Thorn: To keep out the Japs.

Mr. SLEEMAN: There are other deposits close by that people would be willing to work, but the two companies, in addition to having the two islands, have also got this wide reservation allotted to them. As the reservation will expire at the end of the month, I hope steps will be taken to see that it is not renewed. If there is any excuse for reservations on the gold mining areas—there should not be any excuse for the principle to operate even there—there should be no excuse for a reservation around the islands I referred to. I wish to say something about the action of the Taxation Department in collecting hospital tax on earnings of 15s. I am informed by officials of the department that this is not contained in the Act, but it is in the regulations. They say that according to the regulations they must collect on amounts of 15s. It will be remembered that when the Bill went through members understood that people would not have to pay hospital tax on amounts smaller than £1. It is now an established fact that the tax is being collected on amounts of 15s. I know of cases of that sort in Fremantle, and I understand the member for Albany has similar instances in his electorate. I know of people who have earned 15s. from four different firms, and had to pay the tax on each lot of earnings.

Mr. Wansbrough: In one week.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Yes. These people have had the tax deducted at each of the four places. I trust the Minister will make a note of this, and, when the head of the department returns, he will see that collections are made only on amounts of not less than

£1. It is proposed by the Federal Government to hold an inquiry into banking. I hope something will be done in that respect, and that steps will be taken to shake up the Government so that the investigation may become an accomplished fact. The whole of our trouble can be attributed to the present system of banking. Unless the Federal Government are kept up to the mark, it is likely the whole matter will be dropped. When the Premier is attending Loan Council meetings and conferences in the other States, I hope he will see that the Federal Government are kept up to the collar in order that this inquiry may be held. I now come to what may be regarded as a parochial matter. I must say, however, that the chief port of this State is causing me a lot of anxiety owing to the position of affairs that exists there. I know of no town that has suffered from the depression so greatly as Fremantle has. It has suffered not only from bulk handling but in every other possible way. In normal times in any big port a lot of poverty may be found, but since the depression started all kinds of bulk handling machinery has been introduced. We have the bulk handling of sulphur, of phosphatic rock, of oil that used to be imported in cases, and bulk handling in every other direction. Three parts of the town are on half time. With the introduction of the bulk handling of wheat, many people were thrown out of work on the wharf. Numbers of men are hardly earning enough to keep body and soul together. On top of that the only men on wages in Fremantle, that is on the harbour works, are on part time. They were put on part time by the previous Government, and kept there by the present Government. There is no more reason why they should be on part time than there would be for putting any other Government employees on the same basis. One might as well expect the employees of the Railways, the State Shipping Service, the officials of Parliament House, or even members of Parliament to go on part time, as to expect it from these harbour works employees. Theirs is essentially a full-time job. Although for reasons of economy the previous Minister placed them on part time, I hope it will not be long before they are restored to full-time work. This is neither relief work nor a sustenance job, and there is no more reason why it should be regarded as part-time than that

any other Government workers should be treated in that manner. A great deal in the way of public works could be carried out at Fremantle. If something is not done there in the near future, the port may be like one of those abandoned cities one reads about in novels. I hope something will be done to save the town from extinction. If you, Mr. Speaker, were to visit Fremantle as you used to do, I am sure you would not know the place. Three of the largest stores, which used to compare favourably with anything in the city of Perth, have now closed their doors and outside is the sign "To let." It is a pitiful sight. I sincerely trust the Government will do something to bring about a better state of affairs in the chief port of the State.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

#### BILLS (8)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Judges' Retirement.
- 2, Tenants, Purchasers, and Mortgagors' Relief Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Justice.
- 3, Northern Australia Survey Agreement.
- 4, Rural Relief Fund.
- 5, Trustees' Powers Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Lands.
- 6, Droving Act Amendment.
- 7, Brands Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture.
- 8, Fremantle (Skinner street) Disused Cemetery Amendment.  
Introduced by Mr. Sleeman.

*House adjourned at 10.7 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 27th August, 1935.*

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

#### QUESTION—SECESSION, COSTS.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: Will he lay upon the Table of the House an itemised statement showing: 1, The cost of collecting information for, and the preparation, printing, and distribution of "The Case for Secession"? 2, The cost of properly preparing the Secession petitions and providing the necessary cabinets, etc., for presentation to His Majesty the King and both Houses of the Imperial Parliament? 3, The names of persons or firms, if any, who received cash considerations for any services rendered? 4, The approximate cost of the special session of Parliament held to implement the result of the Secession referendum, and to authorise the appointment of an appropriate delegation to present the Secession petitions?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes—Honoraria, £600 10s.; printing, £1,669 6s. 9d.; freight and charges, £20 14s. 3d.; cables, £13 12s. 5d. 2, Writing of petition, £18 6s. 6d.; caskets, £24. 3, M. L. Moss & Son.; J. L. Walker; E. C. Dudley; Hon. J. Lindsay; Executors of the Estate of the late J. Scaddan; W. H. Nairn; Miss Thomas; Miss Coleman; Miss Watson; J. H. Morgan, K. C.; P. E. Springman; J. E. Rose; G. E. F. Tebbutt; H. K. Watson. 4, The additional cost is inappreciable, and cannot very well be segregated as the regular Parliamentary services are maintained throughout the year.