

Wagin Water Board to meet their added expenses incurred by their willingness to manage their own water supply. The board, when they took over the control in February last, expressed their willingness as a board—and incidentally as a municipal council representative of the ratepayers of the district—to accept that additional financial responsibility. So I have every confidence that the Bill will meet with sympathetic treatment in the House and will be given an early passage through the Chamber with a view to enabling the Wagin Water Board to strike a supplementary rate. The Bill is not restricted to Wagin. It will have general application to all water boards that may be in existence, as well as to those to be created in the future for the purpose of controlling local water supplies in the various centres of the State.

On motion by Mr. Davy, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.55 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 20th August, 1929.

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

QUESTION—LAND, VICTORIA DISTRICT.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON (for Hon. E. H. Hall) asked the Chief Secretary: 1. Will the Government state whether any of the areas situated in the Victoria district are to be included in the 3,500 farms scheme. 2. When will the lands north and east of Victoria Location 8687, Plan 161 80, be made available for selection?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1. Whenever any suitable area of land is found for settlement in the Victoria District, applications can be made for its development under the Migration Agreement. 2. The Minister for Lands and the Agricultural Bank trustees will be visiting this area in the course of a few weeks, after which a decision will be arrived at.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eleventh Day.

Debate resumed from the 15th August.

HON A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.33]: The few words I have to offer on this occasion I may perhaps preface by congratulating you, Mr. President, on the excellent work you did on behalf of the State when in London. I may also pay a well-earned tribute to Mr. Cornell, who took your place while you were away and who presided over the deliberations of this Chamber with credit to himself and, I am sure, with satisfaction to the members of the House. I wish also to congratulate Mr. Mann on having been elected as one of the representatives of this State to the Empire Press Conference. Let me also congratulate Mr. Franklin who has attained the dignity of Right Honourable. I am sorry he is not in his place, because if he were, I might get on a little better on account of being in a position in the Chamber to bask in the hon. member's higher dignity of Right Hon. the Lord Mayor. I appreciate the well thought out speech and lucid utterances of Mr. Seddon when he addressed the House the other evening. I propose to touch upon two points only. The first is to endeavour to remove the impression created by Mr. Fraser, in speaking on the Address-in-reply, when he suggested, what has been more than a suggestion throughout the country during the recess, that this House was responsible for the present condition of the hospitals, inasmuch as it had thrown out the Hospital Fund Bill. Those statements are quite contrary to fact, as most members know. This House passed the tax Bill without dissent and almost without discussion. We gave the Government the full tax for which they asked. Where we differed was on the machinery Bill, and at the finish, we differed on one point only. This House said and said emphatically that it

would not be a party to subsidising private institutions which were trading for profit. I think it is part of the Labour policy, so far as I can understand it, that it has always been opposed to subsidies to private individuals who were trading for profit.

The Honorary Minister: The Bill did not provide for a sub-sidy to private hospitals.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Before I finish, I shall show the Honorary Minister that he has not yet understood his own Bill. I want the facts to be known. We amended the Bill by declaring that we would not be a party to subsidising private institutions, and the attitude we took was, that if anyone was to benefit from the tax, it should be the person who had contributed to the tax. Strangely enough, when the amendment was sent to another place for its approval, that was the attitude the Minister there adopted. He said, "I cannot agree to this amendment because I am opposed to taking tax from people and giving them nothing in return." I suggest that the Minister did not understand his own Bill. The measure, as presented to Parliament, was quite clear. Under the Bill nobody could get anything at all except the private hospital. The contributor to the tax could get no possible fraction of a shilling out of the contributions he paid. Though I remember the circumstances well, for the sake of greater accuracy, I shall refer to a copy of the Bill. Clause 10, Sub-clause 3, reads—

Whenever a contributor to the fund, or the dependant of a contributor receives treatment in a private hospital or in a private ward of a public hospital, the department shall pay to the hospital authority a subsidy at the prescribed rate towards the hospital charges for such treatment.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Who would get it?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: No matter what a contributor was paying to the hospital, according to that subclause the subsidy had to be paid to the hospital on top of whatever the patient was paying. Another paragraph provided that such payments—the subsidy—could be made by a refund to the patient on production of receipts for payment by him of the hospital charges. That meant if he inadvertently or otherwise paid this subsidy to the hospital, he could get the payment refunded instead of paying twice, but he would get no benefit whatever from the contributions he had made to the tax. The Government shelved

the Bill on the ground that they were protecting the contributor. Yet the contributor could not possibly get sixpence out of it. The paragraph also provided that the contributor could, on production of his receipts, get the subsidy back so as to afford a corresponding reduction of the charge for hospital service to the patient. Thus, if the hospital charged in the ordinary way five guineas a week to the patient, the hospital authorities, knowing the subsidy would be available, would have made it seven guineas a week. The unfortunate contributor would have got two guineas rebate when he had already paid the two guineas more in hospital charges, because the hospital would have raised its charges, knowing that one way or the other, it was to get the subsidy.

Hon. E. H. Harris: The Government might then have introduced a profiteering Bill to apply to hospitals.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Perhaps so. The clause made it clear that no contributor could get a pennyworth of benefit from it and that the only people who could benefit were the owners of private hospitals. Not only was the measure bad from that point of view, but it cut in another way. It is no part of the Labour policy, I am sure, to help voracious landlords to suck more blood than they get at present from their tenants. While the Bill was before Parliament, Dr. Saw and I had a lady to interview us. She had served during the war and given good service to the country. She had been at a Commonwealth institution for maimed soldiers, which had been closed up. She wanted to get a hospital and she approached us for a little advice. The proposition was that there was a hospital available at £1,200 goodwill and £23 a week rent plus the rates and taxes. There were 15 rooms in the house. I asked the lady, "How long has the lease to run?" She replied, "Seventeen months." I asked "Do you think it possible to pay £1,200 ingoing, plus £23 a week rent, plus rates and taxes and come out of it on the right side in seventeen months?" She replied that she did not think it possible. I said, "Then before you go into it and lose your money, you had better see the landlord and find out if you can get an extension of your lease for five or seven years." She went to the landlord and his reply to her was, "No, I am not granting any extension of this lease. Sooner or later a hospital Bill must be passed and then I

shall be able to get £10 or £12 a week more rent, because the patients who come to the hospital will pay the hospital the subsidy of two guineas a week under the Bill." She could not get an extension of the lease and consequently dropped the proposal. There was another instance at a well-known West Perth hospital. The lease expired. The rent for that hospital had been £14 a week and the landlord proposed to raise it to £26 a week. The ground on which the rent was to be raised for the next term was that a hospital Bill was bound to be passed by Parliament and the hospital would receive £2 2s. a week subsidy for each patient. Therefore the contributor, as I say, would never receive anything. In the two cases I have mentioned, the private hospital authorities would have got nothing out of it, but the voracious landlord in each case would have benefited. A Bill which makes that permissible, is the Bill which the Minister complains this House refused to pass, the Bill which the Minister, with these facts in front of him, knew very well ought not to pass in the form it was then in, ought not to pass without the amendment of this Chamber. This House, therefore, cannot be blamed for the loss of the measure. The Bill at the time was not with this House. We had finished with it. We had amended it, and we had sent it to another place in the usual course. The other place dropped the Bill, for some reason which I am unable to fathom. It is thus that the hospitals were left where they are to-day. I wish it to be quite clear that this Chamber is in no way responsible. The second point to which I wish to refer relates to the Workers' Compensation Act. It is common knowledge that that Act since its first operation has proved a gross scandal from two points of view. One is the number of accidents that are supposed to have happened, and I say "supposed to have happened" advisedly. The other point is the abuse of medical charges under the Act. The Minister, Mr. McCallum, recognises that himself. The Government must recognise it. The Minister states that he has asked Dr. Juett, during the course of his travels, to investigate the matter of compensation Acts and to report. I asked a question in this House—it was not replied to—whether the Government proposed to bring in an amendment of the Act this session. I shall press the question next week again. To me it is a matter so urgent that, if the Government

are not prepared to give us an opportunity of amending the Act, I shall put up an amending Bill myself and see what the House has to say to it.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You cannot prevent a man from cutting his finger or his toe off if he wants to.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Hon. members need have no fear that I shall propose anything that is drastic or unfair. Nor need they fear that I shall suggest anything which will reduce the amount of compensation now payable under the Act. I consider that in cases where the breadwinner of the family loses his life, £750 is little enough for the widow and children. None of us, I think, would like to leave his family with so small an amount as that to make their way in the world. I would not propose to reduce the amount by sixpence.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Would you increase it?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I shall propose to make the Act more equitable, or, if I may so put it, more scientific. The Second Schedule to the Act provides specific and arbitrary amounts for various accidents. For instance, for the loss of a finger, the loss of a toe, or the deafness of one ear or two ears specific amounts are provided. That does not bear any equity at all. Take the case of deafness of one ear. Suppose a bomb or a shot goes off near Parliament House and injures the drum of the ear of one of the "Hansard" reporters. The reporter having lost his hearing, his occupation is practically gone. But the sleeper hewer who, as the result of hearing a shot fired, has the drum of his ear injured, does not find his occupation gone by any means. Therefore the compensation of the two individuals in such circumstances ought not to be the same. I think that is perfectly clear. Then suppose a violinist loses a little finger. His occupation is gone. But if a timber hewer loses his little finger, nothing very serious results. The schedule, which makes the amounts payable to all and sundry alike, is neither equitable nor scientific. If I produce a Bill here, I shall frame it on the lines I have indicated. To start with, I would appoint a board consisting of, say, a police magistrate, a medical gentleman, a representative of the insurance companies, a representative of the workers, and a representative of the industry; and I would let the Government by regulation appoint that board. The members of the board would re-

ceive small fees, which would be payable from the premiums on a percentage of the underwriting which is done. Then, whenever any dispute arose between the employer and the worker—it is really between the insurance company and the worker—either party could refer the matter to the board, and the board would have a free hand to say what should be the compensation. They would base their decision not on the fact of a man having lost a little finger or a little toe, but on the diminished industrial capacity of the worker. The board would say to the worker, "How much has the accident diminished your industrial capacity? We will base the compensation we award on that."

Hon. J. R. Brown: Nothing for the pain and suffering?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: That is included, I take it, in the amount the board would award. The same with the medical expenses; I propose to increase the £750 that can now be awarded to £800, and I propose to strike out that portion of the First Schedule which prescribes medical expenses of £100. Further, I propose to provide that the board shall assess the medical expenses, and that no medical man shall be able to recover a greater amount than the board assess as medical expenses. In that way we shall get down to something fairer and more equitable and, as I say, more scientific than we have now. If the board have to assess the loss of a toe or the loss of a finger upon the basis of loss of industrial capacity—the diminished industrial capacity—there will be less compensation to pay and correspondingly lower premiums, and industry will not be loaded with the high rates existing to-day, rates so high as in some cases practically to cut out a calling altogether. When a calling is cut out, the corollary follows that unemployment is increased. I propose also to add in that Bill other amendments. I state this now so that the Government may know exactly what is in my mind. One is that gross negligence shall be a reason for non-payment of any compensation. The other amendment will define, if possible, what is a casual worker and what is an intermittent worker; because we now find that gardeners and others who do a day's work at, say, six places in a week, are not regarded as casual workers each of the six employers having to obtain a policy of insurance. Certainly the policies only involve cover for the actual

wages paid, but people will not take out the policies; they rather do without the man, and in that way employment is lessened. I fail to see any logical reason why a person who works six days in a week for six different people, should be in a different position from a person who works for one employer six days a week. But we have the fact staring us in the face that if we impose that obligation upon the employers, those who have been in the habit of employing a person for one day per week—say, a washerwoman—will not employ the person. This is especially so with regard to gardeners. Thus further unemployment is created. It seems to me better to relax the position and let the worker take that risk, as he would if working only one day for somebody, rather than cause him to lose some of his employment. The other point relates to gross negligence. Under the Factories Act an employer is bound to provide nets for girls where there is machinery about, say machinery involving the use of belting. Again, a cordial manufacturer has to provide masks under the Factories Act. Although the employees are liable to a penalty under the Factories Act for not wearing the safety appliances which are provided, when it comes to the Workers' Compensation Act they can recover under that measure notwithstanding that they have offended against the Factories Act. Taking the case of timber hewers, I understand that some employers are providing steel toecaps for the workers' boots, so that there shall not be so much liability to chop off a toe. If the worker did not wear that protection, he himself should take the responsibility. He would be guilty of gross negligence in not wearing the toecaps, just as a cordial employee is guilty of gross negligence if he does not wear the mask provided for him to do his work in. I have just outlined these amendments which I have in mind for the Bill. I hope the Government will see fit to give us an opportunity of putting on the statute-book something like that, even for the next year, because we are losing a good deal of trade. For instance, 12s. per load is put on to the cost of sleepers. If we send sleepers into the world's markets with a handicap of 12s. per load, nothing being done for it, no production ensuing from it, we increase unemployment because we cannot sell the sleepers. In these

times of stress in Australia the last thing we want to do, I think, is to have people unemployed, people not producing as they should be, seeing the enormous responsibilities we have abroad. There is one other matter that I desire to touch upon in just a few words—the change that is to be made in connection with the Children's Court. I say nothing about it except to suggest that before finalising everything in respect to that change, the Government would do well to think it out carefully. Unless the matter is very carefully thought out, a grave error may be made. I shall say no more about it, and I thank hon. members for having listened to me so attentively.

HON. H. A. STEPHENSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.2]: Before addressing myself to the motion before the House, I desire to support the remarks that have been made by hon. members with regard to you, Mr. President, and to the good work that you did on behalf of the State while you were in the Old Country. I wish also to say how delighted we are to have you back with us again. It is not my intention to take up very much time in speaking on the Address-in-reply, but there are three or four matters to which I intend briefly to refer. The first, and it appeals to me as a business man, is the condition of the finances. We are told that in all respects the finances of the State are in a satisfactory condition. I am sorry I cannot agree with that statement. I maintain that the finances are in anything but a satisfactory condition, and when we remember that for the last five or six years we have had good seasons and good prices, that we have had a large amount of money from the Commonwealth by way of grants recommended by the Disabilities Commission, I feel that the condition of the finances should now be much more satisfactory than it actually is. Our deficit is in the vicinity of £270,000, and taking all the circumstances into consideration that figure is much higher than it should really be.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is even higher than that.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I suppose it will be this time next year. I think the position is largely brought about by the expenditure of large sums of money on unproductive works, such as roads, and al-

so that it is due to losses arising from State enterprises. A good deal of money has been spent on road work from which we shall get practically no return, and in some cases, after the work has been completed, it has taken not more than 12 months for the road to disappear. That kind of thing is a serious matter where the local authorities are concerned. The next item is the position of the railways. Last year the railways made a loss of £179,000, and we are told that the decline in revenue was in part due to the diminished harvest, and consequently the decrease in the amount of wheat hauled. On the one hand we are told that the carriage of wheat is a losing proposition, and on the other we learn from the Governor's Speech that because the harvest failed to reach expectations, that failure helped to increase the loss suffered by the railways. How the two statements are reconciled I do not know. My opinion is that the loss on the railways is due to the high cost of construction, to day labour, to long service leave, and to 44 hours. There is no doubt that the railways are over-capitalised. In respect of wheat they cannot charge a higher rate than they are doing now. The wheat producer has to sell his wheat in the world's markets, and cannot afford to pay higher freights than he is paying to-day. There is, however, one thing that I believe would materially assist the Railway Department, and it is the more intensive use of various lands already in occupation. I pointed out last session that thousands upon thousands of acres of land adjacent to the railways, and particularly around what are known as loop lines, were lying idle. If that land were brought into a state of productivity, the railways would get the benefit of the extra freight, and the extra overhead charges would be reduced to practically a minimum. A few years ago, when Mr. Angwin was Minister for Lands, he appointed a Commission to go into that matter to ascertain the area of land that was lying practically in a virgin state, and most of it within 12½ miles of existing lines. The report proved that these areas ran into hundreds of thousands of acres. I consider that something should be done to bring that land into a state of production. I can quite understand it is difficult for a majority of settlers to develop it, their difficulty being one of finance, but I hope that the Government will do something by means of the rural

bank, which is referred to in the Governor's Speech, to solve the problem from that point of view, especially if they appoint competent land valuers to advise.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Is that not what the Agricultural Bank is doing now?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Not quite. I would like to read a few lines from the report of the British Economic Commission with reference to the more intensive use of land already occupied—

We have been much struck by what we have seen and heard of the comparatively small degree to which intensive use is made of the land already in occupation in Australia—

and this refers to Western Australia as well

—Schemes are being projected for extensive development by pushing railway and road construction at heavy capital cost into territory as yet unsettled, while it would seem that more intensive use of land already settled or partially settled might, at far less cost, be productive of a greater increase in population and in wealth production than the extensive schemes are likely to yield.

That, too, is my opinion. We are pushing out railways and roads in all directions and passing large areas of land that at the present time are not doing anything in the way of providing freight for the railways. I trust that something will be done in that regard and that eventually the railways will reap the benefit.

The Honorary Minister: Can you make any suggestion?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I suggest that these lands should, with the assistance of the proposed rural bank, be brought into a state of production. If it is possible for the settler to borrow money on his property, then he will have an opportunity to do something with it. The Agricultural Bank does not go far enough, and what I have suggested is, I consider, the remedy.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Where would you get the capital for the rural bank?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: It might be got from some of our wealthy squatters; you never know. You can get money for anything that will show a good profit. The next matter to which I wish to refer is the agricultural water supplies. I congratulate the Government on what they have done in this direction. There is no doubt good work has been done and it has proved a great boon for the settlers, as well as providing

a great asset for the State. I am indebted to the Leader of the House for some figures he supplied to me regarding the position of the agricultural water supplies so far as they have gone. The Narembreen scheme has cost £64,456. That work is completed. The capacity of the reservoir is 16¾ million gallons, and it serves an area of about 113,000 acres, in addition to the town of Narembreen. The Barbalin scheme has cost £205,469. There are three dams and the largest contains 35¾ million gallons. The second one has a capacity of 21¾ million gallons, and the third contains about 7¾ million gallons. That serves 447,000 acres. The rate for the Narembreen scheme has been struck at 6d. an acre. Already no less than 80 miles of piping are laid. The rate struck on the Barbalin scheme is 8d. an acre, and 329 miles of piping have been laid. The towns that will be served are Mukinbudin, Benamblin, Mandiga, Gabbins, Trayning and Kununoppin. When the scheme is completed approximately 350 settlers will be provided with water, and already 170 are being served. The other scheme is the Esperance-Norseman district tank scheme. This has been carried out so far at a cost of £64,963 and it serves approximately 500,000 acres. No rate has yet been struck, and no pipes have been laid. The scheme will serve Salmon Gums, Grass Patch, Scaddan, and Red Lake. I have a list showing all the tanks that have been completed and they number no fewer than 24. Included in the cost of £64,963 is McPherson Rock. I take it that is a catchment which has a capacity of 6,000,000 gallons. I know nothing about the Esperance scheme. The other two, however, will be a wonderful asset to the State and will confer a great boon upon the settlers. They will enable those settlers to carry sheep. Many men have had to leave their holdings because they could not keep stock over a great part of the year when they had no water. The area of land embraced by the two first schemes, that is Narembreen and the larger one, will undoubtedly advance the value of the land by at least £1 an acre. I know from my farming operations in that area that the scheme will prove of great benefit, assist the railways, and be a boon to the State generally. I congratulate the Government upon having hastened the work, and am particularly glad that the Narembreen scheme has been completed at considerably less than the estimated cost. I am delighted to note that the Government are pushing on with the dairy-

ing industry, and that the Group Settlement Board recently purchased from the Eastern States about 900 milch cows. I presume these are for group settlers. I know nothing that offers better prospects than the dairying industry. The local producer of butter, bacon and ham has the best market in the civilised world. It is not generally known that the consumers of Australia will pay this year £4,400,000 by way of subsidies to butter producers within the Commonwealth. The butter, bacon and ham producer will, therefore, have the advantage of high markets for some years to come. I understand that the milk producers here are able to secure from 1s. 10d. to 1s. 10½d. per pound for their butter fat at the local factories. This year we have imported from the Eastern States about £860,000 worth of butter, ham and bacon, which we should be producing. We have splendid land in the South-West for dairying purposes, equal in quality and general usefulness to anything in Australia. I was surprised to read the remarks made by the Premier the other day to a deputation which waited upon him to ask that certain lands now reserved for forestry should be thrown open for dairying. A few years ago I was near Greenbushes and wanted to cross to Wilgar. I was told there was a road of 16 or 18 miles through the bush if I could get on to it. I took the risk and motored across. On three or four occasions I left the car to dig holes in the soil to find out how deep it was. I was much taken with the depth of soil, its quality and suitability for dairying. The Premier was not favourably disposed towards the proposition put before him and remarked, "That is close to where the Hester Group Settlement scheme is, and that is one of the worst of the schemes." I do not know where the Premier got his information, for I have it on the best authority that the Hester group is one of the most successful we have in the scheme. The settlers are quite satisfied and are doing well. I hope something will be done by the Government to proceed more rapidly with the opening up of land suitable for dairying. By this means a large number of unemployed in Perth and Fremantle could be absorbed. Men could be sent to the south-west and other suitable centres to prepare the land for dairy farmers. During my recent travels through Victoria and South Australia I learned that the sons of many dairy farmers would be only too glad to take up land in this State and pay a reasonable price for it, if it were only

cleared in advance. These men know their business and would soon be producing and assisting in reducing the large expenditure from this State on butter, bacon and hams from the other States. I should like to refer to some remarks made by the Prime Minister on 28th March, 1928, in Sydney when he was referring to the precarious state of the butter industry in the Commonwealth. He said:—

Arrangements have been made for the appointment of an expert committee to formulate plans for improved efficiency, increased productivity, and a diminution of the costs of the industry. In order to obtain rapid results from the campaign now being initiated, it was inevitable that large sums of money would have to be expended in research, in herd testing, in improvement of herds, and the education of the dairy farmer. Assistance towards meeting this expenditure, it was confidently anticipated, would be obtained by a modification of the existing £34,000,000 migration agreement with the British Government. The British Economic Mission had concurred in the desirability of the alterations, and it was confidently anticipated that the British Government would be prepared to acquiesce in these proposals. While the problems of the dairying industry were being tackled first, it was proposed subsequently to deal with other industries.

There appears to be an opportunity for this Government to get into touch with the Federal Government and ascertain what the committee have done, and how much of the £34,000,000 we could get at one per cent. to assist us in preparing land for dairying purposes in Western Australia. I hope the State Government will do something quickly so that the excellent opportunity now afforded may be availed of. I support the motion.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [5.30]:

I do not intend to prolong the debate to any great extent, but there are one or two matters to which I desire to refer. One has already been mentioned by Mr. Stephenson. I refer to the statement appearing in the Governor's Speech that really represents the excuse made by the Government for the deficit, when they draw attention to the losses sustained by the railways. From time to time members in this House have referred to the effect upon the railway service of the granting of long service leave and the 44-hour week. It has been pointed out that these concessions would represent heavy charges against the working of the railways. It seems rather hard

that the farmers should be blamed because the wheat traffic is said to be a losing proposition. It was only a few years ago that men on the land were blamed for not producing a greater tonnage to enable the railways to pay. It was stated that the large mileage of railways that had been provided for the assistance of farmers, would pay handsomely if production from the country tapped were so much greater. Mr. Stephenson referred to the claim that there was much unused land along railways already constructed that should be brought into production and so help to make the railways pay. On the other hand we know that the farmers have been doing their part nobly.

Hon. E. H. Gray: By employing Southern Europeans.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The area brought under cultivation along existing railway lines has been multiplied by millions of acres. The quantity of wheat produced is ten times what it was some years ago and within recent years alone the wheat produced and the tonnage hauled over the railways has been quadrupled. We know that with a smaller tonnage of wheat hauled, the railways were able to pay. It is necessary to go back a few years only to find reports furnished by the Commissioner of Railways that contained returns disclosing profits made during the years under review. Appeals were made to farmers to increase their operations and so add to the tonnage available for the railways to handle. By that means it was urged, the railways could be worked profitably. The farmers nobly responded to that appeal and yet the railway returns for the last financial year disclosed a loss of £179,000. According to the statement in the Governor's Speech, it was owing to a deficiency in wheat production that the railways were not able to pay their way.

The Honorary Minister: I do not think the Governor's Speech includes quite that statement.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: That is my reading of it, and I am justified in my attitude by the remarks of Mr. Stephenson, who found it difficult to make the statement in the Speech coincide with known facts. I trust that the Chief Secretary, when replying to the debate, will deal with this phase. Last week I asked a question regarding the working costs of the rail-

ways per ton mile on wheat carried. Splendid returns were furnished by the Commissioner of Railways giving an immense amount of information regarding percentage costs in connection with the handling of various goods. We find that wheat is one of the commodities carried at very low rates. Fertilisers represent another line. We constantly hear the statement made that it is these low-priced commodities that cause the loss on the railways. This point is being so harped upon by those who have a knowledge of the subject that I fear the mind of the public will be gradually affected. Within the last few days a leading article appeared in the "West Australian" in which reference was made to the low rates charged against the farmer for the haulage of his wheat. I am apprehensive that there is a bit of stage management going on, and that presently we will find a general impression abroad that the rates I refer to must be increased. I sincerely hope there is no such intention on the part of the Government.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There would not be if you were to send your wool and petrol by train.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: That refers to another matter that is not under discussion at the moment. I claim that the farmers' wheat represents the best paying proposition the State railways have. The wheat is picked up in full train loads and conveyed to its destination at very little expense to the department. Although there are many other lines of goods that are hauled at much higher rates, they are handled at a much greater cost to the department. Where goods of various descriptions are picked up and hauled under high freight conditions, it must be remembered that the haulage does not represent anything like the mileage that is involved in the handling of wheat. Such goods cannot be picked up in full train loads. Large quantities of parcels are spread over a scattered area and in picking them up, there is great expense and much loss of time. That does not apply to the handling of wheat. Then again, the handling of the higher freighted goods entails a lot of book-keeping and a larger staff. With wheat haulage, a train's crew comprises the engine driver and fireman at one end and the guard at the other. Although wheat is carried at the lowest rate, it is responsible

for the largest return to the railway system. It is about time that the public realised that the farmers cannot bear any additional burden heaped upon them. The leading article in the "West Australian" almost supported the view that has been expressed regarding increased freights, and it is time that the men on the land asked themselves whether, in trying to grow wheat, they were not taking undue risks and were not, in fact, living in a fool's paradise. On one occasion I discussed this phase of the question with a man well versed in the working of the railways. I said to him, "If wheat haulage is not a payable proposition, the farmers will be willing to meet you. We do not want the State to carry us on its back; we can go out of the industry and cease growing wheat." His reply was, "For goodness sake, don't stop wheat production! If the farmers stopped growing wheat, the railways would go to pot." That traffic really represents the most important phase of the railway operations. It must be a paying proposition.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: It will be the backbone of the service within the next few years.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It has been the backbone of the railway service for many years past. We recognise that the railways have sustained a great loss because of the decreased timber trade. Timber is hauled at the higher rates and it is traffic that does not require a larger train staff than is involved in the haulage of wheat, but it has to be remembered that timber is conveyed for comparatively short distance. At the same time, there is very little expense involved in the haulage. In that it is in the same category as wheat. Neither commodity requires the large staffs or expenditure involved in handling small goods traffic. Mr. Miles made reference to the haulage of wool and petrol by motor trucks. That also reminds me of a remark made from time to time by the Premier that the whole of his increased land tax was returned to the men on the land, and land owners generally complaining that they were heavily taxed, received the tax back in the shape of reduced freights. By making such a statement, the Premier really dodges the issue because it is not the farmers referred to who benefit by those freight reductions. They were made in respect of the

more highly chargeable goods such as beer, wool and petrol. It was in respect of such goods, upon which high freights are charged, that owners of motor lorries naturally sought to secure a share in the handling of consignments. The public readily accepted the services available, because they found the motor service more convenient and more direct. They found that it meant a saving in cartage expenses at both ends, and also that the goods were lifted direct from the warehouse in Perth and delivered direct to the store or farm in the country area. Naturally the motor lorries have taken a considerable proportion of the handling of that class of goods from the railways because of the more expeditious and direct service rendered between city and country. And, again, these men compete one against another, and compete with the railways, and so they readily take responsibility for the goods they carry. On the other hand, a number of people from time to time have suffered losses on the railways and have had the utmost trouble in sheeting home the responsibility to the railways. I could mention instances where the railways have failed to carry goods along within a reasonable time, whereas the men with the motor lorries would be prepared to deliver the goods direct with a very great saving of time. I do not wish it to be inferred that I am generally finding fault with the railways. I am only pointing out the reasons why this competitive system has grown up, and why the farmers and settlers are so ready to avail themselves of it. At the same time I wish to stress the point that the Government are a little unfair when they say they have remitted to the farmers the land tax that is being extracted from them. We know that the land tax went up considerably, that there was a very big increase on what was paid before. And on top of that there was the fact that land valuations were increased. Only during the last day or two I met a taxation official going over a country district, and I expect that, consequently, the farmers in that district will presently find an increase in their valuations.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The need for the increased valuations was not the fault of the present Government.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I suppose all Governments are anxious to get all the money they can. But that increased taxation has not gone back into the pockets of

those from whom it has been extracted. The people have to pay a great deal more, and they do not want to see an increase in the railway rates charged on their wheat and phosphates. It must be remembered that in every instance those two commodities are carried in full truck loads, and mostly in full train loads. So the Railway Department can afford to carry them at the very lowest rate, and still make important profits.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: It serves to reduce the working expenses of the railways.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: That is so. With the wheat haulage they had last year, the railways should have been able to show profits. Last year the farmers provided immensely increased carriage as against that of a few years ago. The fact is that profits have been filched from the railways by the giving of improved working conditions to the employees. Then the valuation of the mileage has gone up enormously. The average cost over the immense mileage is considerably more than £5,000 per mile, although included in that is the whole of the mileage from Southern Cross to Kalgoolie, which I believe was constructed for nothing; in fact I understand the contractor paid the Government so much for the right to build the line. The valuation of the Midland Railway Company, with a private railway, is very little over £2,000 per mile. I could quite understand that abominable section of line between Midland Junction and Spencer's Brook costing a great deal, for it has had to be rebuilt three or four times over in an endeavour to get decent grades and routes. I could understand that section costing over £10,000 per mile, but when we have regard to all the sections where there has been no difficulty in getting decent grades, I fail to see why they should have cost anything like £5,000 per mile.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: From Geraldton to Meekatharra it is flat all the way.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Yes, there are no engineering difficulties and no costly construction. When we compare it with the line of the Midland Railway Company and note the difference in cost, we see that these charges imposed by the State railways have been heaped on to the cost of those using the lines. Our railways were a much simpler proposition some years ago. More recently heavier rails have been laid down and heavier engines brought into use, so as to reduce the

working expenses by hauling far greater loads with the same number of hands employed. In consequence, it is only natural to expect that the railways should show handsome profits. That they do not show such profits is due largely to the shorter hours and the improved conditions afforded to the employees. Then our compensation Acts and arbitration Acts have something to do with it, for they have everybody worried. In my opinion those Acts are chiefly responsible for the existing unemployment. Some of them could well be wiped off the statute-book. If that were done work could be found for all the unemployed; for there is plenty for everybody to do, but employers are scared of giving employment. Now I should like to say a word about the work being carried out at the Causeway. In the early days the settlers, at great trouble to themselves, and with no little expense, were responsible for constructing the first causeway. To-day I notice that an enormous amount of money is being spent at the Causeway. I have referred to this in the House before, and I ask the Chief Secretary whether the Government have taken into consideration a project that was placed before the community many years ago. It was that the river should be dammed at the Causeway, or a little higher up, with the idea of always retaining the fresh water and using it for irrigation purposes along the Swan. I think it would be worth the Government's while to go into that project. Whilst enormous sums of money are being spent there, provision should be made for investigating this irrigation project. In other countries where they have gone in for closer settlement, it has been found that under a system of irrigation very much greater production can be obtained. It seems to me the whole of the Swan valley lends itself to irrigation. The chief obstacle is that in the summer, just when the fresh water is most required, the sea water comes up and renders useless for irrigation the water in the river. In the old days this project of damming out the sea water was always favourably considered and held to be a perfectly feasible one as soon as the country could afford it. Since the Government are spending an enormous sum of money at the Causeway, it would be just as well to kill two birds with one stone. If the irrigation project is a feasible one, now is the time to consider it, before money is

spent on the Causeway perhaps in such a way as to greatly increase the cost of the irrigation scheme if it should be decided upon after the present work has been completed. Clearly, if that project is feasible it should be carried out simultaneously with the present work at the Causeway.

Hon. J. Nicholson: How far does the salt water go up the river?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Right up to where the river scatters into pools under the foothills. Because of the septic tanks and filter beds just above the Causeway, if it were decided to use the river for irrigation purposes, no doubt the water down at this end would be of greater value than that higher up. From time to time, we have been told there is a project afoot for removing the sewage into the sea. I have always been averse from that, because there are north of Perth and well up towards the Moore River large areas where sewage farms could be instituted. That would be very much better than running the sewage into the sea. I have here a letter from a friend who is acquainted with a similar project in another country. I had told him of the difficulty we had with the algae and that the experts assured us the algae would not live in salt water. It is understood that if the sewage were taken to the sea coast there would be no further algae trouble. This letter I have will perhaps give us a little more to think about, and we might even decide that it would be wise to get further information before doing anything definite. The letter reads—

At last I am able to give you a few particulars which were told me in reference to the algae nuisance and its effects that I spoke to you of. But it is more than likely that you already know more about this particular place than I do. It was Port Louis in Mauritius, somewhat different from our river, as all the sewage emptied itself into the sea. In spite of the salt water the algae grew to such an extent and became so noxious that it caused fever to become prevalent, and the white races had to leave the port and live well away up in the hills. Indians were imported, and natives of the island were engaged to do the work of the port. This was the state of affairs about 30 years ago. Since then they have turned the drainage, etc., into fertiliser. I have come across a young fellow who lived in Mauritius, which he left four years ago. He says there was still some algae growing in the port, but not to such an extent, and some businesses are again carried on by the white people.

Thirty years ago those people had to leave the place because of the algae nuisance created by the system of pouring the drainage into the water, although it was sea water. They had to abandon the place and live inland. After 30 years they are beginning to get back to their business places and that has been rendered possible only because the sewage has been converted into fertiliser instead of being dumped into the sea. It would be well if inquiries regarding the experience there were made before we remove the nuisance from one spot possibly only to repeat it at another.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Where would you suggest putting the dam in our river, above the filter beds?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: At the Causeway I should imagine. I have always held the opinion that we should have a sewage farm. One matter that has not been touched upon by any other member, though there have been frequent references to it in the Press, is that of Alsatian dogs. I am amazed that both Federal and State Governments have not listened to the appeals of pastoralists and farmers to have Alsatian dogs destroyed or sterilised. When in the city the other day I saw a very fine looking animal. I suggested that it had Alsatian blood and asked what the breed was. The owner told me it was a cross between an Alsatian and a staghound. In days gone by I had experience of kangaroo hounds. I had a good dog, and I could guarantee that kangaroo hound to bring down a bullock any time it liked. Looking at the Alsatian-staghound cross. I could not help thinking that if it got into the country and bred there, it was just the type of animal to bring down cattle and calves much more readily than the dingo, bad as that pest is. In the Kimberley country I have known five or six dingoes to follow cows with their calves, but Alsations would not have to trouble about calves; they would be quite capable of pulling down the grown beasts. I sincerely hope that this matter will receive attention. Practically every association of pastoralists throughout Australia has appealed to the authorities for the destruction of Alsatian dogs. Yet the Governments fail to take the slightest notice of them, except that the Federal Government have barred the importation of Alsations for five years. What a wonderful monopoly that is to give a few people who own Alsatian dogs! I under-

stand that the Prime Minister, Mrs. Bruce, or some connection of the family owns several of those dogs. I have been told that the Premier of this State or some member of his family has Alsations, and I would not be surprised if, in the other States, the ownership of Alsatian dogs were traced to people holding such positions in the community that it would be difficult for any Government to take action on the lines desired by stock owners.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Greater proof than you have adduced is necessary before their request could be granted.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I think the people who own Alsatian dogs probably have a greater influence with the Governments throughout Australia than have the pastoralists associations or the people who have to make a living from the land and carrying a big share of the burden of the country. We know what damage has resulted in the past from neglect to take early action when such requests have been made to the authorities, and I hope some notice will be taken of the pastoralists' request. Even owners of Alsatian dogs should recognise that the claims of people who have stock at the mercy of such dogs deserve consideration.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You have to produce the proof that the dogs are so dangerous as you say they are. You have not produced it yet.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: When the Minister for Works was returning through Canada, I had hoped from remarks made by him that the Speech on this occasion would contain some reference to the introduction of bulk handling of wheat. There is no reference to it in the Speech, but I am justified in speaking about it because it is such an important question to this country. Wheat bags are costing this State an enormous sum of money every year, and it is money absolutely lost to the State. The price of bags represents a considerable deduction from the cheque that the farmer receives for his wheat. We should have some information on the advisableness of adopting bulk handling. If the Minister for Works had been favourably impressed with what he saw in Canada, probably the Government would have submitted a proposal, but the matter has not been so much as mentioned since Mr. McCallum's return, so I suppose those who are anxious to see

some action taken will have to wait still longer.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: I think he asked for a report.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I join with other members, Mr. President, in thanking you for your good offices to the State during your visit to the Old Country. An immense amount of good was done by your speeches and writing, and it is gratifying to know that during your absence you had the State uppermost in mind. We owe a debt of gratitude to many people who travel abroad for their efforts to further the interests of the State. Some of our ex-Governors have proved to be splendid agents in forwarding the interests of the State.

HON. J. EWING (South-West) [6.10]: I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your return from the Old Country and on the excellent work you did for the State while there, work the value of which is recognised not only by members of this House but by the people throughout the State. You have been a good advocate for us. I cannot recall an occasion when I have had the pleasure of listening to such excellent speeches as have been delivered on the Address-in-reply this session. Every subject from Dan to Beersheba has been traversed, and much illumination has been thrown on the activities of the State during the last 12 months. In the Speech the Government have told us what they have done. I admit they have done some good work, but the legislation forecasted in the Speech is very meagre. Since another place disposed of the Address-in-reply debate, however, some 15 or 20 Bills have been introduced there, so we can expect to have a considerable amount of legislation to deal with before the session is over. This is the last session of the present Parliament and we can anticipate a strenuous election in March next. Be that as it may, I hope that all candidates will fight with their cards on the table. I wish to speak particularly about the finances of the State. When the Wilson Government were in power some 16 years ago, we had a surplus of about £13,000. That is the last occasion on which the Treasurer was able to record a surplus.

Hon. J. R. Brown: No.

Hon. J. EWING: During the last 16 years we have had deficit after deficit, and I have wondered when the finances of the State would be put in order. I am not blaming

any particular Government for the present financial position. The Scaddan Government were in power for six years and then followed the Lefroy and Mitchell Governments. When Sir James Mitchell took office, he had to shoulder the deficits accumulated during preceding regimes. During his term of office the deficit reached something like £700,000, but Sir James Mitchell took drastic steps to cope with it by furthering the development of the country. So successful were his efforts that satisfactory results followed, and two years later the deficit was reduced to £200,000. That was the extent of the deficit bequeathed to the Collier Government. With the advantages bequeathed to the present Government and since received by them, I thought it a foregone conclusion that at length the ledger would be squared. In 1925 the Collier Government had a deficit of £50,000, but in 1926 the shortage increased by £41,000. From then on the deficit was reduced until 1927-28 it was about £30,000. That seemed reasonable progress.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Then there was one surplus.

Hon. J. EWING: I had hoped that last year the deficit would be extinguished, but instead of that the Premier finished the year £275,000 to the bad, an amount greater than the deficit of Sir James Mitchell in his last year of office in 1924.

Hon. G. Fraser: A couple of years ago the present Government had a surplus.

Hon. J. EWING: Whatever party may be in power I desire to see the finances of the State put on a satisfactory basis, and that is not possible unless the Treasurer squares the ledger each year.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. EWING: I wish to rectify a mistake I made when speaking before tea. I find that the present Government had a surplus in 1927; its amount, I think, was £28,000.

Hon. H. Seddon: That was disputed, was it not?

Hon. J. EWING: I hoped that in any case, the Government having jumped the hurdle, they would sustain their run, instead of going back in 1928 by £26,000 and in the financial year just closed by £275,000. I feel very sorry that that is the case. The Government attained the position of balancing the ledger, but have now fallen be-

hind. To a great extent the trouble lies with the railways, which showed a shortage of £178,000, and with the wheat yield. Still, the wheat yield was only 2,500,000 bushels behind Western Australia's record; I forget the year in which that record was made. Last season's wheat yield was about 33,000,000 bushels. In that respect, therefore, the reason for the deficit is not very apparent. Other factors have been mentioned by hon. members, but I consider that one which has a great effect upon the finances is the employment of day labour. I have always been opposed to day labour, and am opposed to it now; and I hope the Government will see their way to let contracts for most of the work being done, and thereby save a great deal of money to the State. Let me express the hope that any Government returned to power after the next general election—perhaps the present Government will be returned, perhaps not—will strive, as the present Government no doubt have striven during the past five years, to balance the ledger. Unfortunately the Collier Government seem to have lost their stride. At all events, if they are returned to power again, I trust they will use their best endeavours to square the finances. In view of the buoyant revenue of the past five years and the wonderful amount of money that has been coming to the State Treasury through the Federal Government, one might have expected better things than have happened. The Governor's Speech mentions the sum of £350,000 as having been saved in respect of payment of interest and sinking fund. I wish to state expressly that the Government have done an honourable and straightforward thing in not applying this sum to the deficit. They have promised Parliament that an opportunity will be afforded hon. members of discussing the matter, and of deciding the way in which the sum shall be allotted. I would suggest an allotment in the direction of reducing taxation, and if possible paying off some of our loans, or perhaps the deficit itself. The Premier has stated, and quite correctly, that if the amount were applied to the deficit of £275,000, there would be a surplus of about £76,000. That may be so, or may not be so. Still, this particular saving has nothing whatever to do with the deficit. I trust this House and another place will agree to the application of the £350,000 in the manner I have suggested. It is a matter of great regret to me that the Federal Loan Council, established under the Financial Agreement,

recently decided to reduce the amount of $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling allotted to Western Australia. The original allotment was made at the conference held in the early part of the year. The Honorary Minister, upon his recent return from the East, told us that owing to great difficulties in raising money and in view of the financial position of the Eastern States not being very good—this does not apply to Western Australia—the Federal Loan Council have, at a later meeting, decided upon a reduction of 20 per cent. on the $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions I have mentioned, and that the State Government have agreed to this reduction. It means pretty well a million taken off the State's loan expenditure for the year. I feel no doubt that the reduction will lead to heavy curtailment of Government expenditure on public works, thus increasing the bad unemployment now existing. I regret that the position in the Eastern States is so bad as to have led the Federal Government to such a decision. When the Financial Agreement was before this Chamber, I was one of those who opposed it. Indeed, I opposed it as strenuously as I could. Mr. Lovekin and a number of other hon. members were strongly opposed to the establishment of the Loan Council. As far as I can see, it is working out pretty well as forecasted by the hon. member who took the matter in hand so seriously. Naturally, the States have to be loyal to the Loan Council, and must agree to what that body wants to do. In certain circumstances the Government of Western Australia being financially in a good position and having a buoyant revenue, could go on the London market; but that seems to be out of their reach at present. That being so, it would appear, as was stated in this Chamber by hon. members who opposed the Financial Agreement, that we have lost that opportunity. If we could go to the London market and do what we ought to do, borrow four or five or even six millions, if possible, to carry out the wonderful works that require to be done in Western Australia, it would be a very good thing for the people. So far as this State is concerned, there is nothing to warrant any objection to the carrying out of such a policy. However, we find that on account of having surrendered our sovereign right as we have done, instead of going on any money market we liked, the London or any other market offering funds at a reasonable price, we have

to abide by what has been arranged by the Honorary Minister on behalf of our Government; that is to say, abide by the 20 per cent. reduction. Now I wish to say a few words regarding the Workers' Compensation Act. After three years' working of the Act a position has been reached which is utterly impossible. Mr. Lovekin, who was very much concerned about the matter, spoke this afternoon; but I want to state what appears to me to be the fact, that in connection with the Second Schedule to the Act the insurance companies have lost about £100,000 during the last three years. They have now raised their charges by about 25 per cent. It is a remarkable thing that although we have the State Insurance Office in operation at present, that undertaking finds that in connection with clearing and timber getting the insurance premiums do not anything like cover what has to be paid out in the way of accident compensation. The manager of the State Insurance Office tells us that for every £100 he has received in the way of insurance of clearers and municipal workers he has had to pay out as much as £350. Therefore it is absolutely necessary, I consider, in the interests of the State, in the interests of progress and upkeep of industry, that something should be done. I shall not stand here to-night and say what ought to be done, but I will say that in connection with compulsory insurance under the Workers' Compensation Act, especially under the Second Schedule, there is something that makes it impossible for industry to carry on. Therefore I do hope that the Government will rise to the occasion and recognise that although they have done all they could, and that although this House allowed them to do it—I myself supported the Bill—they find they have made a mistake, and must reconsider the Second Schedule. Upon reconsideration of that schedule the Government in their wisdom will make some suggestion, and I have no doubt that this Chamber and another place will devise some means of making the position very much better than it is at the present time. This is a most important question, and one I am sure the Government will take into their closest consideration. I observed that the Minister recently spoke of some possibility of the Government reconsidering the Act. I hope that the Chief Secretary, in replying, will be able to tell

those who are interested in the difficulties of the country, interested in workers' compensation, and interested in the welfare of the workers that something will be done which, while not injurious to the men, will be just and fair in the interests of this great State. Forestry is a paramount question in my electorate. I may assert that the South-West is up in arms. Perhaps the people there are right, and perhaps they are wrong. It is well known that forests throughout the world are becoming depleted, that the supplies of timber are getting less and less. The supplies in the East almost seem to be vanishing. Such is also the experience in America and on the Continent. It is also well known that in Australia itself there is a severe shortage of timber. Western Australia alone appears to occupy the happy position of having excellent forests. The Premier, who is Minister for Forests, and who held that portfolio in the Scaddan Government, is an ardent forester. He believes in regeneration of the forests, and in doing all that is possible to protect the timber industry. He took action in that direction when he was Minister for Forests in the Scaddan Government. He was then instrumental in bringing Mr. Lane-Poole to Western Australia. Mr. Lane-Poole, upon coming here—through the then Minister for Forests, Mr. R. T. Robinson, the Scaddan Government having resigned—induced Parliament to pass a Forests Act in the year 1918. I well remember the measure going through the House, and the great opposition to it here. I well remember the contention of hon. members that too much power was being given to the Conservator of Forests. That power was exercised, and rightly exercised, because the Conservator was endeavouring to retain the forests of the State and to work out a system of reforestation and of preserving the timber. Mr. Lane-Poole has been followed by Mr. Kessel, also an ardent forester. Mr. Kessel recommended to the Government—and faithfully too, according to what he believes to be right and proper—that the large reservations which have been made in the South-West should take place. When Sir James Mitchell was in power the interests of the agriculturist were always conserved; no areas were dedicated as forest reserves if there were stretches of agricultural land within them. Here, how-

over, at one fell swoop the Government have decided to dedicate 3,000,000 acres for forestry purposes. A couple of months ago I attended a conference at Bunbury at which there were present between 70 and 80 settlers, men who had spent their lives in the South-West and who knew what they were doing. The conference carried a resolution that the position taken up by the Premier was wrong, and that the 3,000,000 acres should not have been reserved. A deputation was appointed to interview the Premier, and all who spoke at that deputation were ardent in their advocacy of a definition of timber and agricultural lands. It is admitted that in the 3,000,000 acres there is a vast amount of timber, but a great injustice has been done to the South-West by locking up within that 3,000,000 acres, a considerable area of agricultural land. The deputation was quite friendly but there was no hesitation amongst those who spoke. They were all settlers who spoke with authority, knowing the country intimately, and they told the Premier that in their opinion something like 500,000 acres of agricultural land was included in the 3,000,000 acres reserved. The Premier would not believe it, but it is nevertheless a fact that the agricultural land has no timber growing on it. My knowledge of the people who attended the deputation extends over a quarter of a century and I know them to be men who would not misrepresent anything. They told the Premier in plain language that the classification was wrong. The classification was made by the Forests Department and agreed to by the Lands Department. I will not say that these departments do not know their business, but I do believe that it was a hasty action on the part of the Lands Department inasmuch as the officers of that department arrived at the conclusion that there was no agricultural land in the area. This evening Mr. Stephenson spoke of his trip from Greenbushes to Wilga and told us that he was impressed by the country that he went through. I venture to say that if the hon. member were asked he would tell us that there was a great deal of agricultural land in that part of the State. I know that to be so from my knowledge of the South-West and I have no hesitation in declaring that a reclassification should be made. The Premier told the deputation that this would be too expensive, but in my opinion it is not too expensive to see what really

does exist there. If agricultural land is actually there in large areas, it will pay to release it from the forestry classification, have it classified by good land surveyors, and thrown open for selection. The development of the South-West is so necessary that every care should be taken that large areas of agricultural country are not included in forest reserves in the future. Whatever the Premier may think, I can assure him that not a single member of the deputation desires the policy of the Forests Department to be departed from. All are anxious to see the regeneration of the forests, but they are also against the locking up of land that can be used for agricultural purposes. I appeal to the Government to carry out a reclassification and to do that quickly even though it be a costly job. We have an able Conservator in Mr. Kessell. He is a young man and has a lot to learn and a lot to live for. If he succeeds in the regeneration of the forests, he will find himself to be one of the principal foresters in Australia. He has material to work on, but we should take care that the two industries—agriculture and forestry—should not be mixed. Reforestation means the employment of hundreds of men, but that number is not comparable with the thousands who would be employed in development from an agricultural point of view. I hope I shall be forgiven for enlarging on this subject, but I feel it my duty to do so, knowing the South-West so well and the ambitions of those acquainted with the country. Their desire is to see forestry conditions worked out in a proper way, and the Forests Department given every opportunity to do so, but at the same time they claim that agricultural lands that are actually there should not be included in forest classification. I hope the Minister will take notice of what I have said on this subject. Now to refer to another matter. Hon. members know that for years past I have taken a great interest in electricity. I have no desire to criticise the administration, but I wish to refer to something that I have just come across and which may be of advantage to disclose. Last session I was successful in carrying a motion through this House, which, to me, was satisfactory. That motion was sent to another place, but unfortunately it was amongst the slaughtered innocents. Perhaps, after all, it was wise that the matter was not discussed in the Legislative

Assembly last session. I find that the East Perth power station is capitalised at £1,210,710 and a new unit is to be installed there. That will mean a capital expenditure of roughly 1½ millions sterling. The advance that has been made at the East Perth power house is simply wonderful. If members turn to the statistics they will find that whereas 70 million units were generated last year, 80 million units were generated this year. That is an enormous leap and the time has come when the East Perth power station will not be able to supply the requirements of this part of the State, much less that part of it that requires to be developed by means of electricity. With regard to the management of the power station, I have never yet criticised it; I consider that Mr. Taylor is a capable manager who is doing wonderful work at low cost. I want the costs to be even lower and to extend the current to the outlying districts. The maximum extent of the distribution of current is 25 miles from the city, and the people within that limit are deriving the advantage of living near the metropolis and getting benefits that are denied to people elsewhere. The Federal Government have recognised what has to be done to develop Australia and amongst other things is the greater use of light, heat and power and its generation as cheaply as possible. With that object in view, they submitted to the Development and Migration Commission a request that an analysis should be made of the position of every State. The outcome was a report by Mr. A. J. Gibson, a member of the firm of Julius & Gibson. Sir George Julius is well known to us as a remarkably clever engineer, and on that account I read the report with great pleasure. The report was submitted to the conference that was attended by the Premier, but it has yet to be acted upon. I have no doubt that Mr. Collier is familiar with the report. It makes certain recommendations with regard to electricity in Australia and those recommendations are so important that I should like to read one or two extracts from them. They recommended—

That each State, where provision has not yet been made for such an instrumentality, shall forthwith constitute an authoritative body as a power commission or power board, whose functions shall be to control electrical power development within the State; to co-ordinate and direct the supply and distribution of current generated by existing supply authorities;

to investigate and make recommendations with regard to development of power sites or other power projects initiated either by the Government or by private undertakers

It now remains for the Federal Government to pass legislation to carry the recommendations into effect. Even now, if the State Government chose, they could take the lead in this matter and appoint a board to work in conjunction with the Federal Board and determine how cheaply the States can generate power and other matters as well that will be of interest to Australia. Mr. Gibson's report suggests also—

The board would consist of the permanent members, and would be assisted by the advice of representatives of—the Railway Commissioners of the State, and/or municipal or private supply authorities; the department charged with the conservation of water and irrigation; Department of Public Works; Department of Mines; Department of Agriculture; Department of Lands and an engineer in private practice representing the public.

The way has been shown by the Federal Government and now it requires only the State Government to appoint a board of three who will go into the question and determine what is necessary. They will determine what is necessary for Western Australia and submit recommendations to the Government, who in turn will send them on to the Commonwealth. By that means we may make a start on the development of this great industry of electricity. We have only to see what has been done elsewhere to realise that we are behind other countries, as well as behind the rest of Australia, in our development of an industry which could be turned to such advantage to Western Australia. I am surprised that this progressive Government did not include in the Governor's Speech some reference to this important question. No doubt the Chief Secretary will say it has already been considered, but I hope that legislation will be introduced so that some step may be taken along the lines I have suggested. The other night Mr. Seddon spoke about the balance of trade, and the effect of Western Australia's position by reason of its being considered with the position of Australia as a whole. In actual fact Western Australia is better off in the matter of the balance of trade than the other States. I refer to overseas trade.

Hon. H. Seddon: I pointed that out.

Hon. J. EWING: The State imported about £9,000,000 worth of goods and ex-

ported £15,000,000 worth, according to Mr. Seddon. He also said that we were not getting the advantage from the position that we were entitled to. I find that imports from Great Britain into Western Australia during 1927-28 amounted to £4,079,340, from the other States £8,373,412, from New Zealand £81,000, from other British Dominions £1,713,000, and from foreign countries £4,020,000, making a total of £18,287,000.

Hon. H. Seddon: Those are the 1928 figures; I quoted 1929.

Hon. J. EWING: I have not seen the 1929 figures but I hope they are even better than those I am quoting. The exports to Great Britain totalled £6,020,838 which was £2,000,000 more than the imports. To the other States we exported £1,337,000 worth, to other British dominions £3,343,000 worth, and to foreign countries £6,837,000 worth, making a total of £18,240,000. On those figures, therefore, our exports and imports practically agree.

Hon. H. Seddon: No.

Hon. J. EWING: In my opinion the figures pretty well agree. The position, therefore, is not bad. We exported as much as we imported. The importations from the other States were £8,373,412, and the exports only £1,337,000, leaving a balance of trade against us of £7,000,000. There are many things that we import that we should grow ourselves. We import butter, ham, cheese, tinned milk, potatoes, etc., to the value of £2,000,000, which could well come off the totals I have given. It is very disastrous to have so great a balance of trade with the Eastern States on the wrong side. I look forward to the time when this position will be rectified, and when the development of the South-West will be such that the difficulty will be completely overcome. I have no desire to be parochial in dealing with the South-West. I was very interested to hear Mr. Fraser's remarks on group settlement. So much has been said against that scheme that it was particularly encouraging to hear Mr. Fraser speaking so highly of it. He said that the Manjimup and Pemberton settlements were good and that there was great hope for the scheme. He also expressed the opinion that the settlers there would succeed, and agreed that the group settlement scheme, to all intents and purposes, would be the salvation of the South-West. I am pleased to be in such excellent company as the hon. member when he expresses himself in that way. The

effects of superphosphate on the growth of subterranean clover are so great that the South-West has been practically revolutionised. Last year I took a trip with the Minister for Agriculture through the South-West. He expressed great admiration for the development that had taken place, and for the energy and enterprise displayed by the people. I have known that part of the State for nearly 30 years. Only 25 years ago much of that country was regarded as worthless. It is now growing luxuriant pastures and has become a great asset. We are fortunate in that direction. It has also been found possible to grow other fodders down there. When the time arrives that we can grow pastures for both summer and winter use we shall have solved one of our big problems. It is interesting to note the development of the South-West Co-operative Dairy Company. This was assisted in the early days by the Government, but has now paid back every penny. It has developed to such an extent that it has a factory at Bunbury, one at Busselton, is erecting a third at Harvey and has purchased a factory at Manjimup. No doubt in time there will be a chain of factories under co-operative control, which will be of great benefit to the settlers in the districts affected.

Hon. E. Ro-e: It is all purely co-operative.

Hon. J. EWING: Yes. Last year Bunbury's turnover was £133,000 and Busselton's £25,858. I am astounded at the figures for Busselton, for which no doubt the groups were responsible. The factories are being made good use of by settlers under the scheme, and they are doing well. Last year the society purchased 4,045,150 lbs. of cream, equal to 1,805 tons. Commercial butter was manufactured to the extent of 2,247,377 lbs., or 1,003 tons. Those figures speak for themselves, and are evidence of the success of the groups. There is no doubt the groups are making good, and that very soon all will be well with them. Our pastures are improving by leaps and bounds, and the number of cattle is also increasing. Mr. Stephenson referred to the recent importation of some 900 dairy cattle by the Government. The cows are a fine lot and will no doubt establish wonderful herds in the South-West. The cost of the scheme has been considerable. The Mitchell Government spent over £1,000,000, and the present Government over £6,000,000. I have no desire to criti-

cise or laud any particular Government, but I do maintain that the scheme is paying for itself. The interest has been a heavy load on the settlers, but they will be released from many of their burdens by the investigations recently conducted by the Valuation Board. This capitalisation of 300 odd holdings, which was over a £1,000,000, has been reduced to something like £300,000. Members may say that this is a very serious reduction, and that the country cannot stand it. Western Australia can stand anything that gives us prosperous and contented settlers. If mistakes have been made and unwarranted expenditure incurred, the State will be amply repaid if the scheme turns out the complete success I anticipate it will. I am sure then that the revaluations will be cheerfully accepted by the community, just as they have been accepted by the settlers themselves. I should like to see the system extended in the South-West. Thousands of acres of land could readily be converted into group settlements. That is the way to get people on. The experience of the past will prevent mistakes being made for the future, and if the scheme were extended we should be able to accommodate many hundreds of people who now desire to go on the land. Probably the Honorary Minister will tell us when the report on the Fremantle harbour development will be made available. I shall be very glad to know what the policy of the Government is, and what the country will have to face by way of capital expenditure. A lot of money has been spent on the Geraldton harbour, in order to provide an outlet for manganese and assist in the development of the Wiluna and other goldfields. For that reason one cannot complain of the expenditure there. Mr. Stewart and other members voiced the claims of Albany. I want to know what the Government are going to do for Bunbury. When I was a member of the Mitchell Government the people said that nothing but promises had been made. I do not think the Mitchell Government did make any promises for the Bunbury harbour. During the last five years the local people have been very exercised in their minds about the whole question. There is no fixed policy governing it. Around Bunbury is a tremendously wide hinterland from which come valuable consignments of apples, wheat and other produce. The time is now opportune for something to be done to develop the harbour. The

work should have been done long ago. The elections are looming in the future and no doubt it is at this time that the Government will make a statement. The Bunbury people will not stand statements made about election time. They want performance, not promises. I trust that something will be done and that the harbour will be attended to satisfactorily. Much the same may be said regarding the harbour at Busselton. For five years a sum of £5,000 has appeared on the Estimates for expenditure in connection with the Busselton jetty, and yet none of that money has been spent. We get tired of that sort of thing. Mr. Mann referred to the same matter a few days ago and he indicated that he was tired of the whole position. He thought the £5,000 at least should be spent for the benefit of the Busselton people. Several railways are referred to in the Governor's Speech. I notice that the Premier informed a deputation that waited upon him regarding the Karlgarin railway, that he would build the line. It seemed to me to be a matter of a few months only before the work would be carried out. I would like to know what is happening regarding the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook line. The Estimates last year contained £5,000 for expenditure in connection with the line, but nothing has been done beyond some survey work. The country that will be tapped by that line is worthy of better consideration. At Bridgetown the people placed a most convincing case before the Premier, and I think he realised the justice of their claims for a line. Promises, however, are of no use. The line is **urgently** required in that part of the State, **because** it will tap wonderful country for fat lambs. Being a farmer himself, the Premier appreciated the position, and I hope that all that the Government can do will be done at an early date. It has been stated that £400,000 was made available by the Development and Migration Commission, and as that money is available at 1 per cent., the Government should make use of it and construct a line that will open up such a fine district. Recently the Minister for Railways visited the Collie district in connection with the proposed Collie-Ferguson line, which will relieve the traffic on the present Collie line and will help to further the interests of Bunbury from

the point of view of export trade. It is known that a great deal of money is to be spent in connection with the establishment of fertiliser works at Picton Junction and when fertilisers are available from those works, it will mean a great deal to the people in the Great Southern and wheat areas. The line, which will open up the country between Dardanup and Collie, will encourage production to a marked degree. I hope the Honorary Minister will peruse the remarks of his colleague, the Minister for Railways, and gain a better appreciation of what the line will mean to that part of the State. The Minister for Railways almost promised he would construe it when he was there.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do you think an "almost promise" is as valuable as a promise?

Hon. J. EWING: I do not know. A promise is a promise, and should be honoured. Regarding the prospects of mining in Western Australia, I am pleased to hear that the prospects ahead of gold mining are brighter than they have been for years past. You, Mr. President, are doubtless more au fait with the position than I am. There is a much more hopeful tone prevalent in Kalgoorlie and Boulder, and there seems to be a general impression that some definite forward move will be made in the near future. The great hope ahead of gold mining in this State undoubtedly centres upon Wiluna, where considerable money has been spent already. It may be found that we shall have a second Kalgoorlie in the mining development that will take place there, and if that is so, we may see the prosperity of the State advance in keeping with that experienced in the nineties. I hope that it will be so. Members of Parliament did not hesitate for a moment in agreeing to the construction of a railway to Wiluna in order to advance the interests of the field. I do not speak about the coal industry much, because I am interested in it personally, but the other night Mr. Miles attributed the high cost of our railways to the use of Collie coal. The conditions under which that coal is mined are almost ideal. The work is done by contract and the men are well paid for the work they do. We are thrice lucky to have such a coal field in Western Australia.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Could not the coal be sold more cheaply if the men worked 40 hours instead of 35 hours a week?

Hon. J. EWING: That is a good week's work. I have been in the mines hundreds of times. I know what it is.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have you worked underground?

Hon. J. EWING: After a man has worked for seven hours underground, he has done a good day's work. Mr. Miles should realise that the Collie coal industry is a wonderful asset to Western Australia. I have been interested in the trade for 30 years and I hope other members will not be under the misapprehension, indicated by Mr. Miles in his remarks, that the men in the coal mines at Collie are not working fair hours for a fair wage.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Five days of seven hours each, or 35 hours for the week?

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member should understand that that is the practice in the coal mining industry throughout the world. The men work only 11 shifts in a fortnight. That is the recognised thing in the trade. The price of the coal to the Government compares more than favourably with the price at which coal from the Eastern States is made available. Collie coal is much cheaper and Western Australia is fortunate indeed to have such an industry that is carried on so peacefully.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And the mines provide fine dividends for shareholders.

Hon. G. Fraser: The miners earn every penny they get.

Hon. J. EWING: Undoubtedly they do. The hon. member has been there and knows all about it. At Collie last year 550,000 tons of coal were produced and the valuation placed upon the coal by the Mines Department was £400,000. When hon. members consider the conditions obtaining in connection with the coal industry in this State, they should realise what is done for the industry in South Africa. There the coal is brought from the inland mines over 1,000 miles or more of railway at a cost that is less than that charged by our railways to bring coal from Collie to Fremantle. The freight rates there are ridiculously low and amount to something like one-eighth of a penny per ton per mile.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The miners work decent hours in Africa.

Hon. J. EWING: The work is done by black boys. When the coal is put on board the boats at Durban, the cost is about 27s. 6d. per ton. The ships take as much coal as they possibly can, and then may sail for Fremantle or other ports. If the engineers are economical in the use of the coal, they may return to Durban with 500 or 600 tons of coal still in their bunkers. On every such ton they receive a bonus of 7s. 6d. from the South African Government. Hon. members can see what a great help that is to the coal mining industry there.

Hon. H. Seddon: Where does the coal come from when it is railed to the coast?

Hon. J. EWING: From wherever the mines are.

Hon. J. Nicholson: How much does it cost to produce that coal at the pit's mouth.

Hon. J. EWING: I have not studied those figures.

The Honorary Minister: What is the reason for the payment of the bonus of 7s. 6d. per ton?

Hon. J. EWING: To help the sale of South African coal; what other reason could there be? The Government want to encourage the industry. In Western Australia we do not want any concessions, but the conditions in South Africa are 100 per cent. better than those applicable to the coal trade in this State.

Hon. H. Seddon: Do you say that the South African Government pay a royalty of 7s. 6d. per ton?

Hon. J. EWING: No, a bonus of 7s. 6d. per ton is paid on every ton of coal that is brought back to Durban.

The Honorary Minister: Why should the South African Government pay 7s. 6d. per ton on coal that is brought back to the port?

Hon. J. EWING: Because the shipping people are able to show that the coal is so good, that they burn less than if they took coal from other countries. By the exercise of care they are building up a great industry in South Africa, and they are advertising it by this means. The fact that a ship had 250 tons left out of 1,000 tons is well worth advertising.

The Honorary Minister: If she has 250 tons left when she comes back, she will require 250 tons less when she goes away again.

Hon. J. EWING: But she gets the bonus just the same. You will find my statement correct.

Hon. J. Cornell: If the hon. member's statement as to the coal is anything like his statement of distances, it is certainly interesting.

Hon. J. EWING: I am quoting facts. The amount of freight charged on the coal is very much less than that charged on Collie coal.

Hon. J. Cornell: The coal is back loading in that instance.

Hon. J. EWING: Never mind that.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What is the cost per ton of the South African coal?

Hon. J. EWING: It is 27s. 6d. per ton free on board.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And what is the cost of Collie coal?

Hon. J. EWING: Only 19s. per ton at the pit's mouth.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Then it is not the same quality of coal.

Hon. J. EWING: If you compare Collie coal with the best Newcastle coal, you will find the comparison very much in favour of the Collie coal, having regard to the prices. The work done by the Collie coal is very satisfactory indeed.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about the sparks and the bush fires and the extra insurance money to be paid because of the use of Collie coal?

Hon. J. EWING: No, Collie coal gives off no sparks at all now. That trouble is finished with. I should like to say a word about the 3,500 farms scheme. The South-West is worth developing and should be further developed. It has been neglected as compared to the 3,500 farms scheme. I know something about the Forrestania country, because my son is out there surveying. There is very good country there, but I warn the Government to be careful about the rainfall. I am just as much in earnest as any other member and just as well satisfied with the development of that part of the State, but I say that one portion of the State must not be sacrificed to another.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The dams there are overflowing now.

Hon. J. EWING: I am very glad to hear it. I hope it will all be a huge success.

Hon. J. Cornell: The only dams there are gnamma holes.

Hon. J. EWING: The land is good, very good indeed and there are numbers of young men coming along from the Eastern

States trying to get that land, but I want the Government to be careful about what they do. A large amount of money has already been expended there on water conservation and roads, but of course the large expenditure will be that from the one per cent. money. It is not necessary because the Government are developing that part of the country that they should neglect other parts. I want that country to be developed, in fact I want every portion of Western Australia to be developed, and not one portion against another. I will support the motion.

HON. H. J. YELLAND (East) [8.35]: I desire to associate myself with the congratulations already extended to you, Sir, on your actions in the Home Land. Also I should like to extend my congratulations to Mr. Mann and express the hope that he will make use of the opportunities afforded him to further the interests of his native State. Throughout the debate a great deal has been said about parochial matters. Every member has brought before the Government matters affecting his own province. It serves to give an indication to the Government of the huge extensions of expenditure required throughout the State. When one listens intelligently to the debate he must recognise the magnitude of the work before the Government to fulfil the requirements of all parts of the State and of the various phases of industry. Two problems have been brought most prominently before the House, and the public have taken them up through the Press. Those two problems overshadowing the political sky are unemployment and the financial position of the State. In spite of the indication in the Governor's Speech pointing out that the finances are in a satisfactory condition, and despite the frequent repetition by Ministers of that assertion, I fail to find tangible evidence in support of it. I propose to show why I think the finances are not satisfactory, and I hope the criticism I shall offer will be taken in the same spirit as it is given, for it will be constructive criticism. I am not going to complain without having in view the advantages that might be derived from putting the finances in order. If the finances are satisfactory under existing conditions and with the year that has passed, I wonder what adjective would have been used in the Governor's Speech to describe the condition if it had not been for the unnecessary expenditure that has been incurred during the year.

Let us compare the revenue and expenditure at the present time with, say, that of 1923-24, the year in which the change of Government took place.

Hon. G. Fraser: It was just as well the change did take place, else the State might have been bankrupt now.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The hon. member may hold that opinion. Perhaps the Government have not done as well as he would try to make out. In 1923-24 the State revenue was £7,865,594 and in 1928-29 it was £9,947,951. So the present Government have had £2,082,357 of revenue more than was obtained by their predecessors in their last year. In 1923-24 the expenditure was £8,094,753, and in 1928-29 it was £10,223,919. That is to say, the present Government had increased revenue of £2,082,357 and have increased their expenditure correspondingly, by £2,129,166. So the expenditure has been increasing more than even the revenue.

Hon. G. Fraser: It shows the good work the Government are doing.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: That state of affairs cannot possibly endure. Under these conditions any private firm would be heading for bankruptcy. If that is so, we cannot possibly say that our finances are in a satisfactory condition. And this year's deficit amounted to £275,969, which is the greatest deficit shown during the last six years. How, then, can the Government say the finances are in a satisfactory condition? To my mind that is rather a stretch of the imagination. The revenue this year as against that of last year increased by £140,000, but the expenditure also increased, by £389,504.

The Honorary Minister: I wonder by how much you want the Government to increase the expenditure.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I have not asked the Government to undertake any increased expenditure. These are the facts published by the Treasury as the operations for the past year.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Then the ledger is not squaring itself.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: No, and since the deficit is increasing, I cannot see how the finances can be said to be in a satisfactory condition.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You cannot say the Government are practising economy.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: No. Members will have noted both from speeches in the House and from reports in the Press that a number of causes for the deficit have been suggested. The railways have been blamed

for most of it, especially the extra expenses of the railways, as for instance the granting of long service leave. This has meant a tremendous cost to the Government, and I do not think it has bestowed any benefit worth speaking of. I have been in communication with a good number of railway men, and I am speaking now from my association with them. Numbers of them realise that long service leave is not the benefit they believed it would be. We have instances of men who have been compelled to take the long service leave. It was due to them and they were told they must take it. They have done so, and in consequence the whole of their savings have been spent on their leave, and on return they have had to start off afresh, if not with a deficit to make up, at all events without any bank balance. They have complained that the salary paid to them, which would keep them while at work, would not keep them while on holidays during their long service leave. Many of them found themselves stranded before their holidays were completed, and they do not appreciate that state of affairs. In nearly every instance they have expressed themselves along lines such as these: If the Government, on deciding materially to benefit them, had given such concession as a superannuation or retiring allowance, it would have been very much more in accordance with their ideas. They would have appreciated it considerably more for the reason that when a man left the service of his own free will, or on reaching the retiring age, he would then have had behind him a certain amount of capital to put into a small business and so be enabled to make a living. If he is on long service leave he is not permitted to engage in business, because his association with the department precludes his engaging in any private work. Consequently, while he is on leave he becomes a spender of money. If the Government had been prepared to grant the railway men a retiring allowance, the men would have been made independent, and after they left the department they would not have become a burden on the State. I have in mind one officer who took his long-service leave and returned to work, as he expressed it, with his bank balance exhausted. Six or eight months afterwards he was informed that, having reached the retiring age, he must leave the department. The result was that he had not any money left, and he was retired from the department practic-

ally penniless because only a little while before he had had to take his long-service leave. If he had been allowed to work until the end of his term, and had then been able to draw what was due to him in the shape of long-service leave, he would have been free to enter into business and probably would have put himself into a satisfactory position the rest of his life?

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: Now he shows a deficit?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes. The granting of long-service leave has been advanced as one of the great concessions granted to the railway men by the present Government. I am convinced that the railway men have not received anything like the concessions from the present Government that they received from the Mitchell Government. If members turn up the advantages received by the railway men during the two periods they will find that those men were much more liberally treated by the Mitchell Government, notwithstanding that they have been granted long-service leave by the present Government.

The Honorary Minister: I think it would be difficult to prove that statement.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about the 44-hour week?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: That has been imposed on the Government.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is a tax on the people.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes. In reply to the Honorary Minister's interjection, I have a comparative statement showing the average salaries and wages paid in the years 1919, 1924 and 1928. For the salaried staff in 1919 the average was £202 12s. 10d., and in 1924 £289 0s. 11d., an increase during the five years of £79 8s. During the four years 1924 to 1928, the average salary increase was £14 12s.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But you do not advocate that one Government should seek to do better than another in that respect?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I am pointing out that the concessions granted during the Mitchell regime were greater than those granted by the present Government.

The Honorary Minister: What was the increase in the cost of living during the two periods?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Naturally that comes into the question.

The Honorary Minister: Why not make a comparison on that basis?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: To the wages staff the average paid in 1919 was £164 14s. 5d., and in 1924 the average was £222 10s. 8d., an increase of £57 16s. Under the present regime the average wage has risen to £242 6s. 4d., or an increase of £19 16s.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Do you say the Government should put up the wages men?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I do not know that there is any necessity for that. I am simply quoting the advantages conceded by the two Governments, to show that those granted by the Mitchell regime were greater than those granted by the present Government. Another point to be borne in mind is that the increases granted while the Mitchell Government were in office were granted in the legitimate and proper way through the Arbitration Court. As for long-service leave—

The Honorary Minister: If I remember rightly, the hon. member advocated long-service leave for railway employees.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I am not aware that I did.

The Honorary Minister: I think so.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Another reason advanced for the unsatisfactory condition of the finances is that railway revenue had declined, particularly on wheat, and as usual the poor old primary producer has been termed one of the great beneficiaries in the disposal of some of the cash that should have gone to swell the coffers of the Treasury. On the question of freight, as has been pointed out, the Government speak with two voices. In one they blame the cartage of wheat and super at low rates for the loss made, and in another voice they say there has not been the wheat to cart. If wheat is carted at a loss, the less the railways have to cart, the higher should be their returns.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Both statements might be quite consistent.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is quite possible to lose on a small quantity and make a profit on a large quantity.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Yes, with large overhead expenses going on.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I have no desire to pursue that question now. Other speakers have directed attention to matters that I intended to mention and I shall not reiterate their statements. The question of unemployment has received a good deal of attention both in the House and in the public Press, and I suppose there have been nearly

as many suggestions of the causes of unemployment as there have been correspondents to the newspapers. To my mind the tariff duties and the arbitration awards based on the cost of living have been largely responsible for the present unemployment. The tariff duties naturally increase the cost of living. The middle-man secures his percentage of profit on the cost of an article plus a percentage of profit even on the increased tariff rate. Those increases of cost are passed on to the consumer and increase the cost of living. When the cost of living increases employers go to the Arbitration Court and secure an increase of wages to meet the increased cost of living.

The Honorary Minister: Are not they entitled to it?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The cost of production naturally soars higher and, when that happens, manufacturers approach the Tariff Board asking for an increased tariff rate to protect the industry against cheaper-made articles from overseas, and so the vicious circle continues. In the "Western Mail" a few years ago appeared a fine full-page caricature of a spinning-jenny, on the end of each arm of which was a horse-man, one of whom was labelled "High cost of living" and the other "Increased wages." The caption was which one would overtake the other? It seems to me that the vicious circle I have just described is operating in our midst slowly but surely, and unless something intervenes to assist us to put things on a better footing, I fail to see how a satisfactory solution can be arrived at. During the debate Mr. Gray interjected that the standard of living should be raised. I reply to the hon. member by asking him how he would raise the standard of living? Would he do it by increasing wages or by increasing the purchasing power of the wages received? It seems to me that that is at the basis of the whole of our economic problems. So far the Arbitration Court has applied the means of increasing wages and the results have not been at all satisfactory. Now there is a cry for an economic readjustment, and it is only by such a readjustment that we can make the second alternative effective—increase the purchasing power of the wages received. When I was a young man earning £3 a week, I could live much more comfortably than I can live to-day on £6 a week, and I am quite satisfied that was wholly due to the economic conditions then existing. We

were living more healthful lives and enjoying ourselves quite as much and getting just as much to eat and wear as we have now, and the articles were of quite as good quality as they are to-day, notwithstanding the higher cost now.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You did not attend picture shows then.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: By a readjustment on those lines only can Australia as a whole put her house in order. We must produce in competition with other parts of the world, and we cannot do it by raising the standard of living on the lines of increased wages.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do not forget that wages are always a long way behind the cost of living.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: That may be so but it should not be so. At the same time, I wish to point out that high wages, from my point of view, are not a bad thing. If an employee gives an adequate return for the wages he is paid, the highest paid man is the cheapest man. Often the lower paid man does not understand his job so well and cannot carry it out with the same expedition, and so the higher paid man gives an infinitely better return and is worth the extra money. Provided the results warrant it, the higher paid man gives the better results. That is exemplified in Mr. Ewing's remarks this evening in connection with Collie. I must make brief reference to unemployment. It is sad to see Government officials utilised, as it appears they are, as organisers for A.W.U. It is recognised that if a man wants a position and applies to the Labour Bureau he must either secure a union ticket or undertake to purchase one.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is the policy of the Government.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes. Boiled down it means that a man has to buy his job through a political organisation. That is neither fair nor just.

The Honorary Minister: It means nothing of the sort.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: That may be a crude way of putting it, but it is what it amounts to. The system is a prostitution of power when it insists that an applicant for work shall be a member of a political organisation, which compels him to pay towards its political funds. Members have only to read the statistics to ascertain the number of men who are employed annually

through the bureau. A Trades Hall ticket costs 25s. From that one can get a good idea of the position.

The Honorary Minister: The hon. member is a long way out in his reckoning.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I am going by the tickets I have seen.

The Honorary Minister: The hon. member should be sure of his facts before making such a statement.

Hon. J. Cornell: He is not too wide of the mark.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I may be a little wide of the mark in respect to the cost of tickets generally, but the A.W.U. tickets I have examined have been marked at 25s.

The Honorary Minister: It is not necessary for a man to take out an A.W.U. ticket.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: It should not be necessary for him to take out any ticket.

Hon. G. Fraser: He can get some tickets for 5s.

The Honorary Minister: And some for 1s.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: All the A.W.U. tickets I have seen have been marked at 25s.

The Honorary Minister: It is the cheapest annual fee in Australia for any trades union.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I do not care if it is only 6d.; the principle is the same.

The Honorary Minister: I do not agree with you.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I do not care. I am stating facts. The Honorary Minister has not denied that A.W.U. tickets are issued at 25s.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You can starve unless you are a unionist.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Every man claims the right to work. Why should an organisation of workers have the right to say to him, "You shall not have this job unless you are prepared to contribute towards our political organisation." The whole thing is wrong and unjust. Another thing that is contributing to the lack of employment is the Workers' Compensation Act. Any charge that is made upon development must pro rata decrease that development. The present system of workers' compensation is a direct charge upon industry, and the recent increases in premiums imposed by the company represent a burden that industry cannot bear. Let me show how this burden falls. The increase has been made owing to the impositions that have arisen in connection with claims.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Owing to abuses of the Act.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes. I will show how these have affected industries. Let me take a simple example, that of clearing. Under the old basis, the premium was 50s. per cent. for clearers, where no explosives were used, and 125s. per cent. where they were used. Ordinary clearing such as is done in the wheat belt would, under the old regime, be charged for at the rate of 50s. per cent., whereas to-day the rate of insurance is 250s. per cent. Under the old rate the charge would work out on land that could be cleared for 30s. per acre at 9d. per acre, but under the new conditions it amounts to 3s. 9d. Owing to the abuses of the Act the companies have been compelled to increase the premiums for clearing from 9d. to 3s. 9d., which represents an increase of 3s. on the cost of clearing at 30s. an acre. This works out at an increase of 10 per cent. on the cost of doing the work. Western Australia depends so much upon the development of its primary industries that a revision of the Act is urgently required.

The Honorary Minister: Who abuses the Act?

Hon. A. Lovekin: The Southern Europeans all do so. Look at the medical expenses that are piled up.

The Honorary Minister: Who abuses the Act?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I am not here to inform the Honorary Minister if he does not bother to follow the discussions that have taken place.

abuse the Act?

The Honorary Minister: But who does?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: For every £100 that was paid in premiums the companies have to pay out in compensation £135. Abuses of the Act must have taken place.

The Honorary Minister: By whom?

Hon. A. Lovekin: Ask Dr. Saw. He will give you day and date for a few things that will surprise you.

Hon. J. Cornell: The rate is the same for all nationalities.

The PRESIDENT: I would remind hon. members that Mr. Yelland is addressing the Chair.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: This is an additional burden that has a considerable effect upon industry. The future of Western Australia depends largely upon the development of our wheat lands. The imposition

of this extra charge will undoubtedly affect the future progress of the State, and must in turn affect posterity. I had no intention of referring to the Hospital Bill, but I cannot allow to go unchallenged a statement made by Mr. Fraser.

Hon. G. Fraser: Which statement?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The hon. member said that this House was responsible for the rejection of the Bill.

Hon. G. Fraser: Was it not?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The statement has been distributed far and wide, and fostered by continued affirmation in the terms expressed by Mr. Fraser.

Hon. G. Fraser: That is not correct.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: To-night, however, Mr. Lovekin blew his argument to atoms, and showed how the Bill was actually dealt with.

The Honorary Minister: He did not give you all the facts.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The Government should thank the Chamber for deleting the clause that provided for subsidies for private enterprise. It took out of the Bill a principle that is a violation of those adopted by the party to which the Government belong. As a State we can only pay our debts out of our primary productions. The subject, therefore, is one of great importance to every Government. In common with other members, I was greatly interested in an article that appeared in the "West Australian" last month by Sir James Mitchell on the subject of the world's food supplies. The hon. gentleman has made a study of this subject for many years, and epitomised his thought and reading in a concrete way in that particular article. He visualised the world's needs and our particular place in supplying them. We must advance by our development. We have much undeveloped resources yet to touch, and the sooner these are brought into use the better will it be for our country. The only other way to profit by our resources is to increase the productivity of the land that is at present undeveloped. Not much has been done in the past few years to bring our virgin lands into use. I am rather disappointed at what has been accomplished by the Lands Department. The 3,500 farms scheme has been in the air for a couple of years, but nothing seems to have been done except that we have had three or four visits from the Migration

Commission who have made certain recommendations. Some of these have been carried out, and others have apparently been shelved. We still do not know exactly what has been done; and I suggest that if the Development and Migration Commission are not prepared to allow us to go ahead with the scheme, and if the rainfall is satisfactory, we should go ahead with it ourselves. We know we have the land, and we know we have the ingenuity to carry the whole proposal through. If the rainfall is assured, we shall be able to settle the land with the money that will pour into the State if only our Government announce that the land is available for selection. Then that area will be settled in the same way as our wheat lands were developed from 1910 onwards. Just as Sir James Mitchell opened the wheat belt in 1910, so we can open up the 3,500 farms territory to-day if only it is thrown open to all caring to select on it. The one condition essential is that the rainfall be sufficient to ensure the necessary production. In the second instance, with respect to the further development of those of our lands that are already producing, the application of science in this direction should receive the close attention of the Government. In agricultural research much remains to be done. A great deal is necessary in connection with the combating of braxy-like disease, the lucerne flea, red mite, and such other pests as have already been mentioned. They call for biological investigation, and I am delighted to know that there is a possibility of our getting somewhere near the mark in the treatment of braxy-like disease. We know, however, that many of our clovers and other fodders in the South-West are being attacked by red mite, which is spreading rapidly. It is evident, therefore, that something should be done in this direction at the earliest possible date. The Royal Agricultural Society have now moved with respect to the matter, and I wish to express my appreciation of the promptness with which the Council of Scientific Research responded to our application and promised to give help. When in Adelaide a little while ago, I had an opportunity of visiting the agricultural research farm there, and was more than interested in the fodder experiments that were in progress. The experiments have shown that there are possibilities of increasing our

production of fodders alike in the drier lands, the wheat areas, and the wet lands of our South-West. Experiments have been conducted suitably to the various classes of land. I suggest that it is quite within the bounds of propriety for the Government to make available an amount of money whereby similar experiments could be conducted at some of our experimental farms. Towards 1910 a parody was written upon "The Charge of the Light Brigade" in allusion to the 600,000 acres of sand-plain which Sir James Mitchell in those days was advertising. I tried to get a copy of the parody, because it would be very interesting to hon. members, especially in view of the development that has since taken place on those lands. At that time Sir James Mitchell was anathematised for having suggested that anyone should settle on light lands. Now, however, with the advent of the lupins, with the development of a variety of oats suitable for that particular class of land, and with the general advancement in science, those 600,000 acres are practically all under cultivation, and men are doing remarkably well upon them. I would have liked to quote that parody just to show hon. members what was then thought of any suggestion of settling on light lands. It would be most interesting to compare the prediction with the results actually achieved. The application of science has given a great impetus to the development of our light lands; and I feel that on other lines the application of science should be continued, since such fine results have already been achieved. Mention has been made of the importation of Alsatian dogs. There are good and bad among all classes of dogs, and it is quite possible to find a most loyal and affectionate dog of the Alsatian breed. However, one must not close one's eyes to the fact that the Alsatian dog is very nearly allied to the wolf of the north of Europe. Naturally the instincts of the wolf will eventually come up in the Alsatian dog, and when they do come up the position is highly dangerous to everyone. In addition, there is the difficulty that a cross with our dingo will have a tendency—or so it is stated—to bring out the very worst instincts that are in the dog. It is this difficulty that producers as a whole are most afraid of, and it is therefore better that we should bar the advent of an animal which is likely to create such possibilities, than to have the difficulty which would arise if Alsations turned wild and crossed with our native dogs.

Hon. J. Cornell: The dangers are mostly imaginary.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: No; they are too real to be disregarded. With respect to the transport of sheep, I took the opportunity on the opening day to ask the Chief Secretary certain questions. They were questions to which I could have ascertained the answers myself, but that course would not have resulted in the information being given to the House. The answers showed that the transport of stock from inland is not receiving the needed expedition. I also took the trouble to work out—and I am sorry I have not brought the detailed information with me—the difference between the cost of transport by train and that of transport by motor truck. The extra cost of bringing down sheep by motor truck worked out, I think, at 6d. per head. They left their destination 24 hours after the time at which it would have been necessary to despatch them by train. The distance was 170 miles. When leaving by train, sheep have to be loaded on the evening of Monday. They then leave early on Tuesday morning—I am referring now to Bruce Rock—and reach their destination at about 2 o'clock on Wednesday morning. Thereupon they are untrucked, and put into the yard ready for sale on Wednesday morning. When sent by motor truck the sheep are loaded on the evening of Tuesday, travel all night, and are put into the yards fresh on Wednesday morning. Naturally, with the freshness of arriving in good condition they realise a higher price in the market. The farmer is undoubtedly prepared to pay a little extra freight if he is going to realise more than the difference in higher selling prices. What I am most anxious about is the loss of revenue to the Railway Department.

The Honorary Minister: How would the system apply to a large number of sheep?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: In that case a large number of trucks would be required. Every farmer could arrange to have a truck on his farm, and it would pay him to run his sheep down himself. I am greatly afraid that the transport of sheep over the railways, especially from the wheat belt and from the lower North, will exercise a marked effect upon the Railway Department in the future. While I want to see the department obtain the business, it is up to them to try to compete with the more expeditious method of transporting sheep, so that the business may be retained to the State. Regarding the age for leaving school, I wish to mention

one point. The matter has been discussed freely in the Press of late. I consider the time has arrived when most of our children should be retained at school a little longer than is now the case. The present is an age of education, and the boy or girl who is taken away from school before he or she has been put educationally upon the same footing with his or her fellows, will be placed at a disadvantage for life. While I consider that a sudden change to 16 years would be ill-advised, I think the Government would do well to give serious consideration to increasing the leaving age to 15 years.

Hon. J. Ewing: What would it cost?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I am coming to that. Associated with that question comes the apprenticeship problem. It is difficult for a young fellow to leave school at 14 and begin his apprenticeship at about 16. There is a break in between, and a boy does not realise at that age what is required of him in life. If the leaving age were extended, the child would be given an opportunity to decide for himself or herself what to take up as life work.

Hon. J. Cornell: Would it not be better to make the standard of education the leading consideration, and not the age?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: That question would have to be considered as well. However, everyone admits that there is the break to which I have referred between the leaving age and the age at which apprenticeship starts, or at which the child goes to a youth's or a maid's job. There is a lack of continuity in the child's progress. If the Minister would get his experts to work, doubtless something satisfactory to the whole State would be evolved. After all, the education of our children means the placing of our coming generations on a sound footing, and on an equality with the rest of the world. That is the attitude I take with regard to the cost of our Education Department. I would not stint that department in any way, for I feel that our future well-being depends upon our ability to stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the world. That end will be achieved by developing the mind as well as the physique of our rising generation. Before concluding I wish to refer to the development of some of our railways, and it is here that the Honorary Minister may perhaps have occasion to retort that I am asking for something in spite of the condition of the finances. I would like to hear a statement regarding the Brookton-Arma-

dale railway. We must recognise that the strain on the narrow railway in bringing all the stock and produce from the eastern wheat belt as well as a good deal from the Great Southern district is too heavy. It represents too severe a tax upon the very narrow line of railway restricted by the bottle neck. We must bear in mind that some of the land along the route of the Brookton-Armadale railway has been settled for nearly 80 years. The railway was authorised about six years ago.

Hon. G. Fraser: The settlers there are giving away their turkeys now.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I consider that those people are entitled to a definite reply to the request of the deputation that waited upon the Government recently in respect of the completion of the line. I much regret that I was unable to attend the deputation but, as I was suffering from influenza, it was quite impossible. Another line that has been authorised for many years is the Yarramony eastwards railways. While I do not propose at this stage that it should be built, I hope hon. members will bear in mind the fact, indicated in the Press recently, that there is a possibility that the survey of the Trans line may follow that particular route. I feel that consideration should be given to those settlers who have been practically isolated for so many years, during which they have been deprived of the advantages of a railway. I do not know that there is anything more that I need refer to at present. I trust the Minister will accept the criticism I have voiced in the spirit in which I have endeavoured to present it. While I have had occasion to criticise him as a member of the Government, I, in common with all other members, still hold him in the highest respect for his intentions and integrity. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 9.34 p.m.