

Martin. I am satisfied that the Arbitration Court would give every consideration to the claims of these men if they were given access to it. I can carry my memory back to the shearing days when all sorts of conceivable objections were raised against the shed workers and shed hands approaching the Arbitration Court. Since that time, when wages and conditions were fixed by the court, I do not know of any pastoralist who is not prepared to admit that that tribunal is the safest way of dealing with the position as far as working conditions are concerned. I support the Bill and hope that the House will, as I said at the outset, take a long view of a question such as this, and will never at any time impede progress or prevent employees from having access to the court.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Forests Act Amendment.
- 2, Soldier Land Settlement.

House adjourned at 5.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 25th October, 1934.

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BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Financial Emergency Tax Assessment Act Amendment.
- 2, Financial Emergency Tax.
- 3, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
- 4, Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1931, Amendment.

Introduced by the Acting Premier.

- 5, Hairdressers and Retail Tobacconists' Licensing.

Introduced by Mr. Needham.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for the remainder of the session granted to the Premier (Hon. P. Collier) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—GOLD MINING PROFITS TAX ASSESSMENT.

Second Reading.

THE ACTING PREMIER (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.36] in moving the second reading said: This is the first of two Bills to deal with the imposition of a tax on profits derived from the gold mining industry by companies operating in Western Australia. The legislation will apply only to companies and not to individuals or syndicates. The Bill I am now dealing with is the assessment measure; the second Bill will impose the rate of tax. I want to emphasise the fact that the tax proposed will be on net profits and not, as in some other parts of the world, on gold produced. If no profits are made, there will be no tax. We are not the first Government to ask the gold-mining industry to contribute something towards the finances of the State in view of the exceptional circumstances existing throughout the world. It is strange to note that when the economic position of the State was far more sound and we were more prosperous than at the moment, the gold mining industry was under a cloud. On the other hand, since the State has suffered from effects of the economic depression and has been faced with grave financial difficulties, the gold mining industry has been booming. It is many years ago, if, indeed, ever before, that there was such a bright outlook

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

for the industry as there is at the moment. In South Africa the Government passed a law applying a tax on gold, far different from the one proposed in this State. The South African tax is called an "excess profits tax," and it is imposed on every person—it is not limited to companies—engaged in the production of gold. The excess profit is based on a standard fixed by the Act and the calculation is in accordance with a rather involved formula. However, the Act sets out that the Government can tax on a graduated scale up to 70 per cent. of the excess profits. With gold twice its normal value, as it is just now, the South African law allows the Government to tax up to 70 per cent. of the excess price.

Mr. Patrick: It has put the South African Government in a wonderful financial position.

The ACTING PREMIER: The tax furnishes the main source of revenue in South Africa. The Act there allows for certain exemptions, and if the excess profits do not reach a certain amount, the tax is not imposed. Considerable objection was raised by the mining interests in South Africa to the tax proposed by the Government, and ultimately the latter agreed not to take more than £6,000,000 from the industry in a year.

Mr. Warner: Nor would you?

The ACTING PREMIER: It will be seen that the tax proposed under our legislation represents a mere bagatelle as against that actually imposed in South Africa, apart altogether from the incidence of the tax. Ours will be on net profits and will be limited to companies, whereas the South African tax is applied to everyone engaged in the industry.

Mr. Seward: What is mean by "excess profits"?

The ACTING PREMIER: I take it that it means the excess price of gold above its normal value. The price is £8 12s to-day as against £4 in normal times.

Mr. Patrick: I think in Canada they refer to the tax as one on the excess increment.

The ACTING PREMIER: I understand that the Canadian legislative proposals have not been finalised. I am informed that their tax is to be on the gold and not merely on profits. It will readily be admitted—in fact, it has already been admitted—by all

concerned in the gold mining industry or who have invested money in that direction, that all Governments in Western Australia have been sympathetic towards the gold-mining industry, and I can say without hesitation that future Governments will adopt a similar attitude.

Mr. Stubbs: The industry was hard hit by Federal taxation.

The ACTING PREMIER: Yes, at one period. Nevertheless it is generally recognised that all Governments have been very sympathetic, and it is safe to say that they will continue to adopt that attitude. Although I do not intend to traverse the full details because I do not propose to delay the House to any extent, I shall place before members some facts to show what Western Australia has done, and at what cost, in order to assist the gold mining industry during past years. Under the Miners' Phthisis Act, the total amount the State has paid since the proclamation of the Act up to the 30th June last has been £418,165, and the annual payments have been as follows:—

	£
1925-26	5,109
1926-27	20,518
1927-28	37,922
1928-29	41,145
1929-30	47,216
1930-31	61,687
1931-32	69,699
1932-33	69,043
1933-34	65,826

That has been the cost to the State under that heading alone. The estimate of outstanding liability under that heading is £344,000, which liability we still have to face owing to a disease created by the industry. In addition there have been incidental expenses totalling £1,307, and contributions to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund at 9d. per man per week cost us £9,672 last year. That made a total of £76,805 expended by the Government last year on phthisis and the relief fund. When the Workers' Compensation Act was passed and the third schedule classed miners' disease as an industrial disease compensable under the Act, for four years the State paid the whole of the premium cost to the State Insurance Office. In the four years that involved the State in an expenditure of £83,155. Since 1930-31 the mines have paid the premium, but during the years 1927 to 1931 the State provided the amount

I have mentioned. It must be remembered, too, that the main claim for the erection of a sanatorium in Western Australia came from the miners. I shall not include the cost of the building, as probably a sanatorium would have had to be provided in any event, but 90 miners have been admitted to that institution during the last five years. The approximate cost of each inmate is £100 16s. a year, which means that the total estimated cost has been over £9,000 for the keep of those patients alone. Under the Mines Development Vote we have expended from general loan funds the following amounts:—

		£
1929-30	\$9,516
1930-31	28,514
1931-32	24,293
1932-33	26,877
1933-34	64,948
Total	<u>£234,148</u>

We have also given substantial assistance to the industry in other ways. In 1923-24, when the mining industry started to slump, the price charged for water was 7s. per 1,000 gallons. The Government reduced the price to the mines to 3s. per 1,000 gallons, and subsidised the Goldfields Water Supply Department from the Treasury to the extent of 4s. per 1,000 gallons. That subsidy continued from the 1st July, 1923, to the 30th June, 1931, a period of eight years. The total revenue paid by the mining companies during the eight years was £242,080, and the total subsidy paid by the Government was £265,717. The grand total of income received from mining sources during the eight years was £507,797, and the total subsidy paid by the Government was £379,553. The balance over and above the amount of £265,717 was for supplies to the W.A. Goldfields Firewood Company, the Power Corporation, and other services dependent on the mining industry.

Mr. Stubbs: Are the mines paying 7s. per 1,000 gallons now?

The ACTING PREMIER: No, the price has been reduced. A statement frequently made by members and generally accepted by the community is that when the loan for the construction of the main pipe line from Mundaring to the goldfields was redeemed in 1926-27 to the amount of £2,500,000, the money was derived from the gold mining industry, and that the industry had actu-

ally paid for the cost of the pipe line. That is not an accurate statement of the position. In 1926-27 when the Treasury redeemed the loan of £2,500,000, the goldfields water scheme was in debt to the Treasury to the extent of £1,886,338. The redemption decreased the annual sinking fund payments from £77,473 to £2,473, and a proportionate saving of interest on the reduced capital was effected. The point I wish to make is that the £1,886,338 was paid by the community as a whole, not by the industry. Of course the people of the goldfields paid their share in common with the other people of the State, but the loan was not fully subscribed by the mining industry. We are very sensible of the importance of the gold mining industry to the State. Before coming to a decision to impose a tax on gold mining profits we took every precaution possible. We would not for one moment have entertained the idea of imposing a tax if we had thought that it would have any detrimental effect on the industry, particularly at the present time when so much money is being introduced from overseas for investment in the industry. We have been very careful at every step taken that nothing should be done to jeopardise the most favourable position that exists. First of all, through the Agent General we got into touch with the representatives of big mining investors in London, and conferences and negotiations were conducted over many months. They were then given an outline of the Government's proposals, and we have received an assurance that they have no objection to the Bill, and that they consider it will not have any detrimental effect on investments in Western Australia. While the Agent General was carrying on negotiations at the London end, the matter was taken up with the Chamber of Mines at this end. Members of the Chamber of Mines were apprised fully of the proposal. The mining interests made several suggestions, some of which we were able to accept, and we set out the reasons why we could not accept the other proposals. The mining representatives appreciated the Government's reasons for not adopting all the suggestions, and the Bill has received their approval. There is no objection to the Government's proposal either from the big mining interests in London or from the interests at this end. Notwithstanding all the large expenditure

with which we are faced and all the money we have spent to assist the industry, we are only providing for a tax estimated to produce £80,000 a year. I have already given the figures showing that the industry, in respect of miners' disease, cost the State over £76,000 last year. There will be some cost for collecting the tax, but disregarding all the other big items of expenditure that I have outlined, and dealing only with the cost of miners' phthisis and expenses incidental thereto, the cost to the State last year was something over £76,000. We told the mining interests that we considered it fair to ask the companies to contribute to the extent of £80,000. The investigations made by departmental experts showed that a tax of 1s. 4d. in the pound would be required to produce £80,000. That is the proposal.

Mr. Stubbs: If gold is £8 an ounce you will get 10s. 8d.?

The ACTING PREMIER: I have already said that we are not proposing a tax on gold. The proposal is to tax the profits made by gold mining companies. If companies are operating and are making no profit, they will not pay this tax, but companies operating at a profit will pay 1s. 4d. in the pound. As I have pointed out, that will barely recoup the State for what is now being paid for miners' phthisis and incidentals thereto. It cannot be said that we are asking for anything exceptional. Syndicates and individuals will not come under the provisions of the Act and will not pay the tax. The reason is that under the Land and Income Tax Act syndicates and individuals at present pay up to 4s. in the pound, less 20 per cent rebate, a net maximum of 3s. 4d. in the pound. Incorporated companies, including gold mining companies, are taxed at the rate of 17.25d. in the pound on profits. The tax proposed of 16d. in the pound will bring the total tax on gold mining companies to 33.25d. in the pound, and that will still leave mining companies approximately 5d. in the pound below syndicates and individuals at the net maximum. Hence we cannot be accused of proposing anything extraordinary. The proposal is moderate in every way. We are asking the companies to do what they themselves agree in all the circumstances is a fair thing. It will readily be accepted that the cost of

treating cases of miners' phthisis is a legitimate charge upon the industry.

Mr. Patrick: It is nothing like the dividend duty charged on mines in England.

The ACTING PREMIER: No. It is a mere bagatelle compared with the taxation charged elsewhere. No one will argue that the charge for the treatment of those who suffer from miners' phthisis is anything but a legitimate one against the industry. Whilst the industry was struggling, and the price of gold was down, and the cost of production was high, the State bore the cost. That cost is shown in figures that I have already given. The position is now reversed. The State is in financial straits, whilst the industry itself is booming. The State stuck to the industry when it was passing through bad times, and now that the State is hard hit and the industry is booming, the industry should do a fair thing by the State. That is all this Bill asks for. There is no question of recouping the State for the hundreds of thousands, indeed of millions, the State has spent in helping the industry. We are not asking for that to be rebated. We know that many shareholders in those days are not shareholders to-day. We desire to continue to encourage capital to come in, and to afford every facility and help to companies to develop our auriferous areas. In view of the prosperous condition in which the industry finds itself to-day, I do not think it can be argued that the community as a whole should continue to pay the cost attendant upon the disease that this industry has spread amongst those who are working in it. That is admitted to be just and equitable by the big investors themselves. It is a great relief and pleasure to the Government that those who are vitally interested, both overseas and in this State, have told us that they regard our proposal as fair and equitable, and that in all the circumstances they have no objection to it. It is proposed that the tax shall be imposed upon the profits made by the companies at the close of the last financial year. Many of the companies close their financial year on the 31st December. The tax will be imposed on the profits disclosed at the end of their last financial year. These are the facts of the case. I know considerable interest has been displayed by the community in the proposals of the Government. On that account I have taken this, the first opportunity, to explain the provisions of

the Bill. I hope Parliament will pass the measure as early as possible so that the companies and all persons interested in the industry will know what the final decision of the Legislature is. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. D. Ferguson, debate adjourned.

BILL—FORREST AVENUE CLOSURE.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [5.5] in moving the second reading said: I feel sure this Bill will not be opposed. It is proposed to build a girls' high school at East Perth. So that the land upon which the building is to be erected may be consolidated, this Bill provides for the closing of portion of Forrest Avenue. The avenue at this point lies between Bronte Street and Wellington Street, and it is proposed to close it between where it adjoins Bronte Street and where it joins Wellington Street. The two locations that will be used for the high school abut upon Horatio Street, Bronte Street, and Wellington Street, at the end of Forrest Avenue. The City Council has done a considerable amount of work in Plain Street, which leads up from Queen's Gardens over the hill to Mt. Lawley, and it is not proposed to close that street, but that portion of Forrest Avenue which traverses the location that abounds Horatio Street and Bronte Street will be closed. The City Council offers no objection to this being done, and there is none from a departmental point of view. The portion of Forrest Avenue that it is proposed to close, and which traverses one of the locations concerned, is bordered blue on the plan. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. D. Ferguson, debate adjourned.

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

- 1, Electoral Act Amendment.
- 2, Constitution Acts Amendment.
With an amendment.
- 3, Western Australian Aged Sailors and Soldiers' Relief Fund Amendment.
Without Amendment.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1934-35.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Sleeman in the Chair.

Vote—Public Health, £34,004—agreed to.

Department of the Minister for Lands (Hon. M. F. Troy, Minister).

Vote—Lands and Surveys, £50,425:

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [5.8]: I regret that the demand for land for agricultural purposes last year was limited, due no doubt to the unsatisfactory price offering for farm products, and the difficulty attendant upon securing the necessary finance. Members are well aware of that condition in this and every other primary producing country, and it need not therefore be stressed by me. Altogether 689 applications were received under the Conditional Alienation Sections of the Act, for an area of 392,538 acres. Until such time as there is a considerable increase in the value of primary products, the department cannot look for a very much increased demand for wheat lands. There was a considerable increase in the demand for pastoral areas, no doubt as a result of the excellent price that was obtained for wool last year. This encouraged more people to embark upon the industry, and others to go deeper into it. I regret, therefore, that the price of wool has not since been maintained. Altogether 104 applications were received for a total area of 7,691,917 acres of pastoral land, being an increase of 34 applications over the total for the previous year, and an increase in area of 4,761,136 acres. The number of blocks allocated by the Land Board was 128, and the number of new settlers for last year was 347. The applications approved under the Conditional Alienation Sections of the Act, numbered 583, for an area of 350,062 acres. That represented an excess of some hundreds over the figures for the previous year. Pastoral leases were approved to the number of 124, for an area of 7,530,930 acres. The area applied for as pastoral leases was more than double that of the previous year. Altogether 766 town and suburban lots were sold by auction. The

amount realised was £18,489, and was £4,922 in excess of the upset prices. The activity in the mining industry has resulted in a great demand for land on the goldfields, particularly for town blocks. The demand in Kalgoorlie and Boulder has been most consistent, and the department has disposed of a great number of blocks in those localities. Many of these had, as a result of legislation that was recently passed, been vested in the Crown. In almost every gold mining centre there has been a noticeable demand for town blocks. The department has been engaged upon the survey of town sites in several areas, as well as in districts that were abandoned some years ago. The sale of blocks has led to a considerable expansion in the revenue receipts. There has been a heavy demand for assistance by way of advances for wire netting supplies to assist farmers to fight vermin. More than double the quantity of wire netting was supplied last year compared with the previous year. Altogether 364 farmers were supplied with netting, comprising 1,360 miles, and there were also supplied 142 tons of barbed and plain wire, the value being £55,221. Since the inception of the scheme, 2,771 settlers have been supplied with 11,000 miles of rabbit netting and 388 tons of wire valued at £496,622. These supplies are made as a result of advances provided by the Federal Government, for which the State takes the full responsibility. The Commonwealth Government have laid it down that they must be paid their instalments and interest annually. They will not stand up to any losses that are made. There is considerable leeway with respect to payments by settlers who have been provided with wire netting, seeing that the arrears of interest and instalments amount to £61,414. The State Government are compelled to stand to that amount to the Commonwealth Government. As I have said, the State Government have approached the Commonwealth Government with the request that the latter should stand in with us in respect to these arrears, but they have refused to do so. It is a trust fund and they expect the State to make payments annually. In reality the State is bearing the whole of the responsibility of finding the payments that are not made by the farmers.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: The Commonwealth Government cannot be a farmers' Government.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That may be so, but the farmers still vote for them. I have no doubt, if a motion of no-confidence were moved to-morrow in the Federal Parliament, the Country Party would support the Government.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: We have to choose the lesser of two evils.

Mr. Patrick: One must always choose the lesser of two evils.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is a fatuous excuse, in view of the farmers' experience of Labour Governments.

Mr. Patrick: Do you think a change of Government in the Federal sphere would get you that money?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Federal Country Party will always vote for the present Government. They always have voted for such Governments, and they will continue to do so. In this State there is less excuse for them. Here it is that Country Party and Nationalist candidates are elected by a combined vote. The Country Party make that their policy. Having adopted such a policy, the Country Party must stand by the consequences. Besides, the Western Australian Federal Country Party pursue a foolish policy in instructing their members in the Federal Parliament to vote against measures which would be for the benefit of the farmers. The hon. member interjecting knows perfectly well, as regards the Wheat Pool, that if the Government pass a law and under that law make a contract with certain people to market a commodity, then the people in question, having put in the commodity, have fulfilled their part of the contract, and the Government must fulfil theirs. The Federal Government promised 4s. per bushel on condition that the farmer put his wheat into the pool. If a law to that effect had been passed, the Commonwealth Government would have been compelled to pay. However, as regards subsequent legislation, somebody else who had no obligation to pay was instructed to pay a bounty. Where a law is passed and the obligation is on the Government to pay, and the other party fulfils the contract, the Government must pay. In such circumstances, every citizen who fulfils his part of the contract has the right to appeal to the courts, and having got judgment, to put the bailiffs in. The Country Party should now exclaim, "Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea

maxima culpa?" The Commonwealth Government, I admit, would have been in great difficulties to find the money; but the Country Party missed their chance.

Mr. Patrick: Do not forget that the State Government had to find half the money.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Commonwealth Government then got shrewder, and tried to put the obligation on somebody else. That law could not effect its purpose. Many applications are being made for wire netting, and unfortunately a proportion of them have to be turned down. I am sorry indeed for that. It is not pleasant to turn down the applications of people who find their incomes depreciated because they cannot get wire netting. When I look around at some of the old-established places in Western Australia, I marvel that the properties have not been fenced earlier. In Northam and Goomalling, two old-established areas, rabbits are to be found in abundance. Although the farmers there have enjoyed good seasons and good prices, they did not wire-net, probably because they thought the rabbits would never come there. Travelling through the district, I see rabbits in thousands. I am exceedingly sorry to have to refuse wire-netting. I would not for a moment think of refusing if the Commonwealth Government came in. However, there is owing to the State nearly £3,000,000 for land rents, interest and wire-netting advances; and there is a limit to the State's capacity to pay. Again, in this country quite a few people who get wire-netting do not look after it. They get it on easy terms; and since they do not pay rent, interest or wire-netting instalments, they do not regard themselves as having any great responsibility in case of abandonment. Travelling through the country I often see wire-netting damaged. In a number of cases the wire-netting is not even in the ground, but is simply hung on the fence. I have been told that if the wire-netting is laid on the ground, the rabbits will not get under it. However, that is not my way of putting up wire-netting. I know of cases where the wire-netting has been put loosely on the fence and broken down by stock.

Mr. Doney: What do you do in such cases to protect the interests of the State?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In one case I spoke to an officer of the Agricultural

Bank. I did not know him; I came upon him accidentally. He was discussing the Agricultural Bank Commission. I said to him, "How is it I find that in this locality people who pay no rent or interest or wire-netting instalments do not even put up the wire properly, a lot of it being on the surface of the ground and hung loosely on the fence?" He replied, "That is not the Bank's responsibility; that is the responsibility of the Lands Department." I said, "No, it is your responsibility. You are an officer of the Lands Department."

Mr. Doney: I do not think that idea is very prevalent.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not saying that it is prevalent, but I am saying that the incident I have narrated is true and correct. I know also that when a farm is abandoned, sometimes the wire is stolen. According to one Agricultural Bank's manager for a large district, the stealing of Bank property is appalling. When a farm is abandoned, the wire is sometimes stolen. The Agricultural Bank have a detective following up that sort of thing; but the Government cannot appoint too many public officers—we have sufficient expense already. The manager in question, in a recent report, refers to the condition as appalling, and says that hardly is a farm abandoned when the Bank property is stolen. Further, he says he feels that frequently before a farm is abandoned, it is arranged who shall get the spoil—those are the words he used.

Mr. Doney: The inspector cannot be doing his job at all.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not say that is universal, but it does occur. If hon. members feel critical about refusals of wire-netting, I give them the explanation that a tight hand is being kept on such advances now, in order that they may not get into the hands of men without any sense of responsibility, and that, as the Commonwealth Government insist upon the obligation of the State to pay, the State must insist upon men who get wire-netting paying something also, as far as they can. The Commonwealth wire-netting grant has ceased. The Commonwealth Government will not make any further advances for wire-netting. The total amount advanced by the Commonwealth Government so far is

£429,630. It was agreed that the advances should be made for six years, and the six years expired on the 30th June of last year. The Commonwealth Government have said that they will make no further advances under the scheme. The expenditure to date is, roughly, £387,000, so that the amount unspent is only £42,000.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Cannot you get the balance from the Commonwealth?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think so. The Commonwealth Government have informed us that they will not advance any further sums, and that as the six-year period expired in June last, they are finished.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: They promised £100,000 a year.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They promised £100,000 a year for six years. The demand was not made for the full amount in those six years, and in June last the Commonwealth Government finalised the matter and said they would not make any further grant.

Mr. Doney: But you will do your best to get the arrangement renewed, because the need is just as great now as ever it was?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. In the interests of Western Australian producers I hope to get further money, because rabbits are becoming very bad in the country. In particular, the group settlers are in great difficulties because of rabbits. Those settlers do not pay anything now, and I do not know how they will be protected by wire-netting, because that country is intersected with brooks and streams. I suppose the member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) having profited by his experience will be able to compare Gippsland with the South-West.

Mr. Seward: I think you will find that I will not do anything of the sort. I am quite aware of the difficulties.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: My remark was not cynical.

Mr. Seward: Why do you say that I would compare the South-West with Gippsland? What authority have you to say that? I know nothing about the South-West.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: On one occasion the hon. member spoke of his experiences in Gippsland and said how they had got over their difficulties in that country. He gave us the benefit of his experience, and I merely suggested that his ex-

perience gave him greater knowledge in respect of this matter than I possess. He knows Gippsland and I do not. The rabbits have been dealt with in that part of Victoria, of which the hon. member has had experience, so I bowed to his greater knowledge and expressed the hope that his experience would be of value in considering the position in the South-West. As members are aware, the Land Act was consolidated last year and came into force on the 6th March of this year. I am glad to say that the operations under the Act have worked smoothly. I confess I do not like introducing legislation to amend the Act so soon after it has been passed, but it is extraordinary how experience in the Lands Department teaches one the necessity for amendments from time to time. Although I do not like tinkering with the Act, I am afraid we shall have to place a few amendments before members. There are many conditional purchase leases, the terms of which have expired or are nearing expiry, but owing to the conditions obtaining in the farming industry the settlers concerned have been unable to pay their rents and purchase money, and therefore cannot obtain their Crown grants. Mortgages are issued under the Transfer of Land Act, and when a lease expires, the Act no longer operates. In the circumstances I have outlined, it is impossible, during the interim between the expiry of the lease and the issue of the Crown grant, for fresh mortgages to be registered, and it is also impossible for the settlers concerned to obtain further financial assistance. The Land Act will have to be amended to meet that position. It was anticipated that when the term of the conditional purchase leases expired, the rents would have been paid and the settlers would have been able to get their titles, after which they could effect any mortgages they liked. Owing to the conditions that have obtained within the State for some time past, the land rents have not been paid, leases have expired, and the settlers have not been able to secure their titles. The Land Act passed by Parliament last year included provision for the surrender of existing pastoral leases that were to expire in 1948, and for the granting in lieu new leases, which would expire in 1982, and the existing encumbrances on the surrendered leases were to be carried forward to the new leases. By that means an opportunity was

provided for a lessee to obtain, wherever possible, an amalgamated lease under which all areas he held under several separate leases would be grouped. Some 2,550 pastoral leases are owned by 755 lessees and action is in progress to investigate each individual lease and supply the lessee or his agent with particulars of the procedure involved. It is expected that when these amalgamations are effected, the number of leases will be considerably reduced to the mutual advantage of the lessees and the department. From the departmental standpoint it means simplification of records, correspondence, accounting and general administration. Treasury approval was given last year for a reduction in the rate of interest on soldiers' holdings in repurchased estates, and the interest was reduced to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. as from the 1st January last. The rate of interest charged selectors on the value of improvements existing at the time of selection was reduced from seven per cent. to five per cent. as from the 30th July, 1933, except, as I have indicated, in respect of repurchased estates, in connection with which the reduction was to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Overdue land rents on conditional purchase leases amounted, as at the 30th June, 1934, to £552,792, and the amount overdue on the pastoral leases was £21,456. It will be seen that the amount of overdue land rents increased during the last 12 months by £100,000, whereas the amount of pastoral lease rentals overdue was reduced by £7,000. The outstanding rentals in respect of town, suburban and other subdivisions for cultivation was reduced by from £200 to £300. The total overdue land rents outstanding as at the 30th June, 1934, represented £580,414. Overdue rent instalments in connection with the repurchased estates and ordinary agricultural lands purchase leases, as at the 30th June last, amounted to £98,792, and on soldier settler holdings to £155,026, making the total overdue instalments of rent on account of repurchased estates £253,819. Then there are the overdue payments on account of wire netting amounting to £60,864. Members will agree that that represents a considerable liability, and in view of present-day conditions there is no sign of an improvement. Unfortunately it cannot be helped. New reserves numbering 200 were declared during the year, covering an area of 24,903 acres. With regard to the outlook for the season, the Deputy Government Statistician has estimated there are 9,547

wheat growers, or 573 less than there were in 1933. He estimated the area under wheat at a total of 2,896,536 acres, or a decrease of 508,372 acres, compared with last season. That decrease is regrettable, but it could not be expected otherwise, nor is the experience different in any other part of the world, except in countries like Great Britain and France where the Governments are paying a bonus on wheat grown locally. In every wheat exporting country, the acreage under crop has decreased considerably. Farmers can hardly be expected to grow wheat for an unpayable market. What is happening here is happening everywhere. Recent reports from the Agricultural Bank inspectors are not encouraging. The inspector dealing with areas in the North has indicated that, owing to rust, the production in that part of the State will be much reduced. Then in the Eastern areas the rainfall during the last month has been light and crops have suffered from lack of moisture, while weeds have been much more in evidence than last year. I am told that the position in the Great Southern district is brighter. Members who know that part of the State will be able to speak with greater authority.

Mr. Doney: Can you say what decrease is expected in the wheat output in the northern areas?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot say. I do not think anyone could give an estimate.

Mr. Patrick: It would be impossible.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No one can tell until the harvester is put over the crop. I looked at a number of crops during the last few weeks and I could not say just what they would yield. I fear that many will give a poor yield of poor quality grain, probably not marketable wheat. At any rate the outlook is not good. The Western Australian Wheat Pool prices for wheat during 1932-33 was 2s. 9½d. per bushel, and for the season 1933-34 growers have received approximately 2s. 7d. per bushel. I suppose there is another payment yet to come.

Mr. Patrick: You have referred to port prices.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, not prices at siding. For the year 1932-33, the Commonwealth Government provided £436,145, of which £389,925 was distributed to the growers on an acreage basis of 2s. 2d. per acre, and £45,304 was retained for the

relief of farmers in necessitous circumstances. In 1933-34 the Commonwealth grant totalled £639,493, of which £568,399 is required to provide a bonus of 3s. 6d. per acre on the acreage harvested for grain, and £71,094 has been retained for assistance to individual growers. This year the Commonwealth Government have guaranteed 3s. per bushel at sidings. I have no doubt that the guarantee will be honoured. My great regret is that owing to late rainfall affecting some parts and the ravages of rust in the northern areas, growers will not be able to reap full advantage from the Commonwealth guarantee. Had the season been normal, the bonus of 3s. a bushel would have meant the circulation of a lot of money and many farmers would have been able to show a slight profit on their operations. The position has caused me a great deal of concern, and some means must be devised to enable relief to be given to settlers who have suffered severely. The Minister for Employment will speak later regarding the work done by his department, but I want to make it clear that the Lands Department has utilised unemployed labour for the improvement of farms that are temporarily vacant, and also on farms in possession of settlers, particularly in the South-West, because in that part of the State a greater proportion of improvements is necessary. Formerly it was the policy to use these men in opening up new country. Many of them were employed in what is known as the Frankland River area. The Minister has removed them from that area. This expenditure is provided from the Lands Department's loan vote and it did not appear to be a wise policy to be clearing country where there are no facilities and no opportunity for marketing, when there is country adjacent to markets, schools and railways and where a greater acreage is required to be cleared in order to give the settler an opportunity to pay his way. So the Minister has sent those men to group areas and the South-West generally, where they are now engaged in maintaining improvements already effected on vacant holdings and clearing additional country.

Mr. Doney: Do you mean the Frankland River work will be, to some extent, wasted labour?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member can determine that for himself.

We have spent a lot of money there, and in my opinion it was never justified. No less a sum than £63,000 was spent at Frankland River. When I became Minister I regarded that as having been expended on country which we do not now want, for which we have no use, and unless the acreage cleared is maintained the money probably will be lost. The Frankland River is 40 miles from the railway, has no schools, no facilities, no butter factories, and so in my opinion the money spent there has been wasted.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Most of it was paid to those men for sustenance.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But it would have been far better had they been employed on some improved properties which had a market and a railway and schools.

The Minister for Employment: And which would have earlier absolved the Government from giving so much relief to people.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not suggest that we are going to charge the settlers the total cost of the improvements for work now being done on their holdings.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: They would not be able to pay it if you did.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would not be fair, because we are employing all classes of labour and so it would be unjust to charge the settler the full cost; but he ought to bear a reasonable part of it. It has been said that this work costs a lot of money, but we have to realise that the men must be employed; and if we spend £1 and do not get £1 back, we ought at least to try to get back 10s., or as much as we can. So those men are now being employed in the South-West to maintain improvements already effected in established areas, and in the hope that they will engage in clearing such an acreage as will enable the settler to carry larger numbers of stock, and so pay his way. I do not suggest that the system is not open to criticism. I admit it is. But members, I hope, will restrain their criticism, having regard to the fact that unemployed men must be employed. The previous Government made arrangements with the Harvey Road Board to expend a certain amount in converting the Harvey commonage into pasture land. When I came into office I was led to believe that the Harvey Road Board

would pay interest on that expenditure; I was told that was a condition of the work. But the members of that road board are good business men, far better business men than were the previous Government. Under the agreement made, the Harvey Road Board are not called upon to pay a shilling. Their obligation is to collect the revenues, deduct the cost of collection and pay to the Government the balance.

Mr. Thorn: The hon. member representing the district must have had something to do with that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is a testimony to the business capacity of the road board. The hon. member had nothing whatever to do with it. But this year the Government have sown and top-dressed 800 acres, and the road board will have to fulfil their obligation, else we shall not do any more of it; we have done a fair thing for them in sowing and top-dressing 800 acres, and the department will now have to await results. An area was being cleared at the Margaret River. This also was new country, which I visited with the member for Sussex (Mr. Brockman). That work is now stopped and the men are being employed on vacant holdings and settlers' holdings. In all, £15,000 was expended there.

Mr. Doney: That was reasonably close to a railway and was reasonably good land.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was from 12 to 14 miles out. We have hundreds of acres closer in than that, on which we have spent thousands of pounds. We are not going to put settlers 14 miles out when we have improved areas, with homes on them, only a couple of miles from a railway. At Denmark we have spent £6,853 in an endeavour to clear some of the swamp country, in the hope that stock will not be subject to the wasting disease if they can be fed on green fodder in the summer. In the South-West a lot of money was expended in developing some of the higher karri country, but I have found that it dries out very quickly. At Nannup and Pemberton, at the end of January last, I found that the whole of the karri country had dried out, yet when I came back on to the plains at Bunbury and Pinjarra I found the country reasonably green. Even as far down as Northcliffe the country on the hills dries right out, when at Bunbury and Pinjarra it is still fresh. However, at

Denmark we are hoping to get an area of swamp country cleared, so that in summer the settlers shall be able to grow green fodder, and consequently the wasting disease will not be so serious. We are spending a fair amount to that end. When the group settlement scheme was reconstructed, the Government abandoned 800 or 900 locations, of which quite a number were in the Busselton area. But Sir James Mitchell, the Leader of the previous Government, initiated a scheme by which unemployed men took up some of those abandoned blocks. They were not abandoned because they consisted exclusively of poor country. Each had an area of reasonably good country, but it was believed that none of the locations comprised sufficient acreage of good land to enable a settler to make a living and pay his way. When those blocks were abandoned we offered to sell them at prices up to £300 or £400, representing the value of the fencing, houses and outbuildings. As I have stated, Sir James Mitchell put a number of settlers on those locations on condition that they purchased the land; and they were to receive sustenance advances at £2 per week until they were able to establish themselves. That was three or four years ago, and a majority of those settlers are there now. There has been expended on 25 locations—thousands of pounds were previously expended on them—a further sum of £14,115. Now I am endeavouring to arrive at an understanding as to when those settlers will be on their own resources, when sustenance is going to cease. With one or two of them I have found difficulty. For instance, one man regarded the sustenance as his wages. That advance is a charge on the land, but now we are arranging that cattle shall be put on the holding and the settler be put off sustenance. The majority of those holdings I do not regard as adequate for a settler to make a living, but I have always regarded them as offering a good opportunity for a man to make a home, pasture a few cows and a few pigs, and find occasional work around the district. When we abandoned the Peel estate holdings, I suggested that some of the Fremantle lumpers might well go on to those holdings and carry on with cows and pigs and poultry, and so find themselves semi-independent of the labour market. I

certainly regard most of those abandoned blocks as affording opportunity for a man to get a home in an area in which he could partially maintain himself and his family, working the block for six months in the year and getting occasional jobs elsewhere. But unless a holding will keep a settler, the attitude of the Administration must be that, when a holding is abandoned on which thousands have been spent, we cannot continue to spend it again on the same holding. In addition to that, I strongly disapprove of the policy of putting settlers on holdings that have been deliberately abandoned after being tried out. However, I hope that this year these settlers will be in a position to maintain themselves, for I am not going to continue paying them sustenance of £2 per week, which is merely re-building the capitalisation. I found that one settler who was to purchase a block for £400 had already received more than £400 in advances. Yet immediately an attempt was made to put him on his own resources, he abandoned the property. That is a class of settler not worth carrying on, and that is a policy not worth pursuing. Those holdings, in my opinion, could be utilised to enable a man to keep himself semi-independent of the labour market. He could keep a few cows and, if he had not a job, he could find work at home. In this country I should like to see that system extended in the township areas so that a man who is able to get work during the harvest or shearing might have a permanent home for his wife and family. I arranged a system somewhat on those lines with the men engaged in the sawmill at Pemberton. The local school teacher, Mr. McLeod, now of Victoria Park, exhibited great public spirit and did useful work there. It was suggested that the Government might cut up 1,000 acres into blocks in order that the mill men might establish homes for themselves, with small orchards, be semi-independent and thus obtain a wider interest in life. I believe that about 100 blocks were made available, and I am told that they have been taken up and are being utilised. I should like to see the system extended so that a casual worker might get a home and make himself semi-independent of other employment. I do

not say that the Government could finance such a scheme.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It is operating to an extent in the township areas.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But to only a limited extent. I do not intend to pursue the policy of unemployed settlement unless there is a better indication of settlers being able to stand on their own feet. I will not pursue a policy of abandoning holdings on the score that they will not permit of men paying interest and instalments, and then putting other settlers on those abandoned blocks. There must be some indication of settlers being successful sooner or later. The department is engaged at present in a classification of the Esperance agricultural area. That has been a disappointing area. It has disappointed the expectations of men possessed of considerable experience. There is due to the Agricultural Bank by the settlers of Esperance no less a sum than £600,000. That amount does not include land rents. The percentage of interest being paid is not worth mentioning; it is very small indeed. Dr. Teakle has been engaged during the last 12 months in classifying the Esperance country. He was definitely put on to that work. He may be required to classify other areas later, but he was instructed to complete the classification of the Esperance area. During the year a staff surveyor has been engaged on the soil survey along the Norseman-Esperance railway in conjunction with Dr. Teakle. It is expected that this survey will be completed by the end of 1934. I think the whole of the Esperance area will have to be used as a grazing and farming area, and that it will have to be put under the grazing conditions of the Land Act.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Then how would you keep down the mallee suckers?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This survey will enable the amalgamation of holdings to be taken in hand. We might amalgamate three or four holdings and such holdings would have probably up to 1,000 acres already improved. I visited the Esperance district a few months ago and saw a considerable acreage on which suckers will not appear again. On the other hand, there was a considerable acreage on which the suckers were growing. The object of the department

is to provide at least 800 acres of cultivable land, and the rest may be utilised for grazing. I believe the land is of grazing value. If a settler is able to carry a fair number of sheep and stock, and is prepared to cultivate the land that Dr. Teakle recommends for cultivation, and not the land affected by alkali, there is a reasonable chance of his winning through.

Mr. Griffiths: Climatically it is particularly well suited for sheep.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think it is. I confess that I did not see as much feed there as I saw elsewhere, but it occurred to me that the future success of the district lay in grazing and farming on right lines. There is a future for grazing if the settler takes up in addition some of the sandplain adjoining Esperance. If a settler took up 5,000 acres of sandplain as a grazing lease—there are millions of acres—water could be obtained easily, and if the country were burnt and the sheep put on it in summer time, it would carry them through. I saw some of that burnt country and considered it nice, succulent land. If I were farming in the mallee area that is what I would do, and when there was a good rainfall I would take my sheep to Norseman. In fact I would become a bit of a nomad, travelling my sheep where the water and feed were to be found. The sandplain country, when burnt, has good feeding value.

Mr. Patrick: It is good oat country.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: And good change country. I carry a fair number of sheep on my property, but could not do so at certain seasons unless I turned them out and made use of burnt sandplain country. A settler who changes his sheep from stubble to sandplain is less likely to be troubled by disease such as toxic paralysis. I believe there is a future for settlers who work along those lines. I do not say it is a radiant future for any settler, but if a settler can pay his way and live reasonably well and maintain himself as an independent man in the community, that is as much as one can expect. A man who is seeking a fortune should not go on the land. He might make a fortune and he might not. If he desires independence, a home and a competency in sickness and old-age he can get it, and I think those things are worth striving for. I believe that a great many

settlers in the Esperance area have a mind to give the new policy a trial. Surveys have been carried out in the North-West for the determination of starting points for pastoral leases. Owing to representations by pastoralists who desire to fence their boundaries and carry out other improvements, it has been decided to survey a portion of the 129th meridian, the boundary between this State and North Australia. It is proposed to despatch a survey party by boat leaving early in March next. It is also intended to carry out further surveys in the North-West during the coming season. The Commonwealth will pay half the cost for the survey of the boundary between the Kimberley area and Commonwealth territory. The work has been held up because the Commonwealth Government wanted to pay only a stipulated sum. The State would not agree unless the Commonwealth undertook to pay half the cost. Now I wish to refer to the migration agreement. The Commonwealth are desirous of cancelling the migration agreement. This agreement was entered into between the Commonwealth and the State Governments as a result of an agreement between the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments. The purpose of the agreement was to encourage migration by means of loans to the State at low rates of interest in the initial years. The agreement provided that for every £750,000 loaned to the State, 10,000 migrants should be received into the State, and of them a certain number settled on approved farms. A further feature was that money would be loaned for the carrying out of approved public works, for increasing the capacity of already settled areas, and expanding settlement areas. The amounts borrowed by this State were—

	£
For land settlement of migrants	2,139,000
For public works	2,379,849
Total	<u>£4,518,849</u>

Certain of the approvals for railways were withdrawn by the State in favour of what it known as the 3,500 farms scheme. This was done in agreement with the Commonwealth after discussion as to the possibility of absorbing sufficient migrants on the land. Owing to the question of soil survey, the 3,500 farms scheme was held in

abeyance. No action was taken towards approving of the building of the railways in connection with it, but in the meantime a number of farms were established on the strength of promised facilities. Those settlers then became the responsibility of the State, and to meet their needs the State Government constructed the Lake Grace-Hyden Rock line, but this does not provide sufficient facilities, and if the settlers are to be kept on the land the following railways must be built:—Southern Cross Southwards, Hyden-Emu Rock, Newdegate-Lake King. The estimated cost of those railways is £670,000. I am concerned about those settlers. I wish to state that when the 3,500 farms scheme was being discussed in the Premier's office, the parties to the discussion were the Premier, Mr. Gunn, Sir Charles Nathan and myself. The whole of the scheme was considered.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Before tea I was referring to the 3,500 farms scheme, and was speaking of the necessity for rail communication for those centres. Before anything was done about the settlement, a conference was held in the Premier's room, at which the Premier himself was present, Mr. Gunn, Sir Charles Nathan and myself. We discussed the whole scheme. The area then included in the 3,500 farms scheme was Mollerin from Kulja Eastward. It was intended that the settlers in the Mollerin area, and in the area east of the settled parts of the Great Southern railway be financed from the migration vote as to railways, water supplies, roads, etc. At that time there was a great clamour for land, and thousands of people were looking for land. About that time 800 locations were surveyed. There were 300 or 400 in the Mollerin area, and 400 in the area represented by the members for Pingelly, Beverley and Wagin. Had we liked, I think we could have embarked at that time upon the whole of the 3,500 farms scheme. The British Government were looking for an opening of this sort, as were also the Commonwealth Government. The price of wheat was good, and the whole of the prospects before the farming industry gave every encouragement to the scheme. We desired, however, that there should be the fullest investigation before anything was

done. I am always inclined to be cautious about schemes of such a character. During the whole of my term of office, whenever I have been challenged for not pushing on with some settlement, I have always declared that our policy was to hasten slowly. Before the areas which are now settled were made available, at the conference in the Premier's room, I spoke about the demand for land, and said these locations could not be held up indefinitely. Mr. Gunn and Sir Charles Nathan stated there was no objection, and agreed that the locations should be made available as part of the scheme. Sir Charles Nathan now states he does not remember the incident. Possibly that is so, as he may not have been sufficiently interested to bear it in mind. I remember it myself. I was very cautious about making land available. I have been asked why I did not get their approval in writing. I did not think that necessary when dealing with men who held such high positions.

Mr. Stubbs: Does Mr. Gunn say he does not remember your conversation?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He has not said so. I saw Sir Charles Nathan, who said he did not remember it. I do remember it, because I took the precautions. I said, "What about the blocks that are all surveyed?" There was a great clamour for them at the time. Mr. Gunn and Sir Charles Nathan said they would be embodied in the scheme. At that time the Mollerin area was included in the scheme. The programme went on as arranged. A complete investigation was made, including soil analyses. Later on, the Migration and Development Commission asked us to remove the Mollerin area from the scheme and build the railway, so that the 3,500 farms scheme would then be embodied in one concrete area. We did so. We removed the Mollerin area from the scheme, and the State Government built the railway. The settlers concerned were very lucky. They have been given a railway because they were removed from the scheme. I understood from the Migration Commission that they would then assist to provide railway facilities throughout the area east of the Great Southern to Salmon Gums. I accept Sir Charles Nathan's statement that he does not remember the conversation of which I speak. I have not discussed the matter with Mr. Gunn. I have been out of office ever since,

but I put my impressions in writing. Now both the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments are pressing for a cancellation of the migration scheme. This has been held up until provision is made for railways to the settlers in the 3,500 farms scheme area.

Mr. Doney: Is there any documentary evidence that Mr. Gunn concurred?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. Stubbs: That is the difficulty.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The two Governments have been pressing for cancellation for some time. They pressed for it during the term of the previous Government, but the Leader of the Opposition, then Minister for Lands, refused to cancel it. I have pursued the same policy. The Government recently appointed a committee under the chairmanship of the Under Treasurer to go into the whole question and put up concrete proposals. I hope these proposals will include provision for a railway in the areas I have mentioned.

Mr. Stubbs: Some of the settlers have put their life savings into their holdings.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Had it not been for the depression, there is no doubt they would have had railway communication. Very good results have been obtained from these areas. The settlement of our land is not going to stop here and now. The development of the country is not ended.

Mr. Stubbs: Some have been there for six years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Population will press out in this country. The pressure of the population and the demand for land will necessitate that being done. If the country is to carry population, our lands must be developed, and we must discover the use to which our land is most suitable. We shall push out. There is no possibility of any man being in a position to determine the future of this country. I am not inclined to remove the settlers from those areas. One day we shall go back there, and probably go still further east. Dr. Teakle's examination did not condemn all the land but only the minority area. He does not condemn the Esperance area as alkaline, but only the minority. He has condemned certain lands which now grow good grasses. I have seen more evidence of alkali in other areas than I have seen in the Esperance district.

Mr. Mann: In the Avon Valley, for instance.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: With cultivation, fallow and the conservation of moisture, alkali develops in land. I am told by the Royal Commission which recently reported on the Agricultural Bank, that in the Lake Grace and Newdegate areas, quite a lot of land has become extensively affected by alkali. That land is now excellent grazing country, and is gradually being restored. The settlers can probably get one good crop in five years, but meanwhile the land is used for grazing purposes. Members know that is the condition that appertains to many areas. We have all had experience of it. We know that many fertile and heavy soils develop an alkali condition. The owners must then use the land for grazing and snatch a crop from it occasionally.

Mr. Stubbs: Do you say that in the Lake Grace district the soil is affected by salt?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: So I am informed by the Royal Commissioners.

Mr. Stubbs: That is the first I have heard of it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is a lot of evidence of it there. I should not be surprised if it is so. I know of many areas affected in the same way. I remember some years ago Mr. Bath, when Leader of the Opposition, and I inspected a property known as the Northern Gully, owned by people named Forrester. There was a beautiful perennial stream of fresh water running through it. That was 25 years ago. When I visited the same place five years ago, the whole of the country around the spring had gone salt, and the stream was as salt as the sea. When the timber had been cleared, the land cultivated and the moisture conserved, an alkaline condition set in. The salt was probably due to seepage and to the raising of the water level. That is what happens in many places, not only in Lake Grace, Lake Brown and Newdegate.

Mr. Doney: There is hardly a district I know of that is free from it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have paddocks which began to grow bad crops. I am afraid to crop them any more, and so I used them for grazing, hoping to get a crop from a favourable rainfall season. I am keen about giving settlers in the 3,500 farms area railway facilities. In any proposition that is put up by the Committee, that

must be borne in mind. Provision must be made for a railway for the people in these areas before the agreement is cancelled. I cannot say the agreement may not be cancelled; I am merely stating my own opinion.

Mr. Stubbs: If £200,000 is spent in Ravensthorpe in the next 12 months to prove the Ravensthorpe mines it will not be long before a railway is running from New-degate to tap the 3,500 farms scheme area.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Big mining developments often warrant a railway. Most big mines are now using oil fuel, which, in the case of Ravensthorpe, would probably be landed at the port of Hopetoun. I shall not recommend the cancellation of the agreement until provision is made for railway facilities for this area. The Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act, which was passed by the previous Government, and continued by the present Government, has been administered in the hope of assisting settlers. It has been to their advantage. Since the Act came into operation in 1931, there have been 966 settlers working under the Act, and 375 under Section 13 (b), which makes provision for seasonal advances under bill of sale. In all, 420 farmers are being carried on under the Act, and 50 under Section 13 (b). In relation to the former, advances in cash and kind total £185,220, the area under crop being approximately 181,000 acres. Under Section 13 (b) the area cropped is approximately 28,000 acres, while advances total £28,572. Arrangements were made for the fallowing of 121,000 acres, but final figures are not yet available. Last year, office expenditure totalled £2,224, as against an estimate of £2,520 for this year. I shall not deal further on this occasion with the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act, as a Bill for the continuance of that measure will be brought down during this session. The Town Planning Board is also administered by the Minister for Lands. The Town Planning Commissioner has acted as consultant to local authorities in the preparation of schemes, park designs, and developmental work. In the course of his duties the Commissioner has been able to secure for the State, at no cost, park lands and water fronts to the extent of 36 acres, besides three acres of school sites, seven acres of drainage reserves, and 73 acres resulting from truncation of corners. These areas,

as I say, have been acquired by the State without cost. The local authorities are now making provision for town planning schemes in the administration of their districts, in which respect the Commissioner is advising them. I do not propose to make more than a brief reference to group settlements. I have already spoken about the utilisation of unemployed labour for the purpose of enabling settlers to obtain acreages that will permit them to carry a larger number of stock. The Bank Trustees are also linking up areas. In some cases, I am convinced, the existing acreage cleared and developed is not sufficient to enable the settler to carry sufficient cows to maintain himself and to pay his interest.

Mr. Brockman: Quite so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That position is being improved by the use of unemployed labour in extending the area cleared, whilst in other cases we are linking up holdings. As settlers' sons come of age, the son is occasionally sold an area, which he works in conjunction with his father's area. In fact, that has occurred in a number of cases. Group settlers follow debates in Parliament closely, if I may judge from the way in which my words here are repeated to me.

Member: Settlers read "Hansard."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know that; but I am often told what I have said here, so I have to be careful. Sometimes our words do not quite convey our meaning, because for the moment we cannot find the words that express exactly what we mean. Sometimes our words may convey something alien from our purpose. What I have described is done when the settler's son is deserving and has a sense of responsibility, and it is not to be expected that all settler's sons have that sense. The sons of many people have not; some have, and some have not. The settler's son is not more distinguished in that respect than any other man's son. Certain advances are still given to settlers, and it has to be remembered that in portions of the group settlements the locations are comparatively modern, by which I mean that they have been taken up at a later period than others. Northcliffe, which is one of the latest settled areas, had not made a very good start before the depression came. Accordingly, the development of Northcliffe has been handicapped, and has not reached the same stage as development of properties

started, say, 12 years ago. Therefore the Bank trustees are continuing to make advances in the Northcliffe area. These advances are largely taken from the vote provided by Parliament for the Development of Agriculture, and so it is fitting that they should come under discussion here. Not all of the money advanced to group settlers is money advanced by the Agricultural Bank. If it is taken from the vote for Development of Agriculture, that is not a charge against the Bank.

Mr. Stubbs: Has that always been the case?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. So far as I am concerned, it is a heritage. I took it over when I came into office. The Bank, of course, advance certain sums too. Since the revaluations, there has been nearly £250,000 advanced to group settlers again. Some of that money has come from Bank funds, and a good deal from the vote provided by Parliament for Development of Agriculture. As regards sustenance by labour advances, for settlers with less than ten cows, the limit last year was £8 per month for wife and family of two or over, less £1 for every cow over two, with a minimum of £5 per month. In February the deduction per cow was reduced to 15s. and the minimum was raised to £6. The reduction is operating now in the case of settlers at Nornalup, Nannup and Napier. For settlers with more than ten cows, potboiler contracts to a minimum of £3 per month are granted at the discretion of local managers. Additional funds were provided in February last to enable fuller use to be made of this arrangement, and provision for it has also been made on this year's Estimates. The matter is subject, of course, to the recommendation of the local management and inspector. With regard to the supply of super, the Bank have continued the agreement to waive interest collections for four months, from August to November, where super is ordered by settlers to be paid for by orders on cream or milk proceeds for the months quoted, subject again to the recommendation of the local inspector and management. In the autumn of 1933, supply of top-dressing was made by the Bank to all settlers who could not supply themselves, irrespective of the number of cows carried. In the spring of 1933, top-dressing was supplied to all settlers up to the 15-cow stage. In the autumn of 1934, top-dressing was

supplied to all settlers up to and including the 19-cow stage. It was extended to settlers carrying this number of cows, because it appears to me that this country must be fertilised and top-dressed. Without top-dressing, the settler cannot get much in the way of results. Without top-dressing, the country would not have much carrying capacity. Complaints are made occasionally that the department refuse top-dressing to some clients but spend money on top-dressing repossessed holdings. It is evident that if any policy is followed, it must have some basis, must be to some purpose. As regards top-dressing of vacant blocks, the uninitiated would be inclined to believe that this is a foolish expenditure of money; but it happens occasionally that a holding will not carry the stock of the settler and that stock has to be repossessed by the Bank. In fact, that frequently happens. When the Bank repossess, there must be a place to keep the stock. If there were no pasture, the stock would die. In my opinion, it is a good policy to keep the pasture in existence for this purpose. Before some settlers vacate, they take all there is out of the country. They exploit the holding during the flush period, and when the lean period comes they vacate. Therefore the Bank would be wanting in foresight if they did not make provision to carry stock when such necessity arises. The Bank's policy is a sound policy, and must be continued. Thousands of cattle have been repossessed from group holdings. Many of them have been sold at a loss because they could not be carried. The others have to be fed. Therefore we need to buy fertiliser for the vacated properties, and we shall continue to do so. Parliament would be right in condemning any institution which did not make adequate provision for such cases. When I was on the group settlements last, the settlers made a request that money from the sale of their surplus stock be put into a trust account, from which they could purchase machinery or fertiliser. Mr. McLarty, the General Manager of the Agricultural Bank, agreed to that proposal, and the policy is being carried out. I think I have dealt with most of the activities of the Lands Department and, having done that, I commend the Estimates to the Committee. I shall be glad to

listen to the views of members who, in their own electorates, come more closely into contact with the various phases I have dealt with. I regret I cannot draw a more pleasing picture of the conditions obtaining in the farming industry. I am sorry that this year, when we hoped to get, if not a good price, at any rate one that would be far better than those received during the last year or two, particularly for our wheat, the fates again are against us. I believe these conditions will change, although I do not think there will be any permanent improvement for some years. I may be wrong but I should say that, for some years to come, settlers must continue to carry on very carefully and economically if they desire to maintain their holdings. I would advise them to take their opportunity as it arises, and whenever they have the advantage of a price for their wheat that will enable them to meet their liabilities, they take that price. They should not be misled by a few who sometimes contend that we have reached the end of the depression and the beginning of better things. I did not regard the price of wool last year as permanent, but merely as a lucky incident in these difficult times. I am not surprised that wool prices are low this year, nor will I be surprised if they are low next year, but, sooner or later, wool prices will rise again. When supplies are exhausted and there is a pressing demand for replacements, the nations will buy, but not, as in the past, for a long period ahead. To-day the world is living from hand to mouth and, until conditions improve, I do not hope for permanently high prices. I do not think it can be otherwise. It would have been surprising if we had had any other experience during the post-war period through which we are passing. People frequently say that if there were a war to-morrow, the Government would find the necessary money to enable hostilities to proceed, whereas we cannot find money for our material wants to-day. That is quite right; Governments would possibly find some money. They would mortgage their future. That is what nations do. When people panic and fear is abroad, they do many things that otherwise they would not dream of agreeing to, and so, during

the Great War, nations mortgaged the future.

Mr. Griffiths: And they are suffering for it now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Members can consider the position of enemy nations such as Germany, Austria and Hungary. They cannot buy our products because they mortgaged the future and are impoverished. Before the war, 120,000,000 people in Central Europe were buying our products; they are buyers no longer. What we regard as a stupid policy on the part of the other fellow, who puts up a tariff wall and shuts out our products, is, after all, to them merely a policy of self-preservation. If the same thing occurred to us in our own homes, and, living beyond our means, we had indulged in a veritable orgy of extravagance, ultimately we would be forced to live within our resources. If they were limited, so our method of living would be contracted within the limits of our reserves. So it is with nations. The experience of nations to-day has not been the sole experience of that type. It has always been apparent after a great war. The other day I read that the Napoleonic wars were followed by a depression lasting for 30 years. The depression in the Old World that followed the Napoleonic Wars drove 200,000 people to Australia in five years, in the hope of finding a way out of their distress. The war left them in poverty in Europe, and they came to Australia seeking a new home in a land where they expected greater opportunities. We have heard of all sorts of financial schemes to escape from our financial difficulties most of which, I confess, I do not understand. I have not had sufficient time to study them; perhaps I have not the capacity to grasp them.

Mr. Stubbs: Have you read the proposals of Major Douglas?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. I think they are too good to be true. If I thought his views were correct, I would accept his proposals. At the same time, I cannot understand getting something for nothing. If that is possible, I shall not be sorry to participate in that or any other scheme that will bring happiness and contentment to the people. As a mere ordinary person, I view matters in the light of conditions confronting me. We live under a certain social system. I have no doubt we could alter things materially if the people desired

to take the risks. We could adopt Russian or Italian methods if the people were prepared to do so. I do not know what the result would be. We can always change a system, but as long as people cling to the system under which we live, we must accept its limitations. I do not expect, within the next few years, any great progressive move in the agricultural industry, but, sooner or later, prosperity will return. Of that there can be no doubt. Nothing is more certain than that people must be fed and clothed. Nature does not always provide those requirements in abundance. This season, owing to the economic conditions that prevail, we reduced the acreage under crop, and now calamities have fallen upon us. There have been droughts in America and Canada, and in Western Australia in one week our prospective yield is reduced by, in all probability, 5,000,000 bushels or more, due to circumstances over which we had no control. Nevertheless, we must keep going on. I would not compel any man to remain on the land if he did not desire to stay there. No Government should seek to do so. If farmers wish to retain their holdings and their homes, they cannot do so without making sacrifices. If they do so, a competency is assured to them. That is the future I can see for the farmers of Western Australia, and that future will become an accomplished fact. We are experiencing difficult times but if our people persist, sooner or later prosperity will return to the agricultural industry and my earnest wish is that the people who stay on the land and make sacrifices will win through to success.

HON. P. D. FERGUSON (Irwin-Moore) [8.9]: With the Minister for Lands, I am of opinion that the nations that are growing wheat to-day at an economic loss will not continue doing so for any lengthy period. Western Australia in particular, and Australia generally, are so situated as to be able to continue the production of wheat for a longer period than most countries of the world. Consequently, it would be wrong to adopt a policy aiming at the reduction of the area under crop. The time will assuredly come, and at no distant date, when every acre we can place under wheat will be required to feed the people in some part of the civilised world. For economic reasons, due largely to the fright sustained during the world upheaval of 1914-18, some

European countries have proceeded to grow wheat at a tremendous cost. There is no country in the world that can produce wheat as cheaply as Western Australia, and consequently we are privileged to live in an area the Almighty anticipated would be used for that purpose. I am certain it will be so utilised for very many years to come. It is regrettable that the Lands Department should have lost, for the time being, its former beehive appearance. To-day portions of the department look more like a morgue than a beehive. I suppose it is due to the fact that land settlement, as we know it in Western Australia, is under a cloud. It was interesting and gratifying to hear from the Minister that, notwithstanding present-day conditions, there has been increased activity in the selection of land for pastoral purposes. I suppose that has been due, to a certain extent, to the improved price obtained for wool last season, when those prices more nearly approximated the cost of production than this season's prices. Unfortunately, wool prices this year have receded to a level actually below the cost of production, with the result that many pastoralists are finding it difficult to make ends meet. At the last wool sales prices realised were from 9d. to 10d. per lb. The Commonwealth Wool Investigation Committee, appointed by the Federal Government to investigate the wool position a year or two ago, told us definitely, after going exhaustively into the problem, that the average cost of wool production in Australia was about 14d. per lb. Members will realise the loss entailed to wool-growers with prices at 9d. to 10d. per lb. The last Parliament altered the basis of the payment of pastoral land rents to coincide with the rise or fall in wool prices. I am wondering how the pastoralists will be able to pay their land rents this year out of current low returns, when the rentals will be fixed in accordance with the high prices obtained last year. I am afraid many of them will find it difficult to meet their obligations.

Mr. Warner: Some will not be able to do so.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I am afraid that will be so, and I urge the Minister to extend sympathetic consideration to pastoralists who find themselves in that difficult position. I believe the amendment of the Land Act agreed to by the last Parlia-

ment was desirable and, generally speaking, it provided a fairer basis for the computation of the value of pastoral leases. If, due to the sudden drop in wool prices, some pastoralists cannot meet their obligations to the Lands Department, I hope the Minister will deal sympathetically with each case on its merits. The Minister referred to the devastation caused in the crops in the northern part of the State by the ravages of rust. I had thought that was a question we might have discussed on the Agricultural Estimates, not on the Lands Estimates. But wherever I go in the country districts north of Perth I hear references made to the rust problem. In that area, many good farmers who have produced excellent crops in the past are going to be just about ruined. And unfortunately the rust is extending farther south, and has reached the southernmost portion of the wheat-growing areas of the Midland and northern districts. Little or no wheat is grown this side of Moora, but from Moora upwards and eastwards there are evidences of rust. The farmers affected are looking to the Minister and the Government to render them some assistance during the difficult time that is going to confront them in the approaching season. I am inclined to agree with the Minister that when he knows more definitely of the difficulties with which the individual farmers are confronted, will be time enough for him to deal with the problem. But there is something essential to be done and done soon, and that is the securing of seed wheat of the necessary varieties to those farmers who will be suffering as the result of the rust. Some varieties which the farmers in those districts want to grow will not yield wheat of the quality they will want to seed next year. In view of the fact that those districts do not often have visitations of rust, it is only natural that the growers in those districts will want to grow the wheats that give them the biggest return per acre, for although they might run a risk of losing a certain percentage of the crop through rust, it is better to use wheats known to be capable of giving them big returns than to attempt to grow those wheats which, over a period of years, would not be so reproductive and consequently not so profitable. So I hope that either the Minister for Lands or the Minister for Agriculture at no distant date will make a survey of the position and see

what can be done to conserve for the benefit of those wheatgrowers from Moora to the Murchison River and out to Mullewa, their seed requirements for next year. Otherwise I am afraid unsuitable varieties of wheat will be sown by some of the farmers, and that will not be in the interests either of the individual farmer or of the State generally. The Minister referred to the operations of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act. I am glad to know that over 1,000 farmers have been saved to the State by the operations of that legislation. I do not suppose that 100 per cent of those farmers would have gone by the board but for that legislation, but no doubt a large number of them would, and I venture to say that the great majority of them are men whom we want to remain on the land in the interests of the State as well as in their own interests. So that legislation has been absolutely worth while. I had hoped the Minister would tell us something of the Government's intention regarding amendments to that legislation with a view to what I might term the rehabilitation of the whole industry. Something needs to be done pretty soon, either through the Agricultural Bank or under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act, in the way of letting the farmers who are operating under that legislation, together with other farmers, know where they stand. They have now been carrying on for four years in the face of disastrous prices for their main commodity, wheat, and it is difficult to see how a good many of them are going to continue unless some method of reconstruction be adopted. They have been clamouring for this for some time, and prominent men, Ministers and members of Parliament, have been telling them the time is not opportune. That is so, of course. Up to date the time has not been opportune, but we cannot go on indefinitely on that basis, and before long we must tell them what the State is prepared to do for them in order to save their activities for the State.

The Minister for Lands: What do you mean?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Some method of reconstruction of the financial position of the whole industry, mainly in connection with an adjustment of the surplus debts the farmers have incurred over a period of years of disastrous prices.

The Minister for Lands: You have the Agricultural Bank Bill before the House.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: But I am not sure whether that will meet the position. Probably you do not wish us to embark upon a discussion of that Bill at this stage. If the Minister is of opinion that that Bill is going to supply the necessary requirements, I am prepared to do my best to help him place it on the statute-book. I am interested in the Commonwealth Wire Netting and Wire Act, under which certain farmers in this State have been supplied with wire and wire netting, mainly to fence their properties against vermin, particularly rabbits. It is a matter for regret that the £606,000 which the Commonwealth provided under that legislation for Western Australia has not been fully utilised. I hope the efforts of the Minister to get the unexpended balance of that money will be successful. Goodness knows we want it in Western Australia; nowhere else is it wanted so badly. The Minister should not be unduly hard on those applicants for wire netting who are in the unfortunate position of not being able to stand up to their obligations to the Lands Department. I understand that various applications for wire netting have been turned down because the applicants owe a certain amount to the Lands Department. I am not blaming the Minister for refusing the applications of those farmers who are in so hopeless a position that they will never be able to get out of it. But unless a great number of farmers are supplied with wire netting, from whatever source, they will never be able to stand up to their obligations to the Lands Department and the Government; because the rabbits have increased to such an extent that they are making it absolutely impossible for the farmer to keep sufficient sheep to enable him to pay his dues to the various Government departments. On my own farm I cannot keep enough sheep to pay my way, unless I conserve the feed that I grow for the sheep. And if it applies to me, it applies to 10,000 other farmers. So it is not right for the Lands Department to be unduly severe on those applicants for wire netting and wire who are anxious to do the best they can for themselves and for the State; it is not right to be unduly severe on them because in the past they have not been able to pay their land rent.

The Minister for Lands: You remind me of the policy of your Government. I have the ex-Premier's minute on the file.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: It was our policy to a certain extent, but unfortunately the present Minister has carried out that policy with a vengeance.

The Minister for Lands: No, I have not.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: If I may use a Biblical quotation I will say that if we chastised those farmers with whips, the present Minister has chastised them with scorpions.

The Minister for Lands: That is not so. More wire netting has been advanced by our Government than was advanced by your Government.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: And there has been twice as much necessity for it, because the rabbits to-day are infinitely worse than they were during the regime of the previous Government. Perhaps that is because we now have a Labour Government. I wish to urge on the Minister that he give sympathetic consideration to applicants for wire netting, and not be unduly severe on them because they owe the Lands Department some money. Without wire netting they can never pay the Lands Department what they owe, unless indeed we get a considerable appreciation in the prices of wheat and wool. In the present satisfactory prices of mutton and export lamb there is a possibility of those farmers being able to stand up to their obligations if they are able fully to utilise the feed their farms are capable of growing. I want to see that feed consumed by sheep, and particularly export lambs, rather than by rabbits. So again I urge the Minister not to be unduly hard on those farmers, but to give them every encouragement to use the wire netting. Again, if the Commonwealth money is exhausted, will the Minister endeavour to persuade the Treasurer to find some money so that the supply can be continued, even if the State has to do it?

The Minister for Lands: But if the Treasurer has no money, where are we to get it?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: In that event I hope the Minister will succeed in getting the Commonwealth Government to share the loss.

The Minister for Lands: I have tried, but without success.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Then if at first you don't succeed, try again. I know the Minister is interested in the development of some of those farms which have not proved very successful as wheat growing propositions. Many of them might be a little more successful as sheep propositions than they

have been as wheat propositions. It would be futile for any bank or financial institution to stock those farms with sheep at considerable expense to enable the owners of the farms to embark largely in sheep production, unless protection be provided for the feed they grow. The only way to give that protection lies through the liberal use of rabbit netting. Unless some money can be found so that we can utilise it on many of our farms, the future does not hold out very bright prospects for those people unfortunate enough to own and live on those farms which have not been a great success as wheat-growing propositions. Every assistance should be rendered to them to change over, not wholly from wheat to sheep, but to make sheep and oats the major portion of their operations and allow wheat-growing on a more restricted scale than in the past. There are instances of farmers who have not wanted to grow a great deal of wheat, but have been urged to do so by their bankers. In those circumstances they could not be blamed for growing the wheat, because they were merely carrying out the wishes of the institution financing them.

The Minister for Lands: I was under the Agricultural Bank, but if I did not want to grow wheat they could not force me to do it.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The Minister has been in a position different from that of many other Agricultural Bank clients, in that he could always please himself what he did.

The Minister for Lands: No, not always.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Many of the clients of the bank are not in that position.

The Minister for Lands: The bank advised me to put in dog netting, but I refused to do it.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Only the day before yesterday I was speaking to an Associated Bank client whose property I know very well, for it is in close proximity to where I live. I know that his farm is entirely unsuitable for the production of wheat. For the growing of oats, barley and fodder crops, and the raising of sheep, it is a fair farm. The bank financing that farmer insisted on his growing a certain quantity of wheat. He lost money on every acre he grew, but to comply with the demand of the institution, he had to grow wheat.

Mr. Warner: Probably that suited the bank.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: That, to a certain extent, has applied also to clients of the Agricultural Bank. They have been urged to grow wheat in some districts not entirely suitable for that production. In some instances it would have been better if the bank had allowed the farmer to decide for himself the best crop to grow. Seeing that the farmer is in such a difficult position, means must be devised to help him out of it. I do not want to see the farms abandoned; I do not want to see the thousands of pounds of State money that have been advanced to back the farmers wasted; I do not want to see country that has been cleared at considerable expense revert to nature. Once it is neglected, it becomes a breeding ground for vermin, and constitutes a menace to every other settler in the vicinity. We have to prevent that at all costs, and one of the ways to prevent it is by providing a liberal supply of rabbit netting.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [8.32]: In speaking on this vote, the discussion almost merges into that which is appropriate for the Department of Agriculture, and while one may encroach somewhat on the other vote, it should lead to less discussion when the Minister for Agriculture introduces his Estimates. I wish to refer to the somewhat sorry tale that has been told regarding land settlement and agriculture generally. A good deal has been said about the farmer not paying his interest or instalments, and about his defaulting in almost every direction. It has almost been made to appear that in this country our farmers are a bad lot and have not been exerting any effort to make good. The difficulties confronting agriculture are not by any means peculiar to Western Australia. They are common throughout the continent and throughout the world. I have been reading a book, which I would commend to the attention of members, entitled "The Way Out," by Upton Sinclair.

Mr. Hegney: Have you become a socialist?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: One could read that book with profit whether he was inclined to be socialistic or not.

Mr. Hegney: I am glad to see you are facing in the right direction now.

MR. GRIFFITHS: It is never too late to learn or improve. There may be a chance of my yet crossing to the hon. member's side. The author deals with present-day happenings, referring to starving people while farmers are burning their corn—I suppose he meant burning maize instead of other fuel to drive their engines—while fruit and vegetables are rotting and teachers are endeavouring to find, from their meagre salaries, a little money to help starving children. Fruit and vegetables are being dumped into rivers, burnt or otherwise destroyed. These matters, of course, involve the question of monetary policy with which we are not concerned at present. I mention those points to emphasise that the fact that farmers here are unable to pay their debts is not something peculiar to Western Australia. For five years, most of them have been producing at a loss, having received something like 2s. 2½d. per bushel for their wheat. We know that last year practically every bushel of wheat produced was grown at a loss. At the same time there are some people who have not had to encounter all the difficulties of the recent stressful years. A relative of mine took up a farm during the depression. A careful man, he has capitalised his energy and has no overdraft, and is gradually forging ahead. It is the succession of seasons of low prices that has reduced so many people to a hopeless position. The Minister's statement about a certain inspector was somewhat remarkable. He, like the member for Murchison, I consider, should be in the museum. The member for Murchison told us last night that he had never made a bet in his life, and did he also say that he had never had a drink? I may be wrong there.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I would wager with you on that.

MR. GRIFFITHS: I think that an inspector who would go round and say that the matter of putting up netting was a mere side-line should be put in the museum. It is deplorable that a farmer should not utilise material so essential as netting, especially when so many settlers are clamouring for it. It is imperative that netting be made available to farmers who can profitably utilise it. I admit that many farmers are deserving of the utmost censure, and the Minister has been right in his treatment of

them. Reference has been made to the thieving from vacated farms, but I consider that motor truck owners have been responsible for many of those thefts. It is not always the neighbouring farmers who are guilty of the thieving. A good deal of wheat has been taken by motor truck owners, not by farmers, and disposed of. Touching the question of salinity in areas of light rainfall, I was speaking with the member for Kanowna (Mr. Nulsen) the other day, and asked what would happen to the Esperance lands. I had a publication pointing out that the rainfall in that area was very similar to the rainfall in certain parts of New South Wales where the finest merino wool was produced. The hon. member mentioned that sheep could be raised in the Esperance district, and all that the Minister said about settlers there changing over to sheep-raising is no doubt correct and should be put in hand. The Minister said that members who were naturally in closer contact with their own districts might be able to give more detailed information about the crops. In my electorate it is extraordinary that near Southern Cross and round about the miners' settlement there are some very fine crops, and yet north of the railway, and only a few miles away, the crops are almost a total failure. Much of the trouble, I believe, is due to the unfavourable opening of the season, and to the torrential rains in March having thrown things out of gear. In many instances farmers were not able to put their crops in as they wished, or at the proper time. Then there have been serious spells of unfavourable conditions during the season. In places, weeds have gained the upper hand. Near Kellerberrin and eastward of that town more weeds than wheat are to be seen, and yet, perhaps half a mile away, are excellent crops. The experience in the Avon Valley is that the season has been very much in and out.

MR. BROCKMAN (Sussex) [8.39]: With much of what the Minister said about the group settlement areas I agree. He referred to the abandonment of farms in the Busselton district. I consider that the Minister is wise in his decision not to expend further money on them, though I believe with him that those holdings will be found useful and will be made productive by men who find part-time work at the port of Bus-

selton. Several of those men have made successful farmers. I hope the Minister will not cut off assistance too abruptly. The timber industry is becoming prosperous, and some of the men who find employment as lumpers at Busselton should eventually make successful farms of those holdings. Regarding the clearing at Margaret River, I perhaps had a little to do with the Minister's decision to close down that work.

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Mr. BROCKMAN: In my opinion, the work was far too costly. I have definite ideas on the expenditure that should be entailed for the development of heavily-timbered land. In the past we have paid too much for the work. The development of our heavily-timbered land should be spread over a period of years, the work of ring-barking, blackboy chopping, and scrubbing being distributed. The enormous cost of development in the last 15 or 20 years has almost killed the dairying industry. Had ringbarking been undertaken 10 or 12 years before settlement, better results would have been achieved, and much would have been saved to the State and the capitalisation would have been much less. I believe we are only on the fringe of developing our south-western areas. There is a vast extent of land that will be developed in time, and it would be wise to adopt a sound scheme for expending 15s. or £1 per acre on land designed for settlement in the years to come. I do not believe in rushing people on to the land and settling men all over the country without providing transport facilities as has been done in the past. To undertake a sound scheme of preparing the land for settlement would be advantageous at a time when we have so many unemployed. I hope the Minister for Employment will consider this matter in consultation with the Minister for Lands. It would be far better to use the money in that way than to waste it on other schemes. I do not intend to criticise the Minister for having closed down works of that kind in my electorate. I am sorry the married men at Busselton were not employed on the work of clearing instead of being sent away from their families. The Minister referred to the unemployed settlement at Nannup. I hope he will assist those people. They have done excellent work, and their capitalisation is fairly reasonable, or was a year

ago. Because of their work those men are entitled to a little assistance in the way of homesteads, horses and carts and machinery. These things could well be transferred from abandoned group holdings to such deserving people.

The Minister for Lands: I have already approved of that expenditure.

Mr. Hegney: You had better sit down now.

Mr. Needham: Keep on while the going is good.

Mr. BROCKMAN: The Minister referred to the rabbit menace. This is becoming a positive danger to settlers in the South-West. Road boards are taking the matter up. The road board in my district is thinking of calling a conference of all road boards in order to secure concerted action. It is a vital question for many of the group settlers, especially those in the Nelson district, and I hope the Minister will be able to give some assistance to help in the eradication of vermin. I was also pleased to hear the reference of the Minister to sons of settlers being allowed to take up holdings adjoining those held by their fathers, so that they might assist their parents and themselves. The future of these settlements, particularly in the case of migrants, lies more in the sons than in the fathers, because the younger men have greater opportunities to learn right farming methods, or rather Australian conditions. It would be of great advantage if the Minister could adopt this principle. He also referred to many of the holdings not having sufficient developed land, so that the settlers might carry enough stock to enable them to meet their obligations. That is the position, and I hope something will be done to remedy it. The unemployed could well be utilised to develop some of this land and increase its carrying capacity. I know of many farms adjoining abandoned holdings. It would be a wise plan if these abandoned holdings could be handed over to existing settlers. If a settler has to carry the capitalisation of adjoining holdings as well as that of his own the burden will be much greater than he can bear. Possibly when the legislation which is to come before us next week is being debated some means of regulating that situation may be evolved. I am pleased that the Minister is taking such a lenient view of the group

settlement question, and I hope he will do all that is possible to assist the people concerned.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [8.50]: The Minister referred to the efforts that are being made to have the migration agreement carried out, so that the settlers in the Lake Carmody and Lake Varley areas may in the near future be afforded railway facilities. I was pleased to hear his remarks, because the Agricultural Bank Royal Commission made an unfavourable reference to this area. The commissioners must have made rather a hasty survey of the district. Records furnished to the Agricultural Bank, through the inspectors and others who know the district and have watched its development, give it a very favourable report. Last year was one of the poor years, and yet the settlers averaged about five bags of wheat to the acre. In other years they have averaged 10 bags. Such productive country as that should not lightly be turned aside by the State. The fact that it is good stock country gives it an added value. People with experience of horses have told me the value of it from the stock point of view. It is also good sheep country. The Royal Commission admitted that the type of settler down there was very good. Many of those people have put not inconsiderable sums of money into their properties. It is hoped that the efforts of the Minister will be crowned with success, and that a railway will be run through the district. Many of the settlers are 40 or 50 miles from railway facilities. During the past few years the Government have been paying a carting subsidy to enable them to get their grain to a siding. Whilst that is necessary in the circumstances, it is not a wise policy to pay out money for this purpose when there is no asset left to the State afterwards. I hope the Minister will in the near future visit the area, as he visited the Esperance area. When he does so I am sure he will be favourably impressed. He also referred to Dr. Teakle's investigations in the locality. Unfortunately it is generally assumed that the doctor's report was condemnatory of the country. That is not so. If the report be turned up it will be found that he was fearful that the rainfall would not be sufficient to leach the salt out of the ground. There is a certain amount of

alkali in the soil, but he feared that the rainfall would not be heavy enough to leach it out.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That referred only to certain portions.

MR. SEWARD: Yes. In to-day's paper I notice the doctor has been conducting experiments at Merredin to ascertain the action of salt in the soil. In all probability it will be found that this area is not so badly affected, from the grain-growing point of view. The settlers say they have even better crops from land which has been certified by the doctor as containing more alkali than it should contain, than they have obtained from ground which contains a lower percentage of salt. I hope the experiments that are being made will eventually prove that this is one of the profitable parts of the State. It is necessary that this should be so if the railway which extends to Hyden Rock is to be turned to profitable use. It must be extended eastwards to tap that country as it will then pass through productive land the whole way. I am sure it will hearten the settlers to know that the Minister is working sympathetically on their behalf in this important matter.

MR. WARNER (Mt. Marshall) [8.55]: I am pleased that the Minister has such an excellent grasp of the position. When the new legislation dealing with the Agricultural Bank comes before us next week we shall have all the opportunities we desire to deal with the land position and the man on the land. I would point out that Agricultural Bank clients are not the only people who will suffer this year because of the unfortunate season. Rust and lack of rain in many parts will lead to a great falling off in crop results. Although I am not a pessimist I believe that the yield will not exceed 25,000,000 bushels. A lot of suffering is being endured by men who at the commencement of this and last season were in a fairly sound position. If their harvesting operations this year result in their being down in their revenue estimate to the extent of about £2,000, there will be a corresponding fall in their banking account and the deficit will have to be met by the payment of interest. Something may have to be done for them in addition to the expenditure that was provided for when the Estimates were prepared. No doubt, too,

the clients of the Agricultural Bank will call for a greater expenditure than was anticipated. Something will certainly have to be done for those who are not clients of the Bank. Primary producers provide the life-blood of commerce, and they must be protected. I am sure the Government are fully aware of the position.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Town Planning, £955:

Mr. HEGNEY: What are the intentions of the Government in respect to the Town Planning Commissioner? I understand the present occupant of the office is holding it in an acting capacity.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Commissioner was appointed for a period of five years. The term has now expired. The Government have not yet come to any decision with regard to a re-appointment.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Farmers' Debts Adjustment, £2,520; Agricultural Bank, Industries Assistance Board, Soldiers' Land Settlement, £91,582—agreed to.

Department of the Minister for Employment, Child Welfare, and Industrial Development (Hon. J. J. Kenneally, Minister).

Vote—Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief, £120,400:

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT

(Hon. J. J. Kenneally—East Perth) [9.1]: As regards the Department of Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief, this year's figures will be found to be of somewhat the same category as last year's. There are some additions to expenditure, particularly in the matter of staff, the necessity for which I shall refer to later. Hon. members are aware that the department, particularly in the times we are passing through, have an important function to perform in dealing with protection of infant life, legal adoption of children, investigation of complaints of ill-treatment of children, supervision of children placed in orphanages and industrial schools, or boarded out with foster parents and foster mothers, and those released on probation by Children's Courts, assistance to women on whom children are dependent, assistance to unmarried mothers, both finan-

cially and in legal aid to obtain affiliation orders wherever possible, outdoor relief to those in distress through sickness, street trading by children, offences by children up to the age of 18 years dealt with through Children's Courts, and probation and preventive work in connection with children. That represents a fair curriculum of work for the officers of the department. The nature of the work causes the Child Welfare Department to be closely allied with the operations of the Employment Department. The system now operating, and in operation for some time past, is that if a man having a family to support is able to work and there is no employment to be found for him, and he has to be assisted, sustenance must come through the Employment Department. But if a man is a hospital case, or is unable to perform work of any sort, in such circumstances if assistance is needed for the man and his family, the case comes under the purview of the Child Welfare Department. It does appear to me that the system adopted of having the two departments under the one Minister, prevents not only a great deal of overlapping but also many efforts to pass the responsibility from one department to another. The activities of the two departments are so closely allied that, as the figures relating to the administration of each department will show, the result of both departments being under one Minister has been a considerable saving to the State. On the 1st July, 1934, the following children were under the care of the department:—

Children in institutions, Wards of Department, on subsidy ..	609
Children boarded-out on subsidy ..	410
In Government Receiving Home ..	33
	<hr/>
	1,052
Children at service and in training ..	265
Children with relatives and others, without subsidy ..	378
Children with mothers receiving allowances, but not Wards of Department ..	2,871
Children under six years of age placed out with licensed foster-mothers and licensed institutions, and paid for by relatives ..	91
Children on probation from Children's Courts and industrial schools ..	264
	<hr/>
	4,921

The above numbers are 122 in excess of those for the previous year. The policy of the department is, wherever possible, to have

the children placed with foster mothers. It is realised that if the home life of the child can be restored, the child's well-being is by that means better protected, even though it does occasionally cost a little more to have the child cared for by foster parents. The endeavour of the department is now, more than ever, to get the child boarded out with foster parents. Let me say also that it is most pleasing to know that foster parents are offering in greater proportional numbers than has been the case previously.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Does that mean that the occupation is profitable?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I do not know that so much. In fact, I do not think it can successfully be argued that the person who takes a child, especially one of tender years, and cares for it in the manner which the boarding-out committee require and by inspection ensure, would make a profit out of the amount allowed by the department.

Hon P. D. Ferguson: Such persons are doing a jolly good job for the kiddies.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I was replying to the suggestion that this is a profitable business. I do not think much profit is made out of it. I do know, and a visit to the Mt. Lawley Receiving Home, whence children are often entrusted to foster parents instead of being sent to institutions, would convince hon. members, that most of the people who apply for children, and particularly young children, are driven by a force which is not mercenary, but rather humanitarian—the love of little children.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: You have not had many unsatisfactory foster parents, have you?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: No. The department have been very successful in that respect. Now that this aspect has been mentioned, I should pay a tribute to the boarding-out committee. The members of that committee give their services in order that the less fortunately circumstanced children in this community may be cared for properly. To the members of the committee the department and the public owe a debt of gratitude. Of the total number, 4,921, of children under the care of the department, 609 were maintained in institutions, and 410 were boarded out in 272 private families. There has been an inno-

vation in the direction of the appointment of a woman probation officer. Hon. members will be aware that the department have for some years had a male probation officer, who has been giving excellent service to the State. His functions are not only to take action when boys are not being cared for properly, but also, wherever possible, to prevent boys from falling within the purview of the law. When boys have to be charged before the Children's Court, the male probation officer's duty is to ensure their receiving proper after-care, so that they may not be placed in such a position again. For some time there was an agitation to have a woman probation officer appointed, and I have been able to secure the necessary funds for the appointment. The resultant benefit is made manifest in the operations of the department with regard to girls. As regards the courts, the position previously was that when a boy was charged the male probation officer would be there for him to appeal to if he wished; but it was considered to be not altogether right that a girl who was charged should only have a male probation officer to assist her or to tell her side of the question. The appointment of the female probation officer has greatly assisted in that respect. She was appointed on the 1st November, 1933. During the eight months ended 30th June last she made 746 visits to homes, 223 interviews in the office took place in regard to difficult girls, girls on probation from the court, expectant single mothers, unmarried mothers and institutions, and 82 cases were attended in the courts. By close investigation into the home conditions and parental control of a child before she comes before a court the probation officer is able to recommend to the magistrate that the child be given a trial on probation from the court instead of being committed to the care of the State. Satisfactory probation in these cases is a definite financial saving to the State, but more important still, the child has the opportunity of living a normal life. Since her appointment this officer's time has been more than fully occupied. It is only when the needs of the position are clearly focused that an appreciation can be correctly formed of the value of preventive work, bringing in its train family and personal happiness and obviating State control with its consequent State

expenditure. As regards assistance to women upon whom children are dependent, on 1st July, 1934, relief was being given to 1,282 cases, as under—

Widows	479
Incapacitated husbands	385
Deserted wives	298
Single	70
Husbands in sanatorium	12
Husbands in asylum	16
Husbands in prison	14
Foster mothers	8
Total	1,282

As regards outdoor relief, there were, in addition, 220 cases, as follows:—

Widows	69
Deserted wives	26
Incapacitated husbands	54
Single sick persons	71

Further, there were 2,871 children receiving assistance who were not wards of the department. Each of the homes is visited at least once a quarter by a departmental inspector. The inspecting staff includes six qualified nurses. I do not think that of the money expended by the department during the year, any portion has been more beneficially expended than that representing the salary of the female probation officer. In addition, representations were made by various 'women's' organisations that the system was not correct whereby womenfolk in distress who found it necessary to apply to the department for assistance were obliged to tell all their troubles to the man behind the counter. It was urged that that system should be altered by the appointment of a woman officer to whom the women could tell their troubles. Provision has been made in that respect, necessitating the alteration of the office building so as to provide a private room in which the woman officer may interview female applicants. The appointment of that officer has also proved highly beneficial in providing opportunities for women and girls to place their exact position before one of their own sex. The Estimates provide for an anticipated expenditure of £130,849 as against the expenditure for the previous year of £128,863, an estimated increase of £1,986. Of this amount, £1,279 is on account of salaries, and £707 on account of contingencies. The Estimates show how the contingent amounts are accounted for.

Should members require any additional information regarding them, if they will mention the matter I shall be glad to furnish additional particulars. To the 30th June, 1933, there were 1,028 wards of the State on subsidy, and at the 30th June, 1934, there were 1,052, showing an increase of 24. The number of children under the care of the department as wards is slightly increasing, and additional expenditure of £695 is provided to meet that increase. Members will find there is a slight increase under the heading of 'Incidentals.' Apart from salaries and wages, regarding which provision is made to meet the proposed partial restoration of financial emergency cuts, this Vote provides for the entire upkeep of the Government Receiving Home, which is the clearing house for all children committed to the care of the State by the Children's Courts prior to being sent to institutions, or boarded out with private families. During the past year, 706 children passed through the institution, which is situated in Mt. Lawley, the average weekly number maintained being 41. The staff at the Home consists of a matron, three staff nurses, four female attendants, one male attendant and clerk, one cook, one laundress, one seamstress and an outside man. During the year provision has been made under which the Fairbridge Farm School, as the result of an agreement, has been placed under the supervision of the inspectors of the Child Welfare Department. I have had opportunities to visit the farm school on two or three occasions and, as the State is held responsible for the provision of portion of the subsidy by which the institution is maintained, it is but reasonable, from a departmental point of view, that the Child Welfare Department should have that right so that the State can say definitely that proper care is being taken of the children housed at the farm school. At the moment there are 340 children there. The department provides a subsidy of 3s. 6d. per week per child up to a limit of 300 children, which is supplemented by a similar subsidy from the Commonwealth Government and 5s. per week per child from the Overseas Fund, making a total subsidy of 12s. per week per child. Members who have not visited the Fairbridge Farm School would be interested if they could see the work that is being carried out there. The insti-

tution is conducted on the village system and aims at deleting the institutional phase altogether. A number of cottages are provided with a "house-mother" in control of each. Each "house-mother" is responsible for 12 or 14 children. The youngsters were taken from homes where they lived in very straitened circumstances in the Old Country, and, in their new surroundings, they have every opportunity to make good. At least they are given an opportunity practically equal to that enjoyed by any other child in the State. I pay a tribute to the work that is carried out by Colonel Heath and his good lady, as well as by the other attendants at the farm school, on behalf of these future citizens of the State. Those who leave the institution mostly go into domestic service or into rural occupations. There is an after-care system, so as to continue watching over the interests of the children, and it is a striking tribute to the efficiency of the staff that there have been few, if any, failures as a result of the training the young people have received. Dealing with the Council of Industrial Development, a slight change has been effected as a result of the active campaign embarked upon to promote the interests of our secondary industries. The object was to assure greater patronage so as to give those industries an opportunity to expand and, with expansion, to secure the employment of a greater number of our own people. As a result of those activities, it became necessary to appoint an additional officer. One has been selected to act as secretary of the Economic Council, the members of which are performing work equal to the best I thought they would be capable of when I originally appointed them. It appeals to me as a very big social experiment. Every Friday men and women, drawn from sections representing every phase of industrial thought, meet with the object of making conditions better for their less fortunately circumstanced fellows. The personnel, amongst others, includes the President of the Employers' Federation, the President of the Trades Hall, the President of the Pastoralists' Association, the President of the Metropolitan Council of the A.L.P., and representatives of the different industrial unions. When one sees them at their weekly meetings, studying problems with which civilisation is beset to-day, and notes the results following upon their discussions, one is justifi-

fied in the hope that their activities may be extended in the future to a bigger sphere. If that could be achieved, then a State adopting a policy, the effect of which will promote the tendency for those engaged in industry to meet around the table and discuss their problems, is the one that should reap the advantage.

Mr. Griffiths: Do women's organisations participate in these conferences?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes. There are women associated with the Economic Council and, in addition, there is a separate Women's Economic Council presided over by the Lady Mayoress and consisting of women drawn from all sections of society. A short time ago the members of that body visited the whole of the shops in the metropolitan area in order to induce the shopkeepers to provide employment for our own people by promoting the stocking of local goods. The women are carrying out splendid work in that direction.

Mr. Griffiths: I am glad to hear the Minister say that because I wished him to make the statement. I know what they are doing.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I do not think there can be many people in the metropolitan area who do not know of the good work those women are carrying out. Later on I shall place before the Committee some figures showing the result of these activities. A definite and fairly successful effort has been made to harness the energy of the people to tackle problems that have proved immense in every country, not alone in Western Australia. It is of no advantage merely to pass those problems by with the assertion that we cannot conquer them. I have advanced propositions here and elsewhere in order to induce the people to assist our secondary industries. I do not suggest for one moment that a definite and permanent solution of the unemployment problem will be achieved in that way, nor do I put forward these propositions from that standpoint. On the other hand, if we can create a proper buying sense among our people, it will mean the solution of the unemployment problem for the next eight or ten years. Last year we spent £9,300,000 in the Eastern States and in return they spent £1,300,000 in Western Australia. Those figures are altogether out of proportion. It

can be shown that in certain lines, as a result of the agitation in the interests of local products, we reduced the importations of those particular lines by a value of £110,706 last year, and the State Statistician reports that during that period 1,313 additional people were engaged in the production locally of those particular lines. Seeing that that additional employment was secured as a result of curtailing exports to a value of £110,706, whereas the total imports represented £9,300,000, it must be obvious to members that if we can develop the correct buying sense, we shall be placed in the position of providing to men and women and our young people the opportunities to which they are entitled. It will be agreed that the activities I refer to are along right lines. The person who ignores the movement and is not prepared to render assistance to local industries and thereby provide additional work for our own people is nothing but a traitor to Western Australia. Our young people should obtain employment here and not be compelled to go elsewhere for jobs. As I have already indicated, these activities necessitated a change in the department. Members will find on the Estimates that the salary of the secretary of the Unemployment Department is now a charge against the Council of Industrial Development, to which it rightly belongs. That officer is designated as Secretary to the Council of Industrial Development. In future the salary of that officer will be added to the expenditure of the council, and the employment salary expenditure will be less by the £80 previously allowed.

Mr. Doney: Are his services to be transferred too?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: No.

Mr. Doney: Then why debit the council with the transfer?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Because the salary is a matter for the Council of Industrial Development to meet.

Mr. Doney: His work is not all with the council.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes, and its associated activities.

Mr. Doney: Only a small proportion.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: No, a big proportion. The additional officer I previously referred to has been placed immediately under him. It will be recognised that this is not additional expenditure. It merely decreases one section and corres-

pondingly increases another. I have also found it necessary to agree to the classification of the staff of the Employment Department and some of the officers of the Council of Industrial Development. On assuming office, I found that the staff in the Employment Department had been asking for a long time to be placed on the permanent staff. Some of them had been there for a great number of years. I have been able to get the Public Service Commissioner to take that in hand and classify the staff. This has already been done for a certain number of them, and there are still others to receive that attention. I will deal later with the question of the number of the staff; but the main thing desirable is that, when men and women have been any length of time in the service, and are to remain for an indefinite period, they should be placed on the permanent staff. In that respect some increases which they received on appointment, dated back to the 1st January of this year, although the definite appointments were not made until towards the end of the financial year. In the item "Contingencies" dealing with the industrial department it will be seen there is provided £120. Last year it was £50. I have had it increased because the department is going in for additional exhibitions of local products this year. Last year we conducted an exhibition in the Government House ballroom which was attended by 70,000 or 80,000 people, including 12,000 children, in whom we wished to inculcate a correct buying sense so that they might grow up with that advantage. This year we shall be starting well before Christmas to conduct an exhibition in Government House ballroom in sufficient time to bring it before the people of the State before they spend their Christmas money. It is proposed to lay before them information as to how to spend that money if they wished to assist the Economic Council in their campaign for the consumption of local products.

Mr. Griffiths: That last exhibition was a very fine one.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Under the small-loan scheme introduced to make money available to those who desire to renovate their homes, there has been considerable amount of money advanced. The first sum set aside was £20,000, after

which it became necessary to increase the amount. One of the conditions of a loan is that, wherever possible, local products must be used by the person securing the money. The expenditure of that money, combined with the expenditure of Government money, which is keeping at least 100 men employed the year round renovating public buildings, has played its part in giving an impetus to the building trade.

Mr. North: Is that scheme still open?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes, it is. We have had 143 tenders approved, and the work put in hand. The loan is managed in conjunction with the Workers' Homes Board and a few representatives of the Economic Council, the total involved being £17,403. In addition there are 40 applications waiting for an aggregate sum of £4,745, or a total of £22,148. It is thought that out of £20,000 no less than £8,000 will be absorbed in wages paid on the job, exclusive of wages paid in allied industries. This fund is being absorbed at approximately £150 per week. On this basis full time employment is being found for about 36 men over a period of 12 months. The Economic Council recommended the formation of a special committee to consider the provision of additional homes catering for the needs of those in receipt of less than £4 per week. The Economic Council contend that if we could give attention to the building of houses to suit the income of a man on £4 a week or less, we would gradually bring about a far better housing scheme particularly in the metropolitan area than exists at present. The committee has now been formed and consists of architects and representatives of the Public Works Department and is trying to devise means by which a house that could be paid for on a rental of 15s. per week and give decent accommodation might be provided. It has occurred to the Government that if this could be done, it would be better to advance money on lines such as that than on some of the lines we are advancing upon at present, and which were referred to by the Minister for Lands to-night. On that committee's report being made available, the Government will consider that aspect of the question. The Economic Council has been operating in conjunction with the Chamber of Manufactures and various

branches of the Returned Soldiers' League in conducting a series of local products exhibitions. As I mentioned a while ago, we owe a debt of gratitude to that council; and I do not wish to exclude from that debt other organisations that have assisted, as, for instance, the Returned Soldiers' League and the A.N.A., which materially helped in the exhibitions being held in country centres. At the moment I am giving attention to the provision of a railway train that will go through the country districts, each truck or coach of the train carrying a display of local products. That will serve to let country people know what can be produced here, and should induce them to favour goods of local origin.

Mr. Griffiths: That will be repeating an experiment previously carried out.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: But of course it will be a considerable improvement on the earlier one. In that respect we have received valuable assistance from various organisations. On the 20th September I decided to ask the manufacturers and all engaged in local production to meet me and go into the question whether we could get additional assistance, and have greater co-operation between the manufacturers and the Government. There were 160 manufacturers at the conference, and the enthusiasm they showed then and have shown since gives me hope that there is going to be a tremendous improvement in the consumption of local products in this State. They appointed a committee to go into ways and means of taxing themselves, and they have now adopted the report of their own committee, which aims at the provision of £3,000 per annum for three years, to be paid by the representatives of the local products themselves in order to intensify the campaign and extend opportunities for getting additional service and, incidentally—this is where the Government come in—placing additional people in employment. They have agreed on that campaign and are now setting about the provision of the money. After that meeting I had the unique experience of having to refuse to take cheques from them in order to start the fund going. Not many men these days find themselves in that awkward position, but I refused, for the reason that the fund will have to be established on an organised system and must

be kept entirely apart from Government funds.

Mr. Marshall: You don't want to let the Acting Treasurer get hold of it.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Possibly I had that in mind when I refused those cheques. The money will be placed in a trust account and three trustees will be elected by the manufacturers themselves. The money is to be spent in the manner best calculated to keep local products before the people, not spasmodically, but each week and, if necessary, every day; by printing catalogues giving the housewife an opportunity to know what can be produced locally, and by a house-to-house canvass, if necessary. so as to point out to the women-folk the necessity for providing work for their own boys and girls. I feel sure that the £3,000 which the manufacturers have decided to make available annually for this campaign will be returned to them tenfold, and that its influence will be felt for a considerable time to come. Big alterations have taken place in that respect to which I shall refer later. If we had not received the assistance of people such as those I have mentioned, the success of the campaign would not have been very great. On the committee supporting the campaign are representatives of the Women's Economic Council, Men's Economic Council, Chamber of Manufacturers, retail merchants, wholesale merchants, Shop Assistants' Union, youth movements, and Returned Soldiers' League. In conjunction with representatives of the Economic Council and the Chamber of Manufacturers I have had an opportunity to visit a large number of industrial establishments in the State. The visits were greatly appreciated by those interested, and the Press have been kind enough to give good publicity to them. The information available is that the result to the factories concerned has been greatly to improve their output. I wish to say for the benefit of those who may read my remarks that the local products campaign cannot be of much use unless it is carried out in its entirety. I was at a factory celebrating the opening of extensions rendered necessary by the campaign, and the person most concerned had been enthusiastic about the benefit of the campaign to local products. He asked me to have a cigar, and held out a box of foreign cigars for me to

help myself. That is not the spirit in which the campaign should be waged.

Members: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I pointedly refused to take a cigar of foreign manufacture.

Mr. Griffiths: Good man!

The Acting Premier: Refusing cheques and refusing cigars!

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: It was not long before a box of local cigars was produced, and though I took one of the local cigars, I did not mention that I did not smoke cigars. I had a somewhat similar experience at Albany. One of my first duties was to attend to an S.O.S. signal from the Albany Woollen Mills asking for a Government advance order to keep the looms going. The position at the present time is that we are trying to get additional money to extend the machinery to cope with the orders received, because it has been necessary to ration orders for a considerable time. There are 120 employees engaged in the mills, and that means a circulation of £400 or £500 a week in wages in Albany. There is no reason why 1,000 people should not be employed there. Of 48 or 50 woollen mills in Australia, we have only one in Western Australia. The turnover there has increased from £28,000 to £53,000, but there is no reason why the turnover should not be a quarter of a million, because there is sufficient work offering in the State if only it were directed into the right channel. While at Albany I opened a new butter factory, and the people assembled were quite enthusiastic about the local product, provided it was butter. When I looked around, however, I realised that they were not wearing suits of Albany-made material.

Member: Can it be obtained?

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes.

Mr. Doney: We must not destroy reciprocal trade altogether. We have to sell our wheat.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I am not aiming at destroying reciprocal trade. We are sending £9,300,000 to Eastern Australia yearly and are doing a trade of a million and a few hundred thousand pounds in return. That needs to be rectified. We are entitled to have that trade more nearly equalised. If we could cut down our imports by half, we would have to import people into the State to do the work that would be offering.

Mr. Patrick: You would not need to import them; they would come from the Eastern States.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: They would probably follow the trade, but if they did not, they would have to be imported, because there would be more work than our people could do.

Mr. Doney: Unless we export our wheat, we shall not have money to pay for goods.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: We do not export our wheat to Eastern Australia.

Mr. Doney: The cigars did not come from the East.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: If the hon. member cannot see that any benefit will accrue from the campaign—

Mr. Doney: Do not be misled; I am agreeing with it.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Then going beyond Australia, the nationalism developing in different countries is not going to be lessened because Australian trade is of a certain value only. While people are subsidised to the extent of 6s. per bushel for growing wheat as against importing our wheat, we have to consider whether for all time we are going to accept their goods to the detriment of our own people. That applies more particularly to this State. Evidence is not wanting regarding the success of the campaign. If we take the mean employment for the year 1929-30 as equalling 100, the following figures become interesting:—In January, 1932, this figure had fallen to 65, but there was a steady improvement during the year, the December figure being 83, and the average 74.4. Last year showed still further improvement, the average for the year being 83.8. The lowest point, 79, was reached in July, and the highest, 91, in December. For the first nine months of the present year the average figure was 92. Let members compare that with the figure 65 previously referred to. The lowest figure was in January, namely 89, and the highest in September, 96. The figures for the respective months were:—January 89, February 90, March 93, April 95, May 92, June 91, July 90, August 92 and September 96. I should like to point out that the whole of the people represented by those figures are not in full-time employment. It is our task, wherever possible, to place them in full-

time employment, to which they are entitled. Dealing with unemployment relief a mis-print on page 93 of the Estimates, should be rectified. Referring to the number of officers employed, the number "12" should be altered to "14," and the number "22" should be altered to "33." The estimated expenditure for 1934-35 is £100,000, a reduction of £132,191 on last year's expenditure, and a reduction of £250,000 on the estimated expenditure at the commencement of last financial year. Expenditure on the Labour Bureau is estimated at £6,961, an increase of £538. This increase is due to extra provision for fares to be advanced. The department encourages men to seek private work and the advancing of fares by the department has assisted considerably. Last year the department advanced fares to the value of £6,146, the highest on record, and the collections to the end of last financial year totalled £5,086, or 82 per cent. It is expected that practically the whole of the fares advanced will be recoverable. The advancing of fares to our people to enable them to look for work is preferable to the growing practice of men who have secured employment arranging for their relatives and friends in other States to come here and partake of the employment which is offering to the detriment of our own citizens. The revenue under the heading of "Unemployment Relief" consists of recoveries of sustenance advanced to men proceeding to relief work, recoveries of assistance to prospectors and others, and recoveries of assistance pending finalisation of compensation claims. The revenue collections last year on account of unemployment relief totalled £2,818, which was £400 below the estimated revenue. This decrease was due to the closing of the Blackboy Camp and the consequent reduction in sixteen receipts. This notwithstanding, the revenue collections were £471 over those of the previous year. The estimated revenue for this year is £2,100. The revenue of the Labour Bureau is estimated at £5,500. This consists of collections of fares to be advanced. Last year the estimated revenue from this source was £3,600, and the actual collections were £5,086. A comparison of the unemployment position reveals that on the 7th October, 1933, there were 4,406 families receiving sustenance at a weekly cost of £5,849. On the 6th October, 1934, there were 1,068 families receiving sustenance at

a weekly cost of £1,425. Thus during the 12 months there were 3,338 fewer families in receipt of assistance, and the reduced payment was £4,424 per week. On the 7th October, 1933, there were 9,683 persons employed on Government relief work, which together with those in receipt of sustenance, made a grand total of 14,089 either in receipt of sustenance or on Government relief work. For the week ended 6th October, 1934, there were 9,129 persons engaged on Government relief work, which, together with those in receipt of sustenance, made a grand total of 10,197, or just on 4,000 fewer families depending on the Government for either sustenance or relief work. That is the only way in which we can judge whether we are making any progress. If, as was stated by interjection by a member of the Opposition some time ago, we were simply transferring men on sustenance to Government relief work financed by loan money, we would be perpetuating the burden, and there would come a time when loan money would not be available. The fact that in 12 months 4,000 fewer people are no longer dependent on sustenance or Government relief work indicates that they are being absorbed in private industry, and if that continues, they will cease to be a charge upon the State. The statement that the improved position has been brought about by the transfer of men from sustenance to Government relief works financed by loan funds cannot be substantiated. We can only judge the effects of economic conditions by comparisons. That the headway has been considerable may be gathered from the fact that during the height of the depression no fewer than 17,000 families were receiving sustenance at a cost to the State of £660,000 a year.

Mr. Patrick: A lot of men have been absorbed in the mining industry.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: It does not matter where the people are employed, so long as we can find work for them. The main thing is to restore to our people their independence, of which they have been deprived for many years, and without which no State is any good. That independence can only be restored by providing men with employment that will give them adequate living conditions. We must aim at the goal of giving them full-time work at not less than the existing basic wage. I

should like the mining industry to absorb even more people. I am making available to men on relief work passes to enable them to proceed to employment elsewhere. When they get ahead of their earnings they can draw their money, and we make available to them passes so that if they are offered work elsewhere, they may proceed to take it, whether in the mining industry or in any other avenue. Mining has absorbed quite a number of men in that way. Of course it does not do to send men out *holus bolus* in the hope of their finding work when they get to some other place. It is necessary that the work should first be available to them. The Government have liberalised the permissible earnings of the men. Investigations are being conducted by the department to ensure that men are not drawing relief funds to which they are not entitled. Every case in which a person is suspected of receiving sustenance, or getting relief work as the result of a false statement is being closely inquired into. No member would hold any brief for a person who wilfully imposed on the State to obtain help to which he was not entitled. At one time there was a fair amount of fraud going on at the expense of the State. Men have claimed money for wives and children who existed only in their imagination. One man obtained sustenance for a child who had been dead for 18 months, and others have obtained it for children who were in England. No political party would stand for that sort of thing.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It is stooping pretty low.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The Department has been able to save a considerable amount of money by preventing that sort of conduct. Every person who receives money, sustenance or relief, who is not entitled to it, is depriving some other person in want of the opportunity to have his position improved. I have kept the investigation staff very busy. Whilst the staff generally has been reduced for the full year from 84 to 69, the expenditure by the staff has not been greatly diminished. This is due to the fact that additional expense has been involved in keeping the officers travelling from place to place, interviewing applicants for relief, and in ensuring that the person in need of relief gets it as speedily as possible. They also have

to see that persons who are not entitled to relief do not get it, and that they are subject to the penalties that can be inflicted upon people for such actions. They have to ensure the equitable distribution of that which is available according to the family responsibilities and the circumstances of the individual. For Government relief work, the system of checking the time from the pay roll of the men employed on such work has been instituted. Co-ordination there has made it possible to employ additional people. This week's return shows that we are now starting on the last 1,000 unemployed. Actually there are 968 persons on sustenance awaiting employment. Many of these are not fit to do a day's work at ordinary employment. The task of the Government is to see that those who are not fitted for a full ordinary day's work are given employment with which they can cope, and to see that those who are in employment are taken gradually towards the full-time standard. We desire to restore the standard of living in this State to that which every member would desire to see accomplished. Those who are not fit to perform an ordinary day's work have been classified according to the class of work they are able to do. The medical officer and the Conservator of Forests and his officers have been in the forests and have gained a knowledge of the class of work that will be required there. By that means it is possible to say to what extent these men are fit for that work. I have had very good reports of the investigations, and as a result of the co-operation between the office and the Forests Department, we have been able to find employment for a large number of persons coming under this category. Towards the end of last year the camp for single men at Blackboy, and the Immigration Home at Fremantle, were closed. The cost of Blackboy was £121,375, and of the home £7,826, a total of £129,201. Although during the height of the depression these institutions played their part, it became desirable in the interests of the men that definite work should be provided so that they might regain their manhood. I recall with pleasure the reception I received recently at the Wooroloo Sanatorium grounds, where we had placed a number of men at work. Some of those men thought

they had come to an industrial dead end. After three years' spell in the Blackboy Camp they felt they would not be fit to work again. Many of them in my office argued against going to work, but they went. There are no more contented men now than these, because they have gradually got back their independence. They find they are able to work, and are only too anxious to do so. I have one letter which I prize very highly from a man who argued against going to work. He wrote to me recently, as he says on the birthday of his son. He said he had gone to work against his will, but he found when he started he was able to do the job. He gradually became more used to it and was able to do better work. He left the department and married. He is able to do ordinary farming work. He said in his letter that on the birthday of his boy he thought he would write a letter to the man who had made it possible for him to get into that particular walk of life. Those are things which make the effort worth while. If one could do that with any number of cases, one would be only too glad to do it. No better illustration of the benefit of closing these institutions can be furnished than that expressed in the different outlook of men who were formerly in camp and who are now earning their livelihood, but who, had they remained much longer in idleness, would have accepted the position that they were unemployable. Certain portions of the operations of land clearing, particularly, do not lend themselves to day labour; but so that men might have an appeal against piece rates fixed, the Government last year set up a board consisting of an independent chairman, a Government representative, and a representative of the workers. The operations of the board have worked smoothly, and to the benefit of all concerned. In point of fact, the decisions of the board when made are retrospective to the date when the appeal was lodged; and that does away with the necessity for any stoppage of work. Pre-natal assistance is rendered to expectant mothers upon production of suitable medical evidence and after taking into consideration the whole family position. To sustenance cases the assistance is usually in the nature of milk allowance or other forms of nourishing food prescribed. In the case of relief workers, a little addi-

tional work is allowed in special cases. While the objective of full-time work is not at present capable of achievement, the system introduced by the Government, of giving a certain period of full-time work, together with the payment of margins for skill, and holiday pay, and camp allowance according to the award, is an advancement in the system of part-time work, and has been the means of improving the position of those who, unfortunately, have had to suffer severe hardships through the period of acute depression. The aim of the Government is to improve still further the position of these men, when and as soon as finances will permit. A further move consists in not making men available to outside bodies for their sustenance only; and the department have evidence of the benefits of the cancellation of this past practice—benefit not only to the men, but also to the revenue of the State. Firewood supplies have been given during the winter, but of course on a scale consistent with the reduced number on sustenance. Where it is shown, on medical evidence, that dental and eye treatment is necessary in the case of single men, additional work up to a given amount is approved to enable them to receive, principally, dental treatment. The work of the officers directly engaged in giving relief is of a nature requiring tact and patience, and the manner in which the duties have been performed is to the credit of the officers concerned. I desire to refer to a matter mentioned by the Minister for Lands, namely the Frankland River camp. At present I am using that camp practically as a clearing station for single men. At the moment, under 50 men are there. The work there was evidently being performed for the purpose of making the area a stock-holding country. Land was being cleared, or partly cleared, and attended to in a manner which would render it valuable from the point of view of stock-holding rather than that of dairying or other purposes. A question was raised by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) whether the whole of that money will be lost. It is quite possible that the whole of the money will not be lost, even though the present Government have decided that the system shall be altered. In dealing with unemployment I have not made it my practice to adopt an attitude of simply

criticising, which gets us nowhere. It may be that when the Frankland River camp was opened by the previous Government, that was the only means of rendering employment available quickly for a given number of people.

Mr Doney: That was the case.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: That, however, would be no justification for the succeeding Government continuing on the same lines, instead of altering the system when the time for alteration had arrived. The position now is as follows: There are many holdings on which the Government are still making advances. If we can bring those holdings to the point of productivity at an earlier period than would otherwise be the case, we shall render it unnecessary for the Government to continue making advances to the settlers over the whole of the period contemplated by the original system, and the State as a whole will gain as a result of the alteration. The State will at once receive some direct benefit from the work performed by the men on those holdings. Again, if the men are placed at the point of productivity more speedily, and are enabled to earn their own living earlier, there will be restored to them that sense of independence which is so valuable to the community. Therefore the system has been altered, and at a convenient time the Frankland River settlement will be closed. To close it immediately would involve the risk of losing the benefit of the work already performed. But it is quite possible that the land will be made available to people who will be able to use it when the time comes. The general position regarding unemployment is better now than it has been since the period of stagnation set in. I have already mentioned that we are down to less than a thousand men unemployed. Unemployment relief payments last week totalled £1,300 odd, as against about £6,000 per week 12 months ago. The difference is going in the provision of work, and the benefit of the additional money circulating has made itself manifest in the community. Practically every timber mill that was open previously has been reopened. Between 800 and 1,000 additional men are now placed in the timber industry. That fact, while representing an immediate benefit, also makes for the development of the South-West. Again, in the

country districts comparatively very few men find it necessary to apply for sustenance. The work is there, and naturally the vast majority of men are only too anxious to take any work offering so that they may be enabled to support themselves and their families. I have much pleasure in submitting these Estimates. I only hope that at the end of another 12 months we shall be able to report equally good progress as on this occasion.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [10.18]: The Minister for Employment is to be congratulated on the very detailed and comprehensive statement he has just delivered. It affords members a great deal of interesting information. Everyone will be pleased to hear that instead of sustenance having to be paid to thousands of men, the position has so far improved that sustenance is being paid only to men in hundreds. I echo the hope just expressed by the Minister that the day is not far distant when not anyone will be in receipt of sustenance. No doubt the steps taken by the Employment Department have considerably minimised the destitution and the curse of unemployment that have been rampant. While we all realise that the remedies applied now are merely palliatives, it will be conceded that the trouble will continue while the economic difficulties remain. I wish to direct the attention of the Minister to the activities of the Boys' Employment League. I do not seek to enlist his sympathy, because, long before he occupied his present position as Minister of the Crown, he took an active part in the work of the league during the early stages of the period of depression. I intend asking him if he can provide the league with a little more assistance than it receives at present. The league has done a considerable amount of good work, and is continuing along those lines. The latest figures show that, to date, the placements of boys have totalled 4,333, or an average of approximately 30 per week. The applications to date have totalled 4,360, and the weekly applications average 31. At the end of the year, thousands of boys will be leaving the State private and secondary schools, and we may presume that the majority of them will apply to the league for positions. That is a sorry picture, presenting the tragic side of our economic difficulties. Wave upon wave of youths leave the schools and colleges,

only to find themselves up against a blank wall, with no avenue of useful employment available to them.

Mr. Doney drew attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

MR. NEEDHAM: In order to cope with the position, the league was formed and, in the course of its work, has experienced considerable difficulty in meeting necessary expenditure. I am informed that the only assistance obtained from the Government is the provision of a secretary, a clerk and free office accommodation. That is very little, and the league would welcome further assistance, although realising the financial difficulties of the Government. In 2¾ years, the league has received £717, £200 of which was made available by the Lotteries Commission. There has been no Government grant in cash, and the clerk, who was made available by the Government, is very much underpaid.

Mr. Hawke: So are we all.

MR. NEEDHAM: The league desire the Government to consider making money available so that the fares can be paid for boys who have to be sent to the country to take positions, and also that a similar concession can be granted to boys who proceed from one country job to another. I participated in a deputation from the league to the Minister, who was very sympathetic. The statement was made on that occasion that men who secured sustenance jobs had their fares paid. The league contends that just as those men are rightly assisted in that direction, so the league should be assisted by the provision of money for the fares required by the boys. Efforts have to be made to provide for boys to proceed to jobs in the country, or country boys who have to be sent to the town for work, to see that the boys get the best wages available, to make sure that the places where the boys go are suitable, that they will be well looked after; to see that provision is made for clothes, boots, meals in transit, sustenance for country boys awaiting transport, and so on, and the league is hard put to it to make that necessary provision. I have a few figures to indicate the assistance rendered by Governments in the Eastern States to similar institutions. Victoria, on a population basis, places one-third of the number of boys for whom positions are found in Western Australia, and the league there has a staff of eight fully-paid officials

to carry out the work. In addition, the Bendigo Rotary Club received from the Victorian Government £2,000 for placing 25 boys. Many of the boy employment movements in the Eastern States are supplied by their respective Governments with free postage, or its equivalent. The league in Western Australia does not even receive free postage, or any grant for that purpose. A similar organisation for the placing of girls in positions in Western Australia, according to the Auditor General's report, received in 1931-32 over £6,743; in 1932-33, £4,121, and, for the portion of 1933-34 to the 7th September, £2,577. The Boys' Employment League does not complain about the assistance rendered to the movement for the girls, but points to the difficulties experienced in carrying out the work it has in hand. In placing over 4,000 boys in work, not one has displaced an adult worker, and the lads have been saved from losing their morale through inability to secure work. We know how degrading it is to the youth of the State to waste their time in idleness. A lot has already been done by the league, and the service rendered has been of advantage to the State both from an educational and a moral point of view. For these reasons alone I would commend the request of the league to the Minister. It does not require much, only a little cash to help these lads with their transport to the various jobs.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [10.31]: The hon. member has stolen my thunder.

The **CHAIRMAN**: The hon. member must not reflect on another hon. member.

MR. GRIFFITHS: I do not wish to do so. I have had some conversations with members of this league, and I know from experience the fine work they have been doing on behalf of youths waiting for employment after leaving school. The league have had practically no assistance from the Government. The figures given by the member for Perth as to what has been done by the league have been most illuminating. Only to-day I heard from a member of the league that there is some move to put them under the auspices of the Technical School. I hope the Minister will see to it that some assistance will be granted in the direction indicated by the member for Perth, and I trust that the activities of the league will not be curtailed in any way.

Progress reported.

[39]

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Forests Act Amendment.
- 2, Soldier Land Settlement.

House adjourned at 10.34 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 30th October, 1934.

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

ADMINISTRATION ACT (ESTATE AND SUCCESSION DUTIES) AMENDMENT BILL SELECT COMMITTEE.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson, the time for bringing up the report was extended to Tuesday, 13th November.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 25th October.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [4.35]: This Bill is the usual annual measure to extend the operations of the Industries Assistance Board. It is unfortunate that we have not before us the report of the board for the year just closed, and therefore can only discuss the Bill in the light of the information supplied by the Minister. I should like