

tion to exploit it ourselves. If patrol boats are made available, we could probably retain that industry for the benefit of Australia. If something is not done at once, that outpost of the Empire will go, too. Our own folk will be unable to compete with the boats that are coming in from Japan and other places, especially as those concerned pay no Commonwealth duties or State taxation. The pearling industry will shift to the islands and we shall be deprived of the wealth that should belong to Australia. Australia will receive no benefit from that industry unless something is done at once to safeguard it. I am not going to talk about starting-price bookmaking or the intimidatory remarks of the junior member for the West Province. I am sure members do not take him seriously when he makes such statements. He knows that everything that passes through this Chamber is considered on its merits. I support the motion.

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

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [8.50] : I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.51 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 11th August, 1937.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 7.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—PENSIONS BOARD.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Premier: 1, Is the Pensions Board a statutory body? 2, If so, under what statute was it created? 3, How and by whom are its members appointed? 4, Who are the present members?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, By regulation under the Public Service Act, No. 134. 4, The Public Service Commissioner, the Solicitor General and the Under Secretary for Law.

QUESTION—VETERINARY RESEARCH.

Value of Dr. Bennetts' Work.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, In view of the magnificent achievements of Dr. H. W. Bennetts, of the Agricultural Department, as a result of his exhaustive investigations, formerly into the braxy-like disease in sheep, and recently into the disease known as "rickets," has any action been taken to suitably recognise the value of Dr. Bennetts' work in the interests of the stock-raising industry? 2, If not, will he take up with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and the Federal Government the question of the adequate recognition of the value of the results of this research work to the State and the Commonwealth?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No special remuneration has been given to the Veterinary Pathologist, Dr. Bennetts, because of the work mentioned. 2, The suggestion will receive consideration.

QUESTION—STATUTE OF WESTMINSTER.

Hon. N. KEENAN asked the Premier: 1, Have the Government considered the position which will arise if and when the Com-

monwealth Parliament validates and adopts the Statute of Westminster? 2, If so, what action (if any) do the Government intend to take in this matter? 3, Will the Government afford an opportunity to the House to consider such action (if any) before the same is finally determined and acted upon? 4, Have the Government had any communication with the Governments of Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, with a view to taking joint action with such Governments in this matter? 5, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: 1 to 5, A communication has been received from the Victorian Government only and the matter is being given urgent consideration. No objection will be taken to a discussion in the House.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [7.34]: Before dealing with the criticism of the Leader of the Opposition I should like to associate myself with the remarks he made in regard to the Coronation of Their Majesties the King and Queen. On several public occasions I have already expressed my opinion in connection with that event, and respecting the loyalty of the people towards the Throne. In the second place I would associate myself with the belief that immense benefit must result, not only to the British Empire but to the world in general through the meeting together in England of the various representatives from all over the Empire. This all makes for the unity of the British race, and I think there is no greater factor for peace in the world than that the British Empire stands solidly united on this most important question. I think I have made some reference to the fact that the population of the British Empire as a whole is about one fourth of the population of the world. If a quarter of the population of the world can live in peace and harmony, that is, the component parts of the British Empire, surely it is an example that other people might well emulate. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his

kindly references to myself, and the work that devolved upon me during my visit to the Old Country. I think he and most other people will agree that it is of distinct advantage to this State for prominent public men to become closely associated with and gain an intimate knowledge of each other and of the prospects of the State. While in England I met hundreds of people directly or indirectly associated with this State's welfare, who, in many instances, represented a considerable amount of capital invested in the industries of the State, and I think the contacts made will be all to the good of the State. I do not take any credit specially to myself in regard to this matter. The work that has been done in the State during past years has reflected credit on those responsible for the government of the State, and whenever public men do visit the Old Country they can be assured of a welcome by the people there. While in England I heard many references to the excellent work done by representative men of this State when in England, as for instance the Minister for Mines, the Leader of the Opposition, the President of the Legislative Council, and other public men who in the Old Country disseminated first-hand information regarding the State and its prospects, and explained what we are doing, where we are heading, and what progress we are making. The Leader of the Opposition declared that according to the Governor's Speech as he viewed it, everything in the garden was lovely. I do not think the Government made any attempt to suggest that everything in the garden was lovely. It would be ridiculous if anybody did make such a statement, because we know there is a considerable number of men still in want of full-time employment, and that our primary industries are still in a comparatively parlous condition; but what I do say, and it can be borne out by facts, is that very solid improvement has been made during the past three or four years. That is what the Governor's Speech intended, to convey. Not only have the people out of employment been reduced in number by considerably over half, but in many ways their conditions have been improved. As for the people engaged in primary industry, if a survey had been taken seven or eight years ago, and if as a result of that survey people looked forward and considered what would be the effect of the disturbed conditions, the

depression, the poor seasons and poor prices, the effect that those handicaps would be likely to have on the agricultural industry, most people would have been of the opinion that not one-quarter of the farmers would be found on the land after seven or eight years. But far from that being the case, those farmers have been helped and encouraged, and assistance has been given to them, and it can truthfully be said that they have had a helping hand extended to them in their time of stress. I may deal more fully with that aspect a little later on. The Leader of the Opposition criticised what he called the absence of proposed legislation from the Governor's Speech. Of course he implied that the member for Roebourne (Mr. Rodoreda) had some inside information about the legislative programme. However, I think that the Leader of the Opposition knows just as much about the legislative programme as does the member for Roebourne.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That is not much.

The PREMIER: It is a good deal. There is a considerable programme of proposed legislation indicated in the Governor's Speech, and if all those measures so indicated are passed by Parliament, considerable benefit will accrue to the State. Of course we could fill up the Governor's Speech with proposed legislation. Probably the Leader of the Opposition could say at first hand that there are certain Bills which will be brought down to the House, apart altogether from those measures indicated in the Governor's Speech. He knows that we shall have taxation Bills; he knows that certain taxation will be imposed, and that Acts for that purpose will have to be passed by Parliament. Also he knows that before the end of the session we shall have the Appropriation Bill and Supply Bills and Road Closure Bills, and what is known as the emergency legislation, and in addition annual Bills that are always brought before the House each session. If the Government had included all those Bills in the Governor's Speech we should have had a list of 30 or 40 measures, which of course would look quite an imposing array of legislation. However, most of the important Bills to be brought down were mentioned in the Governor's Speech. Possibly there will be introduced other legislation, but there is sufficient legislation indicated in the Gov-

ernor's Speech to keep Parliament busy for a considerable time. My only hope is that all the Bills to be brought down will be passed by both Houses of Parliament. Dealing with finance, the Leader of the Opposition asked that the Public Accounts and the Auditor General's report should be presented early. As a matter of fact, the Auditor General's report was presented early last session.

Hon. C. (i. Latham: Yes, in October.

The PREMIER: And I hope it will be presented even earlier this year. As members know, the Auditor General is an officer, not of the Government, but of Parliament, and naturally he is desirous of carrying out his duties and so giving good service to his employers. But, touching the Auditor General's report, I would point out that it includes reports on many of the big undertakings of the State, the balance sheets of which are not available until about September. Moreover, they all come in together, and so give rise to a certain amount of congestion. However, they are segregated and dealt with and brought before the House as early as possible so as to give members an opportunity to see how much money has been spent, and to peruse any criticism that the Auditor General thinks fit to make for the information of members of Parliament. I have the assurance of the Auditor General that he is just as anxious as the Leader of the Opposition and other members, if not more anxious, to make this information available to Parliament. He is endeavouring to finalise the public accounts and to make comments so that they may be placed before members even earlier than was the case last year. The Leader of the Opposition denied the truth of the statement in the Speech that the reduction of the grant and increase in the drought expenditure were responsible for our being unable to achieve the surplus forecast in the Budget of last year. Instead of there being a surplus of £5,674 there was a deficit of £371,000. It is a fact, whether denied or not, that the Disabilities Commission did reduce our grant by £300,000. We did not get the money. That is one of the main reasons why we did not achieve the result set out in the Budget. Furthermore, the Government, knowing the position at the time the Budget was framed, and that the farmers were in need of relief, placed a sum of £50,000 on the Estimates for relief. Owing to the drought, however,

another £111,000 had to be found. There is more than the deficit comprised by these two items alone, the reduction of £300,000 in the grant and the £100,000 for drought relief above that provided in the Estimates. The hon. member claimed that the failure to achieve a surplus was due to an additional expenditure of £400,000. He said the expenditure was going up, and that the Government had increased their expenditure. He also said that was the only way the Government could influence public finance, and that whatever happened expenditure should not increase. We know that expenditure does increase. I do not intend to delve deeply into financial questions now; that will come when the Budget is brought down. The Leader of the Opposition did not criticise any particular item of expenditure. I want to show how the £400,000 to which he referred was made up. It was made up of extra drought relief to the tune of £111,000. That was an item of expenditure which the Government incurred knowing that farmers required that amount of assistance to enable them to carry on. I do not suppose the Leader of the Opposition will criticise the Government for having done that. Then in connection with the repurchase of estates for agricultural land, the sum of £40,000 was paid. This was to clear off payments due under that heading. We repurchased this land in good faith. Outstanding accounts were due and £40,000 was expended in that way. That was an obligation upon the State, and cannot be criticised. Under the heading of Education another £26,000 was expended.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Over and above the estimate?

The PREMIER: Yes. The largest proportion of that expenditure was incurred through the reclassification of teachers. These are matters over which we certainly have some control. I suppose we could have taken up the arbitrary stand of saying that, although the Arbitration Court had made alterations in the remuneration of people coming under its jurisdiction, and although the Public Service Commissioner had made certain alterations to the remuneration of public servants, the teachers must not have any increased remuneration. But the Government did not take up that attitude. We considered that the teachers were entitled to their classification in all the circumstances

that exist at present, and the extra expenditure was incurred to the tune of £25,000. With regard to railways, an extra £170,000 was expended by the department concerned. This was brought about to a great extent by payments under the belated repairs programme. I think that just on £100,000 was taken from revenue for belated repairs.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Was that over and above the estimate?

The PREMIER: Yes. Arrangements were made for the liquidation of the amount due for belated repairs.

Mr. Hughes: Where did you get the money? Were loan works reduced by £400,000?

The PREMIER: No. The money was taken out of the amount available for carrying on the affairs of State. It does not matter whether it is a deficit which has to be met out of loan, or whether it is loan expenditure or what it is. When money is due it has to be paid, and in this case it was debited to the revenue account. That is also responsible for our increased expenditure to the amount of £400,000.

Mr. Hughes: Did it not result in £400,000 less work being provided for the unemployed?

The PREMIER: No. It does not matter whether work is given to the unemployed out of the belated repair programme, which is debited to revenue or loan, as was the case in years gone by. Because we could not get the money from revenue, the account was debited to loan. This year about £100,000 extra was debited to revenue. I am at the moment dealing with the increased expenditure about which the Leader of the Opposition complained. Electricity Supply was responsible for an increased expenditure of about £18,000. This was used to increase the revenue. We could easily have said we would not generate any more current or make any more extensions, but there was this extra activity in the Electricity Department. More current was generated and the expenditure increased.

Mr. Sampson: Were there any extensions into the country?

The PREMIER: I would refer the hon. member to the Minister for Railways. When I was Minister for Railways the hon. member was extremely importunate in respect to the request for extensions, which the state of the electricity undertaking did not warrant, but which, now that the electricity

undertaking is nearing completion, may prove practicable.

Mr. Sampson: That is good news.

The PREMIER: Always provided that the money can be secured for the purpose.

Mr. Sampson: I hope the Treasurer will be able to find it.

The PREMIER: We have had to transport a considerable amount of water for the Railway Department, and this to some extent increased the railway expenditure. In some instances the department had to transport water 150 miles for its own locomotives. Many hundreds of trucks of water had to be transported for a considerable part of the year. That cannot be done for nothing, and the accounts to some extent have been increased accordingly. On the Murchison line, fortunately we have been able during the past year to increase our water supplies materially in many places, and this will obviate the necessity for increased expenditure there this year. I hope I have explained the situation to the satisfaction of the Leader of the Opposition. If so, I would ask him what item of this expenditure would he suggest the Government should not have made provision for.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Let us adjourn until we get the Estimates.

The PREMIER: The hon. member did not wait for the Estimates to rush in with his criticism. It is no use allowing such loose statements to gain ground in the country when they are not in accord with the facts. Now that I have explained the situation, to the satisfaction of the Leader of the Opposition—

Hon. C. G. Latham: Not to my satisfaction.

The PREMIER: I hardly expected that. I have, however, explained it—

Hon. C. G. Latham: To your satisfaction.

The PREMIER: To the satisfaction, I think, of any reasonable and impartial person. The Leader of the Opposition also commented on the increased expenditure by the Government compared with the expenditure of the Government of which he was a member. We all admit that owing to the circumstances existing at that time it was impossible for the Government to find money with which to carry on the ordinary affairs of State.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Two million pounds more is a lot of money.

The PREMIER: There is considerable increased activity in the State too.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are expected to spend more, but not two millions more.

The PREMIER: In a big State like this we could with advantage on a reasonable progressive programme spend 20 or 30 millions of loan money if we had it. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, there is a tremendous problem awaiting the State in the provision of agricultural water supplies for the areas concerned. That work would not be profitable.

Hon. C. G. Latham: In the long run it might be.

The PREMIER: It would be of tremendous advantage to the productivity of the State.

Mr. Doney: And therefore must be profitable.

The PREMIER: Not to the Government as a Government, so far as the State's accounts are concerned.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Indirectly I think the expenditure would be profitable.

The PREMIER: Oh, yes, but every Treasurer receives many importunate requests for many things. People say, "Make this money available and the indirect benefit to the State will be tremendous." Whilst I like the State to benefit at least indirectly from everything we do, we have a responsibility to the State as a whole and must endeavour to balance the Budget with the money we have at our disposal. When I was Minister for Railways I had a piece of chalk in my office. I promised to make a mark every time I received a request from someone that would lead to a direct benefit to the State's finances.

Hon. C. G. Latham: So that accounts for all the chalk marks I have seen.

The PREMIER: In the course of seven or eight years I had hundreds of requests that were said to lead to an indirect benefit to the State, but not one that was of direct benefit. I, therefore, had no occasion to make any chalk mark. I have no wish to cast opprobrium upon the Government of which the Leader of the Opposition was a member on the score of lack of ability to do anything.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I suppose they would have spent the money if they had had it.

The PREMIER: Unfortunately a good deal of necessary expenditure was delayed at that time. I think it was said that the expenditure had to be of vital importance before the money could be found for it.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It was a question of tucker rather than of anything else.

The PREMIER: That is so. The Government of the day did not have the money; they could not raise it, and so they could not do the work. What should another Government do with regard to this work that had been neglected—I do not use that word offensively—when they could secure the money? We were in that position, and were we to continue to neglect that work, or, with the limited money at our disposal, should we have gradually increased the expenditure and overtaken the arrears of maintenance and other work that another Government had been unable to carry out? The earlier Government could not carry out the work, and naturally it was not done. I admit that the present Government have had more money at their disposal, and, therefore, rather than allow the assets of the State to depreciate, we carried out the necessary work. That could not have been done without increasing expenditure, and in those circumstances the Leader of the Opposition was not quite fair in criticising the augmented outgoings, seeing that he knows, just as does every other person well informed regarding State affairs, the reason for that increased expenditure.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I was merely criticising the expenditure over and above the amount you estimated.

The PREMIER: Very well, and I have explained the position to the honourable member. An expenditure of £718,567 was spent under the headings of "belated repairs" and "special maintenance," and of that amount £525,971 has been recouped to revenue. The Leader of the Opposition will be pleased to know that we have overcome the position regarding belated repairs, and from now onwards we shall have no such programme to carry out. The ordinary maintenance expenditure will enable us to carry on the railways in the safe conditions that should ordinarily obtain. Naturally, for a couple of years we shall have to repay to Loan account money that was obtained from that source to provide the revenue necessary to carry out the work. I could give instances of a similar type of expenditure in relation to other departments, which would indicate more fully what has been done, but I think I have mentioned sufficient to deal with that particular phase. I know the difficulties that confronted

the Government with which the Leader of the Opposition was associated, and which they had to surmount. I will admit that there was a vast amount of unfair criticism offered at the time, but I have merely stated the simple facts. We have carried out the work I have indicated, and that cost money, which meant that expenditure had to mount up. The Leader of the Opposition also indulged in what I might term platitudes respecting what he deemed the "neglect of the primary industries." I think his remarks rather savoured of real ingratitude. The honourable member will admit that much has been done to alleviate the difficulties of the farming community. It is all right to talk to unsophisticated audiences in outback farming centres and indicate what the Government ought to have done, thereby implying that nothing had been done; but the simple fact is that much has been done, and will continue to be carried out so long as assistance is needed by the primary producers.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Are there no unsophisticated audiences elsewhere than in the outback country centres?

The PREMIER: Perhaps the honourable member might not like it if I suggested that members representing country constituencies say many things at outback centres that they would not say in Parliament, where their statements could be refuted.

Mr. Doney: But you referred to audiences.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Yes, and what the Premier now says does not affect the audiences at all.

The PREMIER: It does not say much for the forensic ability of members opposite if they cannot impress audiences at outback centres.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Are the audiences at Mukinbudin more unsophisticated than those at East Perth?

Mr. Hughes: The audiences at East Perth are not unsophisticated.

The PREMIER: As regards knowledge of what goes on in the State, the audiences at far outback country centres have not the opportunity to acquire information that is available to other people. For instance, the people of Mukinbudin, who have not had a very prosperous time, are hardly able to take the daily newspapers in order to keep abreast of the times.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: You would be surprised at the knowledge they have of current affairs.

The PREMIER: I might be, but I am afraid their information is tainted by the views of the Primary Producers' Association and other similar organisations, in addition to which they have the "Primary Producer."

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: If they take that paper, they will be well informed.

The PREMIER: Probably they will be well informed from the point of view adopted by members of the Country Party. If statements that have been made by the Leader of the Opposition may be taken as indication of that, the information the country people will gain may be regarded as not quite in accordance with the facts.

The Minister for Works: In addition to which, the people in the country districts would get that particular information, but would not gain a knowledge of replies made to statements in that paper.

The PREMIER: I have some facts which indicate what the Government have done. The Minister for Lands, who has made it part of his daily life during the past four or five years exhaustively to consider the condition of the agricultural industry, will no doubt, with his extensive knowledge of what has been done departmentally, supplement the statements I shall make in a general sense. This information should be placed before agriculturists and the people generally, who should know what the real position is regarding assistance rendered to the primary industries. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned quite wonderful things that could be achieved if we were to allocate £500,000 annually for the rehabilitation of the agricultural industry, but by way of remission of charges and direct contributions even more than that amount has been made available. Mention has been made of drought relief. We put £50,000 on the Estimates last year for that purpose, but we exceeded that amount by well over £100,000. I would remind members of the Country Party that a considerable proportion of that amount was provided from the financial emergency taxation, much of which was paid by people in receipt of the basic wage. I do not say that they paid the tax cheerfully, but without too much grumbling they met their liabilities under that heading, and much of that money has been paid away in assisting people engaged in the agricul-

tural industry who required help. Direct contributions have also been made from the taxation paid by people who were in a slightly more fortunate position than those in receipt of the basic wage. In all £161,111 was devoted directly from revenue for the purpose of drought relief.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You cannot claim that that money came from the financial emergency tax wholly; some of it may have been taken from the land tax.

The PREMIER: That may be so, but the fact remains that we would have been that much further behind, from a financial standpoint, if the financial emergency tax had not been payable.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You must remember that one of your Ministers went to Melbourne and got about £1,000,000 extra for the assistance of agriculturists.

The Minister for Mines: Nothing of the kind, and you know it. Why repeat a statement that you know to be untrue?

The PREMIER: We discussed that matter last year, and what the Minister for Mines was told, in response to his representations that the agricultural industry was in a state of dire necessity, was that if the necessary money could be raised, the State might receive up to £800,000 extra for drought relief.

Mr. Boyle: Was that money advanced through the Industries Assistance Board?

The PREMIER: Some of it was. The money was advanced from many sources. The Government took that action last year, and more money will be found as the necessity arises. Regarding the assistance rendered during the last three years to the primary industries, the files of the Lands Department show that with regard to repurchased estates an amount of £121,404 was written off. I know the member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) urges that we should not take credit for that on the score that the money could not be collected. Perhaps it could not be collected, but surely it is a helpful gesture on the part of the Government when they say to people who owe £121,404 that they will never be called upon to liquidate their indebtedness. Such an action on our part must surely give them more hope regarding the future.

Mr. Doney: You have written off what you never had.

The PREMIER: The hon. member says so.

Mr. Doney: It happens to be a fact.

The PREMIER: It may be a fact.

Mr. SPEAKER: But the member for Williams-Narrogin must get back to his own seat before he interjects again.

The PREMIER: Nobody can foresee what will happen in the future, but we hope the agricultural industry will experience considerably better conditions this year than during the previous five or six years. There are at present reasonable grounds for expectation of a satisfactory season, and if that should prove to be so the position of the farmers will be so much improved because of the writing off to which I have referred. Then £98,299 was written off in connection with the repriced conditional purchase leases, while rents remitted under the 1936 Act in respect of pastoral leases amounted to £35,028. I suppose that if the Government had adopted a Shylock attitude, we might have wrung those amounts from the people concerned. On the other hand, we realised that they were in dire trouble, and we did not attempt to do so. We held that the State could afford to extend a helping hand in that direction, and we have passed an Act to the provisions of which we have given effect. We intend continuing with that measure and to give the Minister power, should circumstances warrant the course being adopted, to grant the remission of such rents. Again, £637,431 was written off in connection with amounts due to the Agricultural Bank, and £387,459 with regard to the Soldier Settlement Scheme. As to Group Settlement matters, writing down has become rather a hardy annual, and I am afraid that if we continue that course we will eventually record a credit balance. Under that heading, £1,716,621 has been written off and £556,398 in connection with the Industries Assistance Board.

Mr. Hughes: I suppose you know that in some instances the Agricultural Bank, in writing off the amounts, capitalised some of the interest and now can charge interest upon that amount, so that the bank will get compound interest?

The PREMIER: I know most things that are done by the Bank.

Mr. Hughes: So that they get compound interest on what they write off.

The PREMIER: If what the hon. member says is correct, there is not much chance of getting it. With regard to country water rates, the Water Supply Department has

written off £34,077. The remissions I have mentioned so far represent a total of £3,586,717.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Much of that applies quite a lot to abandoned properties.

The PREMIER: Arrears of dues in respect of leases of repurchased estates, which amounted to £249,212 as at the 30th June, 1936, have been suspended for three years. In addition to that, the Lands Department, with regard to conditional purchase leases, has capitalised the arrears of rent totalling £147,167 over the balance of the various terms of the leases. With regard to the Agricultural Bank, direct refunds amounting to £108,473 were made to the Bank mortgagees. We really had the money and it should rightfully have gone into the revenue of the State. Instead of our doing that, the amount was not taken by the Bank but handed back to the people to enable them to carry on. In view of the fact that action of that kind has been taken, the suggestion should not be made that the Labour Government have done nothing for the farmers. That seems to be the impression which the Leader of the Opposition desires to create.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What alternative would you have had if you had not refunded the money?

The PREMIER: What alternative have many hard people placed in a position similar to that of the Government? When they get money which rightfully belongs to them, they stick to it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The people would have walked off their holdings if they had not had the refund for they could not have carried on.

The Minister for Mines: Give us a little credit for refunding what we did refund.

The PREMIER: This amount was a direct refund. I say with all due humility that we really did do some little thing for the farmers, but the hon. member would have the people believe that we did nothing. That is the implication contained in his criticism of the Governor's Speech. Approvals under the Industries Assistance Board totalled £305,000. That amount was granted to farmers to assist them to carry on. I am not claiming any special credit for this; it would be the duty of any Government with an idea of their responsibility to do this kind of work. What I am complaining about is the suggestion

that the Government have done nothing at all. I think the Minister for Lands will bear me out in my objection to this criticism. I am sure that he often becomes tired when representations are made to him by people who declare, "You have done nothing for us." It is about time that people knew that we have done something, and done a considerable amount to assist the agricultural industry in carrying on during this period of stress. I do not say that it reflects any great credit on the Government, but I do say that we have done our job by the people of this country, particularly those of the agricultural areas. Even with regard to payments in respect of wire netting we have paid £20,000 more than has been received from the Commonwealth Government for this purpose. The farmers were in distress in Western Australia and we supplied netting and relieved them of the necessity of paying us the interest. But we had to meet the obligations to the Federal Government to the extent of £20,000 which had been paid during three years. The Leader of the Opposition contended that it would be a wonderful thing for us to set aside £500,000 for the assistance of the agricultural community, but the items which I have enumerated bring our expenditure on behalf of the agricultural community to 4½ million pounds. However, I do not want to dwell on that any longer. It is a pity I did not delay my speech until the Primary Producers' Conference had met, because we generally get an audience from their ranks. Still, they may read the facts in the Press.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They will read about it in the morning.

The Minister for Lands: We ought to go and tell them.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It would be a very good thing to go and tell them. You could not be as cheeky to them as—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: Regarding increased expenditure, the Leader of the Opposition said that he was aware that the departmental heads did this, that and the other, and so added to the expenditure of the State.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I was only just following up the remarks of the member for Roebourne. He charged the Government with that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member was talking about expenditure and he said the departmental heads were anxious to push up that expenditure. Certainly the heads in charge of spending departments such as the Charities, Police, Education, Health and others are very anxious and importunate—I might almost say as Treasurer—cheeky, in their desire to do the best for their departments.

The Minister for Mines: They would not be worth their salt if they were not.

The PREMIER: We do not complain because we have zeal and enthusiasm displayed by departmental officers, in their desire to give better service to the people, but I wish to state that the Treasury does not take one request or two requests and deal with them alone. The many requests from the departments are balanced, so that each in respective order of merit will get something towards furthering the work which the departments are striving to do on behalf of the people of the State. The Leader of the Opposition also referred to the conditions of men on part-time employment and said that the position should be improved. I agree. It is our policy to improve conditions, and improvements have been made, though not as rapidly as we would wish. But the utmost is being done with the money available and considerable improvement has been made in the conditions, in addition to which the number of men unable to secure employment has been reduced by considerably over a half. There is another aspect of increased expenditure for which allowance has not been made, and that concerns the improved budgetary methods. Members will know that for a considerable time past money which should rightly have been charged against revenue expenditure was taken out of loan expenditure. It was done deliberately by successive Governments. I want, however, to pay a tribute to the member for Boulder, who, when he was Treasurer, was most energetic and enthusiastic and gave instructions from the Treasury that wherever possible and in every way possible a true statement of the accounts of the State should be rendered so that not only the Treasury would know where we stood but every section of the State would know exactly what was the position in regard to the revenue and expenditure. We have made very many alterations. Payments are now made from revenue which were previously made from loan.

As an instance I would mention that we used to take money into revenue from loan on account of interest which was not paid in respect of the Agricultural Bank. It amounted to hundreds of thousands of pounds. The improvement in the budgetary methods has been generally recognised. The Chamber of Commerce of this State has recognised the change which has been made for the better and so has the Press. Commendation has also been expressed by the Commonwealth Grants Commission, which I do not think anybody would say was biased greatly in favour of Western Australia or of the Treasury of this State. That Commission stated that they had to commend the State for the budgetary methods which had been introduced and which, constituting a great improvement, gave the real financial position.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Which report was that? This year's?

The PREMIER: The 1936 report.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There was certainly an improvement last year.

The PREMIER: Of course that is what makes it very hard to accept the criticism of the Leader of the Opposition, when he says we have no right to increase the expenditure.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You know you had no authority.

The Minister for Works: You did it three years running.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We provided for it.

The PREMIER: You took it out of loan moneys made available. However, it is generally recognised in respect of the finances of the State, that a truer representation of what really occurs is now given to the House and supplied to the public. When expenditure is taken out of loan account and put into revenue account, if it was not in revenue account before it must result in an increase of revenue expenditure. That is another reason for the increased expenditure from the revenue account in the past few years. The Leader of the Opposition also said that the Government should take little or no credit for the improvement in gold mining. He stated that really the improved price of gold was responsible for all the improvements made so far as the gold mining industry was concerned. That opinion is not the opinion of people who have an interest in the mining industry. Those who know the industry and are aware of the attitude the Government have taken up in connection with that industry

are full of gratitude for what the Government have done to assist to increase the production of gold in the State. I met many people in Great Britain during my recent visit who went out of their way to tell me how pleased they were. They contrasted very favourably the attitude of the Government of Western Australia in regard to the gold mining industry with that of Governments in other parts of the world. I do not want to make any invidious comparisons, but we have done a fair thing by the gold mining industry, and we will continue to do it. And the interested people have responded to the measure of assistance the Government have given. Let me tell the Leader of the Opposition something of what we have done, although not everything. We have constructed the Big Bell railway, involving an expenditure of £57,000. That assisted greatly in establishing the industry there. Indeed, it not only greatly assisted that development, but it was actually a condition of the working of the property that the Government should assist by building the railway. We agreed to build the railway; the company agreed to spend a large amount of capital. They carried out their contract and we carried out ours, and I consider that, as a result of the expenditure of that money, the production of gold in this State will be very materially increased for many years. The railway will be opened officially in five or six weeks and the company are under no misapprehension as to the gratitude they owe to the Government for the assistance rendered. In connection with State batteries, during the past three years the Government have increased the size of the Kalgoorlie and Ora Banda batteries and rebuilt Coolgardie and Laverton batteries. They have also renewed and extended practically all the other plants, having expended on such alterations £52,000 since 1934.

Mr. Marshall: A lot more could be spent on State batteries.

The PREMIER: It could. We have a rather enthusiastic State Batteries manager. If he were let loose in the Treasury vaults and allowed to take out money to expend on State batteries, there would not be much left.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They are very profitable.

The PREMIER: We do not seem to make much profit.

Mr. Marshall: They should not be run at a profit.

The Minister for Mines: They never have been.

Mr. Marshall: We will have a debate on it later on.

The PREMIER: In regard to the northern Australia geological and geophysical survey a sum of £37,500 has been spent by the State. Everybody knows of the Government prospecting scheme and what it has accomplished. The Minister for Mines has given information to the House each year detailing the activities of the men, the gold they have produced and the general position. All that was made possible because the Government provided a sum of money. I am not saying that the Commonwealth Government did not find some money also.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I was wondering whether you had forgotten that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member forgets things very often. I do not wish to deny credit to anyone to whom credit is due. If the Commonwealth Government will give us funds, I will certainly not withhold credit from the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They should have given you the money for the geophysical survey.

The PREMIER: We paid some and the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments paid some for the geophysical survey. In addition, the usual developmental assistance, including cartage subsidies, has been given to the mining industry. The provision of water supplies is just as important to mining development as to agricultural development, perhaps more so. It is impossible to start mining at all without water supplies. We provided an amount of several thousand pounds to give Norseman a satisfactory water scheme. All this has been done with the idea of developing the gold mining industry. All those interested in the industry realise that the Government were out to help them.

The Minister for Mines: They would not be there now but for the water scheme.

The PREMIER: For the Leader of the Opposition to imply that the price of gold was the only factor responsible for the increased production in the gold mining industry is not correct.

Mr. Doney: We have always assisted when water supplies were required for mining areas.

The PREMIER: I am aware that the hon. member, as indeed every member of

the House, has done so, but for the Leader of the Opposition to state baldly that the rise in the price of gold was the only factor responsible for the increased production is incorrect. The increase in the price of gold certainly had a material effect. I am not going to deny that. Combined with the very opportune rise in the price of gold were the efforts of the Government, who were not behindhand in granting assistance that enabled people in the outback areas to develop the industry to an extent that would not have been possible had such assistance not been rendered, and rendered, I might say, with all cheerfulness. Branch mains have been laid to Norseman, Ora Banda and Mt. Palmer, mains have been enlarged to Bullfinch, Marvel Loch and Burbidge, and parties have been out boring for water in different places. Everything possible has been done to assist the industry by providing water supplies and whatever else was needed in order that it might carry on successfully. This has been the policy of the Government for the last four or five years. The other primary industry that is in a prosperous condition is the timber industry. This is one of the aspects of our development on which the hon. member would say that something out of the £500,000 might reasonably be expended to increase the production of wealth.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are spending a lot on reforestation.

The PREMIER: Yes; this is one of the industries we desire to assist.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And the Commonwealth Government have assisted in that.

The PREMIER: I am not denying any assistance received from the Commonwealth Government. During the time of stress in the timber industry the Government materially helped those engaged in it. We knew that unless a helping hand were held out to the industry, the people would be in a very parlous condition for perhaps many years. In order to build up the trade, representations were made to us—the member for Boulder was Minister for Forests and I was Minister for Railways at the time—that if we reduced the royalty charges on mill logs and inspection fees on sawn and hewn timber for export, the industry would have a reasonable chance to carry on. The mills were working only part time; in fact many of the mills were not working at all. Because the Government took prompt

action and provided money, the industry was placed on such a basis that now not a single timber mill that could be profitably worked is not giving full time employment. There is a market for the timber and our action has enabled the industry to carry on the production of wealth. A considerable quantity of timber is exported for which money is returned to the State by way of trade balance. A 20 per cent. rebate was granted on royalty charges on mill logs, and 25 per cent. on inspection fees both for sawn timber and hewn sleepers for export, and a special rebate of 5s. a load on sawn timber exported outside Australia was in operation for two or three years. Those rebates amounted in 1934-35 to £29,911, in 1935-36 to £32,791, and last year to £27,090. Also substantial rebates of railway freights were granted, 12½ per cent. on interstate business, and 16-23 per cent. on overseas business. During the last three years the Government have rebated in railway freights alone to the timber industry a sum of £57,000. At a function I attended in London I was able to point out that this assistance had not been granted at a time when we had an overflowing Treasury. It was given at a time when the State had a deficit of £500,000 or £600,000. Though we were in trouble, we held out a helping hand in order to maintain the timber industry. Naturally we could not immediately cancel the rebates, but they will be gradually reduced as the industry is in a position to stand on its own feet and pay the reasonable charges that were previously imposed. The Leader of the Opposition also claimed that no substantial reduction had been made in railway freights. I told him by way of interjection that reductions had been made. To-day I had the figures taken out. In 1934-35 when we passed the State Transport Co-ordination Act and coincidentally promised to reduce railway freights—which was done—we estimated to rebate freights to the amount of £105,000 annually.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It was not done on the Midland line.

The PREMIER: Had those rebates not been made, calculating on the basis of the increased traffic carried last year, railway revenue would have been better off by nearly £200,000. Yet the hon. member said we had made no railway freight reductions. I take the word of the Commissioner of Railways, who said that had the

1933 rates remained in force, he would have received increased revenue to the extent of £200,000.

Mr. Doney: He might not have done so. The possibility is that had you maintained those rates the railways would not have carried the same quantity of goods.

The PREMIER: That is so, but I have stated the position. I do not know whether I need pursue the task of replying to the criticism of the Leader of the Opposition. I feel that I am doing rather too well.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Not too bad, but not too well, either.

The PREMIER: The bogeys raised by the honourable member have been successfully knocked down. I entertain a very kindly feeling towards the Leader of the Opposition, and do not wish to be hard on him.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Then your kindness is merely balancing up for some of your friends.

The PREMIER: I think the honourable member gets on fairly well with them. I do not wish to deal at length with the honourable member's reference to Trade Hall domination.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You know it is true.

The PREMIER: I know it is untrue, and everybody else knows it.

Mr. Styants: It is as good as St. George's terrace domination.

The PREMIER: Everyone interested in the politics of Australia is aware of the manner in which the Labour movement is constituted. Everyone knows that the people representing Labour, even those in the distant portions of the State, meet together at a triennial conference to formulate the policy and platform of the Labour Party. Then it becomes the job of a Labour Government to give effect to that policy. That is what we do. We tell the electors, "This is the Labour platform. This is what we and the Labour movement have decided upon in conference. If elected, we will do our best to give effect to this policy."

The Minister for Lands: The Primary Producers' Association have flattered us by doing the selfsame thing.

The PREMIER: I do not object to that but everybody knows exactly what is done. As regards domination or instruction, there was a time when the Country Party could have been challenged on that score.

The Minister for Works: Even now.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We can supply you with facts from your own newspaper.

The PREMIER: Whatever the Trades Hall authorities endeavour to get the Government to carry out will be found to be not inconsistent with the Labour platform. If the Leader of the Opposition saw the light and joined the Labour movement, he would have an equal say with anyone else. As to domination, the Labour platform dominates the policy of the Labour Party, and that is all. We are elected to give effect to that policy, and are anxious to do so. Unfortunately, the hon. member and his colleagues in another place do not give our proposals the reasonable consideration that we believe they merit. But it is really clap-trap to talk about domination when everybody knows exactly how things are carried on.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What do you mean by that?

The PREMIER: I saw something in the Press to the effect that a certain speaker at some caucus or political party meeting had threatened to do something or attempt to do something.

Mr. Doney: There is nothing in that.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You remember those fellows who came from the goldfields and attended a caucus meeting and instructed you what to do.

The PREMIER: No.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do, and so do other members.

Mr. Styants: They were invited.

Hon. C. G. Latham: When the strike was on, they instructed you what to do, and you did it in spite of the law of the land.

The PREMIER: I daresay that when the hon. member was a Minister, country constituents waited upon him and asked him to do various things. It is quite a reasonable thing for a deputation to wait upon a Minister and ask him to carry out certain requests. That is what is done when we are in power. If the hon. member's supporters approach his Ministry and ask for something to be done, will he say that that is domination? It is about time that the suggestions of Trades Hall domination were dropped. Then the hon. member sarcastically harangues about going to the country. No doubt he would help us to go.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I would so.

The PREMIER: But he would not help us to come back.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We would stump the country against you if we could.

The PREMIER: But if we were returned to power, the hon. member would not help us to carry out our programme. He would not help us against the Legislative Council, for instance.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I was referring to statements made by the member for Rockbourne (Mr. Rodoreda).

The PREMIER: I think we might ask the assistance of the Leader of the Opposition in regard to the attitude of the Legislative Council, an attitude which that House is not entitled to take.

Hon. C. G. Latham: If you will go to the country, I will go with you.

The PREMIER: Perhaps then the hon. member would not come back. Not that I wish him any bad luck. As a Labour Government we recognise our responsibility in all phases of governmental, social, agricultural and industrial activity. We do not bring down a legislative programme dealing only with the Labour platform. We recognise our responsibility, as the Government of the country, to give legislative expression to many things which will benefit other aspects of industry. It seems to me that the "non-party House," which professes willingness to give reasonable consideration to all legislation submitted to it, really does so, but with an absolute reservation, not merely a mental reservation, that this means all legislation except industrial legislation. That is not a reasonable attitude. If we as a Government adopted a corresponding attitude, saying that we would give effect to any industrial legislation but no consideration to legislation dealing with other aspects of the people's activities, there would be a howl of indignation against us. The Government do not intend to adopt any such attitude, but propose to deal equitably with all sections and interests of the community. However, we are not prepared to let the Legislative Council declare, "We give consideration to all aspects of State-wide legislation" subject to a reservation against industrial Bills. The Legislative Council has as much right to pass industrial legislation as we have to pass legislation dealing with other subjects. I do not wish to threaten reprisals against legislation that commends itself to the Upper House, but I do suggest that it is up to members elsewhere, who always claim that they give consideration to all legislation submitted to them, not to

throw out ignominiously legislation proposed by the Government and affecting large sections of the population. Another place has thrown out such legislation without even going into Committee on it. I do hope there will be no necessity for the Government even to consider any policy of reprisals such as we might possibly have to consider if that attitude continues. I will not say more than that. In speaking on the Address-in-reply I have not attempted to deal exhaustively with State finance, which subject will come forward when the Budget is brought down. Where criticism is constructive, we welcome it. Even to criticism which in our opinion is unjustified we do not take much exception; in fact, I for my part welcome it because it gives us such an opportunity as was afforded by the criticism of the Leader of the Opposition last night, to defend our actions without boasting about what we have done. In a State largely dependent on climatic conditions, the best Government in the world could not put the community on the road to prosperity when climatic conditions are adverse; but a good Administration, such as we claim to be, can by administrative and legislative action alleviate the shock and burden which come upon all industries in distressful times. Western Australia has had its periods of climatic adversity during the past two or three years, and those conditions have applied over large portions of the State. If climatic conditions are normal—and that is all we can expect or are entitled to bank on—the people of this State will be enabled to reap some reward from their labours. The present Government will do in future what it has done in the past, irrespective of criticism, and irrespective of perhaps a little pique arising from what I may term ingratitude. We shall continue to assist industry in all its phases, so that when prosperity returns the whole of the people will share in the benefit.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,500,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 9.51 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 12th August, 1937.

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

QUESTION—IMPRISONMENT OF FRANK EVANS.

Mr. BROCKMAN asked the Minister for Justice: 1, Why was the late Frank Evans, of Boodarockin, after his acquittal by a jury, confined by the Government in the Claremont Hospital for the Insane, despite the fact that the Inspector General for the Insane testified at Evans's trial that the accused was then in his right mind? 2, Why, after the Inspector General again testified before the Royal Commissioner appointed to inquire into the escape of Kelly and Walsh from the Claremont Asylum that Evans was perfectly sane, was Evans transferred to the Fremantle prison, although he had been found "not guilty" of any crime? 3, When the Government announced before the conclusion of the last session of Parliament that Evans was to be released on January 16, 1937, was this decision communicated to Evans himself? If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, The detention was ordered by the trial Judge in accordance with Section 653 of the Criminal Code. 2, The transfer was ordered by the Governor in Council under Section 653 and the conditions specified in Prison Regulation 148 (a). 3, The Government made no announcement in the terms stated in the question.

QUESTION—KATANNING COURT HOUSE.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Works: 1, What amount was recently expended on minor alterations to the Katanning court house? 2, Is this amount all it is intended to spend on improvements to the court house there this year? 3, If the answer to No. 2 is in the affirmative, when

is it intended to provide better accommodation at that court house as previously asked for: and if in the negative, what improvements are contemplated, and when will they be proceeded with?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, £20. 2, Yes. 3, The provision of improved court house accommodation has been listed for consideration on the draft Loan Estimates for the current financial year.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK INTEREST RATES.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is 5 per cent. per annum the rate of interest being charged to purchasers of reverted properties from the Agricultural Bank now being offered for sale through selling agents recently appointed? 2, If not, what rate is being charged? 3, Is the rate mentioned applicable throughout the whole period of payment, or is it subject to alteration by the Commissioners under Section 46 of the Agricultural Bank Act? 4, If the rate is not subject to alteration will the same condition be applicable to all mortgagors to the Bank? 5, If the rate is subject to alteration, what steps are being taken to advise prospective purchasers of the fact?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Answered by 1. 3, Subject to alteration under Section 46 of the Bank Act of 1934. 4, The rate is subject to alteration, and this applies to all mortgagors of the Bank. 5, The interest conditions are fully set out in the mortgage document.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, SUPERANNUATION.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has the Public Service Appeal Board decreed that any ex-wages employees of the Railway Department are entitled to be paid a superannuation allowance under the Superannuation Act, 1871? 2, If so, what are the names of such ex-employees? 3, Has the superannuation allowance been paid? 4, If not, for what reason is it being withheld?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, 3, 4, Answered by 1.

QUESTION—LOTTERIES COMMISSION, GRANTS.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER asked the Minister for Justice: 1, Has any money been granted by the Lotteries Commission for any public halls or other similar buildings? 2, If so, for what were the respective amounts thereof and what are the names and localities of the respective halls? 3, What grants have been made from the funds of the Lotteries Commission under the provision of subparagraph (i) of Section 2 of the Lotteries Commission Act, 1932?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, Returns of payments made under Section 2, Subparagraphs (a) to (i) inclusive are not filed under the separate headings. However, a complete list of all payments made from each lottery conducted by the Lotteries Commission is attached to the auditor's report and submitted to Parliament at the conclusion of each consultation.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [4.35]: I am quite sure that every member of the House enjoyed, if some may have been surprised by the speech delivered by the member for Rotherbourne (Mr. Rodoreda) who moved the adoption of the Address-in-reply. He pursued a very independent line, which is welcome in this House. That is particularly so in these days when many countries have abandoned the Parliamentary system under which it is essential that those who possess individual rights as members shall use those rights to the full. That is essential in order to prevent the danger, which can arise under the Parliamentary system, of Governments of the day becoming too powerful and not susceptible to the opinions of private members. The whole basis of democracy, as we support it, depends upon the value attached to the efforts of private members and upon their powers, in different ways and at all times, to influence the course of government. I am pleased to have the opportunity to offer a few remarks in support of that point of view because on many occasions the electors of Claremont have called upon me, as their Parliamentary representative, to take somewhat independent lines of action in this Chamber. They have gone out of their way

to back outsiders, and members will agree that it is seldom that the outside horse wins in the political race. Nevertheless therein lies the spice of the game, and it is always interesting to see the unknown political horse developing until it becomes a prime favourite.

Mr. Hegney: That all depends upon whether or not the outsider is backed.

Mr. NORTH: I shall refer to three instances to illustrate my point that the people of Claremont have supported formerly unknown causes, which they have brought forward in this House through me. To-day those causes attract world-wide interest. The first dark horse I will call "Nutrition." In 1928 that subject was mentioned in this House, and it had the support of the present Minister for Health. At that time the topic was unfamiliar to members, apart from the Minister and myself. The Press were rather cautious in dealing with the matter. During the years that have elapsed, the problem of nutrition has developed into one of the world's leading questions. We can hardly read a paper without perusing a mass of dietetic information. I well remember that when first mentioned in this Chamber it was looked upon as a ridiculous subject. Not only was that so, but one of the newspapers, which did pay some attention to it, pointed out that we had four or five portly members of Parliament each weighing 20 stone or so, and it was suggested that in such circumstances there was no need to discuss the question of nutrition in this State. Unfortunately, in a very little time two of those portly politicians came to untimely ends. Ever since then I have noticed that the Press have concentrated upon propaganda to bring before the notice of the people the importance of this subject. This absolutely dark horse in 1928 did not seem to have the slightest chance of attracting attention, but to-day it is a world-wide problem. It has even progressed to acquiring a pedigree stage, because it may now be said that Nutrition is by Bruce out of Geneva, which is pretty good stock. The second dark horse that was dealt with strongly by the electors of Claremont was really a railway question. On several occasions I have heard members advocating the construction of various lines. Railways are of importance, and we need them. The only railway stakes that the Claremont people have ever backed may be described as the dark horse known as "Unification." That certainly was a dark horse with a very small degree of possibility of

interesting members when it was first mentioned ten years ago.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: What about the trolley buses?

Mr. NORTH: I have not got to them yet. Unification seemed to be a very hopeless proposition, but the existence of private members' rights enabled the matter to be brought up. We have those rights in this Chamber, and I was glad to see the member for Roebourne exercising them. To-day, unification has come very close to practicality. It has become almost a matter of practical politics. I see that the representative of the Government in another place advocated the other day the building of that line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, and even the National Party carried a resolution the other day advocating unification. So it will be seen that in this connection also the private member was justified in coming forward a little out of his turn, as might be said, to bawl a rank outsider that has become a hot favourite. The third instance I would like to give is in regard to the depression. When the depression started, all kinds of ways were suggested of emerging from it. I can remember very distinctly that in this Chamber in 1930 there was a drastic attack made upon the Australian workers for not giving a sufficient return for their money, and an attack was made on Governments for having borrowed money and spent it too lavishly. But even in those days, in 1930, the electors of Claremont were prepared to stand by the argument that it was the financial system that was at fault and that the trouble was not due to the lazy Australian worker, or extravagant Governments, although there may or may not have been some justification for such a charge at that time. What was my position, then, for having dared to make that criticism in those early days when we were all being told from every platform about Government extravagance, and the necessity for wages being cut down? My position was made very difficult, but the fact remains that as a private member I was justified in voicing my views, because the result was that later on people began to talk about it and investigate the position, and a demand was made for a Royal Commission upon this financial question. There was opposition and much discussion. The appointment of a

commission was said to be unnecessary. It was declared that the financial machine was a thing which could not even be discussed; that it was the foundation of civilisation as it stood. We all know, however, that eventually in this Chamber a Royal Commission was requested by the unanimous vote of the Assembly, and members will recall that we urged that the Government of the day should appoint a judge of the Supreme Court to that commission. Never in history, to my knowledge, has there been an investigation into finance except by those interested in it, and the idea was that if a judge of the Supreme Court could be secured to take evidence impartially, there was a chance for people to ascertain whether or not some improvement in our financial machinery was possible. We have had that Royal Commission. It took a long time, and cost thousands of pounds, but the report, as far as I can learn, is receiving the plaudits of all our business people, and of leading financial papers in other parts of the world. I have even seen one comment that effect will be given in different parts of the Empire to the recommendations contained in the report. These results are surely a justification of the rights of the private member, and of electors. Neither will submit to browbeating by the Government of the day, or even by a strong Opposition, because although the Opposition have their rights too, even a bigger right in this Chamber is the right of the individual member. There is something more in it than that. It seems to me that we are passing through a period of history when many Governments are changing their form altogether, and there have arisen dictators who are nothing less than killers and gangsters, and who are running large countries. In the face of such circumstances, I feel the importance of stressing the underlying British statesmanship, which is the foundation of our Parliamentary system, the idea of a balance of power: because it is the balance of power which, in all the cases to which I have referred, has operated, and it is the balance of power which runs this country and this Government, and prevents bloodshed and riots, and the various other difficulties which are occurring in other parts of the world. Should we therefore not do everything in our power to maintain this right of private members? Thus, although I thoroughly agree with many remarks of

the mover of the Address-in-reply, who said that the Address-in-reply debate could well be cut out, I suggest that if such a course should be adopted, there must be some provision in our Standing Orders to preserve the rights of private members. Every move made to weaken private members' rights and prevent expressions of opinion in this Chamber will tend to bring us gradually towards that very form of Government by the Right or the Left which we mistrust and which is giving so much trouble in other parts of the world. Two questions with which I have been dealing—nutrition and increased consumption—are really now matters of ordinary banking parlance. I have here the latest number of the circular issued by the Bank of New South Wales, dated the 2nd August, 1937, in which these words appear—

Modern knowledge of dietetics teaches that real physical fitness depends upon a well-balanced diet.

Here are our bankers telling us about nutrition.

Mr. Marshall: What do they know about it?

Mr. NORTH: They know a lot about it. The circular continues—

Food, such as butter, milk and fresh vegetables, known as protective foods, are as important as energy foods, such as wheat, sugar, and beef. Australia's Constitution has saved the country for the time being from the worst dangers of restriction of agricultural output.

Mr. Bruce brought this matter before the Assembly of the League of Nations in September, 1935. The circular points out—

Australia took the lead in awakening the conscience of the world to the need for an enlightened nutrition policy. He (Mr. Bruce) spoke on that occasion of "the marriage of health and agriculture."

So it will be seen that this matter has received recognition in the most responsible circles in our community—the Associated Banks. Then on another page again there is the question of the financial machine being slightly adjusted, in order to enable consumption to be increased and abstention to be eliminated. In the same circular this is very strongly stressed—

What is essential, however, is that Governments everywhere should be determined not to allow technical points to be used as an excuse for non-co-operation. This the Governments could do the more readily if they could depart from the depression and post-depression mental attitudes.

Have the Government today got a post-depression attitude? I should like to hear that they have an optimistic attitude. The circular continues—

During those periods they rightly concentrated upon the interests of producers of all kinds, and gave very little consideration to the interests of the public as consumers. We have seen already that in the case of agriculture a policy of nutrition adopted and carried through at an international level could do much to restore vitality and progress to agricultural production throughout the world.

Then they finish in this way—

The same thing would be true if, in considering industrial tariffs and the conditions under which trade and production are carried on the Governments aimed at securing as far as possible the maximum output at economic prices, and at increasing the supplies of goods which their populations can buy. If the great trusts were unable to raise prices in their home markets they would not be able to disturb international trade by price discrimination in foreign markets. If therefore the Governments in the great industrial countries were to concentrate upon protecting their own consumers, they could take a great deal of the venom out of the competition of the great trusts. If the great empires in the world would concentrate upon increasing consumption and raising the standard of life of their dependent peoples, they would let loose forces making for economic expansion throughout the whole world.

So the Government of today have to take this pressure on two sides. They have the pressure of the abolition of poverty campaign, and now they have the Bank telling them to forget their post-depression attitude, and set about increasing consumption.

Mr. Marshall: There are lots of people in this State who would gladly increase consumption:

Mr. NORTH: Let me at this stage point out to the Chamber what was achieved by that Royal Commission to which I have referred. They came to this conclusion, which is vital in the history of this country, and which is an epoch-making conclusion from which I hope there will be no departure; this Royal Commission has ruled that where there is a dispute between the Government of the day and the Commonwealth Bank there shall be a full and frank discussion, but if the discussion is not satisfactorily solved then the will of the Government of the day shall prevail, and that Government shall take responsibility for its action in having overruled the Bank. That is a bold revolution in economic thought, and I feel that although there has not been very much

discussion of the subject in this Chamber, what is the use of this Chamber failing to interest itself in this important subject? Because this means in effect that from now on the people can hold their members of Parliament responsible for any failure to adopt a people's progressive policy. In the past there may have been some dispute as to who was responsible in the ultimate; because the Loan Council met, and if it had a certain policy, and if that policy was found to be not in accordance with the tenets of sound finance, then the Commonwealth Bank was able to refuse that policy. On the last two or three occasions some of the Premiers did say that the responsibility must then be on the Bank. But now in accordance with this most important report which was issued under the chairmanship of a judge of the Supreme Court, we have an opposite situation in which the Government of the day are responsible to the House for formulating the financial policy of the Australian nation.

Mr. Hegney: It is only a recommendation.

Mr. NORTH: Of course it is. I do not see what else a Royal Commission can do but bring in a recommendation. I am trying to show that it is possible for private members of a local Assembly like this to achieve important results in this community, and I am doing it in order to stress that if our system of Government, namely, democracy, is to prevail, we should protect those rights of private members in view of what is happening in other parts of the world. I admit that what is put up by the Royal Commission is only a recommendation, but of course it is open to the Government of the day, or failing that, some other Government, to put that idea into force. I am convinced that sooner or later the people will demand it, because the recommendation will stand. I shall be much surprised if, during the coming election, the matter is not attended to. Of course it may be that it will be raised during the election and left to be dealt with after the election. Still, there is the recommendation. Leaving this matter, it seems to me that from now on any Government of the day, both in State and in Federal politics, must be held responsible for their actions, and that when this machinery is in operation there will be no need whatever for any Government to say that they cannot meet the situation. I may give an illustration: At this moment, I am in-

formed, there are hundreds of C class men unable to obtain employment suitable to their limitations, and who are therefore living on rations. Many of them have wives and families. Obviously those C class men through circumstances beyond their control are not doing a fair thing towards their wives and families on the money they are receiving. Still the Government will say that in existing circumstances they are unable to pay more money, and the criticism then must be that they have spent money in various other ways which we may think less desirable, money that should be available for putting the C grade men on their feet. But in future no Federal Government will be able to ignore the demands of a State, and so we shall have opportunity to criticise Governments on their merits. So I think we may say that on such a slender foundation a very great job has been done by the electors of Claremont in this Assembly during the long years they have been represented in Opposition. I must say it has been very enjoyable to me to have had the honour of serving them. Largely has it been due to the backing I have received and surely "backing outsiders" is the spice of politics. Now I should like to point out this: The ideas I have voiced on nutrition, unification of gauges, and the Royal Commission's report are based upon expert evidence. I have never taken up in this Chamber causes for my electors without having behind me arguments that are absolutely watertight. The evidence behind nutrition was that of Dr. Tibble, the first doctor of our generation, at any rate to my knowledge, to stress the point that medicine must get away from relying solely on bottles and get back to feeding in order to cure disease. That was an arresting idea. Dr. Tibble was followed by Sir Arbutnot Lane, of Guy's Hospital, who has now reached his eightieth year, and he even infringed professional etiquette by going out on the hustings and telling the people of England that they must have a new health society; that they could not continue with a C3 ramshackle race growing up but must know what to eat. I suppose he was under the impression that once the people knew what to eat, they would be able to buy it. When in 1928 the matter was discussed from the point of view of the public, and mention was made of the desirability of school teachers instructing the children

how to eat, we were told by the Labour Party that there was not enough money; if the people knew what to eat they still could not buy those commodities. To-day, in Great Britain, the position is reversed. I understand there is a move on foot to increase the incomes of depressed families, but it is argued that it is of no use giving them the money because they do not know what to eat. It is allegedly pure ignorance there. I have mentioned the subject of unification of gauges because yesterday I had a somewhat bitter argument with a fellow Nationalist, who considers that we should retain the 3ft. 6in. railway gauge in Western Australia for all time. The backing for a uniform gauge is that of Mr. Blake and Mr. White, expert railway engineers, who came here shortly after the end of the war to investigate and report on our railways. They told us that we could not afford to wait a day in beginning to convert the railways to one gauge with uniform rolling stock and one set of standards throughout. I believe that we shall live to see that work under way, if not consummated. I believe that in the near future either the present or some other Government will make a start to bring the line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie into conformity with the Commonwealth gauge. Regarding the third subject the man who really influenced me to study the subject of finance was a financial expert who is now the Lieut.-Governor of the State. This is a marvellous country indeed. Some years ago Sir James Mitchell was caricatured with another member, Mr. A. Thomson, on a poster, which depicted an ass with two heads but no tail. One head represented Sir James Mitchell and the other Mr. Thomson. How times change! Sir James, who himself has done so much to bring about the opening up of this country, came to me in 1929 and said, "You ought to look more into the financial side of politics. Other members do their own work, but whenever I start to talk about finances or the Budget, they begin to shuffle their papers. I want you, as a young member, to give a hand by looking into figures and helping me on occasion." Evidently, I got hold of the wrong book.

Mr. Marshall: You got too enthusiastic.

Mr. NORTH: I began by looking up all the Treasury returns and financial statements, and in my searches discovered a most extraordinary thing. I found that in the railway returns and the Treasury returns

different forms of ledger balancing were adopted, and while the Treasury statements showed a dead loss on railway operations, the railway returns showed a dead profit.

The Minister for Employment: Should not you say a live profit?

Mr. NORTH: When the Minister has heard my explanation I think he will agree with me that it was a dead profit. I went to Sir James, pointed out that the returns did not seem to tally, and asked the meaning. He laughed and replied, "Be guided by the Treasury returns; we take no cognisance whatever of the railway returns. The railways are used for conveying members of Parliament and school children hither and thither, and those balances do not count as real profits." Realising that there was something rather curious about the matter, I, in an idle or careless moment, ambled down the street to Albert's bookshop and purchased a tract on monetary reform by Mr. Keynes. That book was the origin of all the worries I have experienced during the succeeding seven years. It contained a letter addressed to the Governor of the Bank of England, Mr. Montague Norman, and in it I read a striking sentence to this effect, "There is no question of the day on which so many conservative notions are held as the question of currency, and there is no question on which reform is more needed. Unless reforms are made, society will decay." Here we had a matter lying at the very foundation of society and a Cambridge expert, one of the leading thinkers, telling us that nowhere was there greater need for change, and that unless changes were made, society would decay. That letter was written in 1924, and I have often wondered whether Mr. Montague Norman received it. Much has happened in the intervening years. We have had a Royal Commission that has produced a most wonderful report, a report that I believe will make history. But that alone will not solve the problem.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What horse are you backing now?

Mr. NORTH: Some of the horses I have in mind did not start. Those which actually started I may refer to as "The Premiers' Plan," "Nationalisation," and "Economic Democracy." It is the last-named horse which won. If you permit the Government of the day, in a dispute with the Commonwealth Bank, to win out against it, that is economic democracy. The horse to which the hon. member may have been referring was

scratched; it did not start. Long before the Royal Commission commenced operations certain electors and others asked me to bring forward a proposal to have an investigation conducted by this House, but refused to give evidence before the Royal Commission. I was, therefore, relieved of further action in that connection. Thus, the horse in question was scratched. I do not deny that in other climes such as Alberta that particular horse might have had a run, but there was a lot of trouble at the starting post. It might not suit our particular clime. We have our own experts, and economic democracy has won the day here. Any horse can come forward now, and the Government of the day will have power to bring these things into force. That in itself will render Governments more cautious. The position will be a little like that in connection with the Legislative Council. Just at the moment it is very tempting for the State Government to put up some hot ones to another place, because they know another place will throw them out. Suppose, however, a letter were written by the President of the Legislative Council to the Premier stating that, to test the policy of the Labour Government, it had been agreed by resolution in that Chamber that all legislation brought forward by the Government would be passed in its entirety for a period of one year, so that the people might test the effect of that legislation. If such a letter were written, the test would be applied.

Mr. Sleeman: Suppose you get him to write such a letter.

Mr. NORTH: That is the position under the banking commission. In the past Governments of the day have come forward with all these brilliant ideas, or dark horses as they may be called. They may have been fortunate and been returned to office. They have always known, however, that there was the Senate which, because of vested interests, would devote special attention to these things in order to protect their own rights from their point of view. Governments have known in advance that almost in the ratio of ten to one dangerous proposals would be thrown out by the Senate. To-day, under the finding of the Royal Commission on banking, Parliament has been superseded. The matter at issue will be one for the Government of the day to decide. Governments of the future, therefore, will be more cautious about what they bring before the people.

I am now going to mention a problem which has not yet been solved, despite the Royal Commission and all our wearisome labours. I refer to the question of storks.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I am reading of the cuckoo now.

Mr. NORTH: The bird I am thinking of is the stork. Storks are leaving this country and we have to get them back. Storks have gone to Russia, South America and to Far Eastern countries.

Mr. Marshall: What have you done to help the stork?

Mr. NORTH: That is a personal question. It is my hope that all these improvements in our economic affairs, increased consumption of food, etc., circumstances which are now so near fruition, will have the right effect. It is something against human nature that a community should not adequately reproduce its own kind. It is a most serious question. A few months ago a Cambridge professor passed through this State en route to the Melbourne University where he had to deliver a number of lectures. He stated that unless the western nations brought forward the principle of family allowances for depressed income families, we would be in danger of going down.

Mr. Marshall: The poor man is the one who provides the natural increase.

Mr. NORTH: That is so. The difficulty is that on the balance it works out at two children per family.

Mr. Marshall: It is the social butterfly who is at fault.

Mr. NORTH: It appears that there are two troubles. Those who have a few children seem to be able to bring them up satisfactorily, but in the case of large families the children are very often, undernourished and fail to grow up. The question of the generations to follow is a most important one, and it is a problem that must be solved quickly. In the past there may have been some excuse for Governments in respect to any assistance they might have rendered, because they could do nothing without finance. Now that we have the report of the Royal Commission we can look at the matter in a different light. State Governments will be in a position to make requests for financial accommodation for health, nutrition, etc., and to overcome those difficulties which previously existed.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: To whom would such requests be made?

Mr. NORTH: To the Loan Council, for instance. Any Government which turned down requests of that nature would have a sorry time when going back to the electors, because of the findings of the Royal Commission. After trying to establish a prosperity complex in the minds of members of the Government, I now wish to refer to one or two matters such as subways in my district and trolley buses. We talk about the loss of babies. That is bad enough, but there is also the question of loss of life from transportation. A good deal of the loss of life is due to the lack of subways. In my district we are asking for the widening of a subway in Claremont through which the taxis and buses pass.

Mr. Marshall: The subways I know constitute a great danger.

Mr. NORTH: This too constitutes a great danger, and requires to be widened. In connection with the Cottesloe station a deputation was recently very kindly received by the Minister for Railways, and as a consequence I hope to see a special item on the Estimates dealing with the matter. The suggestion was made that the Federal Aid Roads Agreement might provide funds for a job of this kind. It is suggested that five annual grants might be made from the fund, free of interest. That would enable us to have a nice job done and a lot of good would accrue to the district. Technically this particular spot is in the electorate of the member for North-East Fremantle, but many of the electors in my district are anxious to see the work done. The only other matter, apart from the trolleys, that I wish to refer to can be disposed of briefly. It is Butler's Swamp. The subject has often been brought up in this Chamber, and during nearly every election my opponent has asked, "Why has not Butler's Swamp been attended to? Why is nothing done about it? What is our member doing?" As regards the last question, it is not easy for a member to get attention given to such a matter, as there are fifty of us in this Chamber. However, it so happens that there is now a very simple way suggested out of the difficulty. Within a hundred yards or so of the swamp there is a sewer. That sewer is on a slightly higher level. The argument now is that if about a hundred yards of piping

were placed in the swamp and a small engine attached—current being available—the whole swamp could be pumped away. Once the water gets on top of the level, it would syphon and go into the Minister's sewerage down on the sea-coast. I wonder whether the Minister for Works and Water Supplies can be tempted to spend a matter of £300 to eliminate this huge volume of water which is not wanted.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: But would the swamp fill up again?

Mr. NORTH: Not immediately when it is once emptied, though I believe much of the water from the town is deposited there. The residents concerned are not numerous, and cannot get a hearing themselves. Moreover, it is a matter for the ratepayers. I promised one of them faithfully that on this occasion I would bring the question before the House. I warn the Minister, however, that some other people are afraid the result of the proposed action might be to spoil their wells. The last matter of all is one which has received so much publicity that I fancy all hon. members know about it already. Therefore I intend to devote only a few words to it. The issue in question is the trolleys. A great many persons in Claremont are highly pleased about the trolleys and will use them. A great many other persons in Claremont are using the buses, and they want to use the buses. Further, quite a number of those who will use the trolleys would like to be able to use the buses now. There is no particular discussion at the moment about the installation of the trolleys. These people merely say, in the first place, that if the Government were in a position to improve the means of transport, they would be very pleased about that, and that they would just as soon see a dozen more Diesel buses. In the meantime, however, they ask: Cannot some of the restrictions be lifted from the transport? They have been told by the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) and myself that that is a matter really for Parliament, that the Transport Board cannot take instructions from the Government except *ex officio*, and that the board, anyhow, cannot accept instructions from the Government officially. The idea, therefore, is that perhaps the House might be persuaded to amend the Transport Act so that in cases of this sort, where an existing facility has proved to be not convenient enough, the board should have

power to lift restrictions until the new system is in operation. That is all it amounts to. The Government should be swayed in the matter, though I do not suppose they will be rocked to their foundations. A great deal of annoyance is caused to many Claremont residents. The hardship is not as bad as some of the hardships existing in the country; but what I have suggested is what is desired by the people who have brought the matter to my attention. I assure the House that I have not stirred those people up. It is a real hornets' nest of their own brewing: I ask to be excused for the mixed metaphor. Could the suggestion be considered? Is the House big enough to consider an amending clause in transport legislation to provide not only in this case, but in many cases in the distant future—perhaps in 50 years' time the Government will still be building trams—the necessary alleviation? Could not we consider the idea that wherever a case is found by the Transport Board in which existing facilities do not suffice for the job to permit the necessary convenience to be furnished by other means? In such a case could not the board declare that the residents should be entitled to use the buses?

The Minister for Railways: The board might provide for taking the stings out of the hornets.

Mr. NORTH: I am not too sure where the stings are. At all events, I am not encouraging the construction of hornets' nests. On the whole I may be said to have not made as much ado as I should about the matter. Still, it was clearly stressed by me in this Chamber last session. I am sure the Government know all about the subject. They are sufficiently informed to make it unnecessary for me to take up the time of the House with regard to it. I desire to conclude on a personal note. I am very pleased indeed that the Premier has come back from his trip abroad looking in excellent health, which I am sure every member of the Chamber is glad to see.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [5.28]: The applause one receives when standing up to speak on the Address-in-reply is always encouraging, especially to one who requires a little encouragement, as I do. I should like to begin on a personal note. I too am glad, as we all are

on this side of the Chamber, to know that the Premier has had such an enjoyable trip to the Old Country, and that he has returned greatly benefited in health. We were all concerned about the hon. gentleman's state of health just prior to his departure for the Homeland; and if the trip abroad has been responsible for any improvement, I feel sure we all think it was well worth while. In my opinion, it is highly desirable that our public men should visit the Old Country at intervals. There are some people in the community who appear to believe that these trips Home are mere pleasure jaunts. I do not agree with that view. To my mind, it is absolutely essential that the leaders of our public life should visit Great Britain occasionally in order to keep in close touch with Empire affairs and with the affairs of the outer world. I must express my regret at the accident which has befallen the Minister for Agriculture (Hon. F. J. S. Wise). I sincerely trust that his injury will prove to be merely temporary, and that he will soon be able to resume his place amongst us. I do not agree with the hon. member who moved the adoption of the Address-in-reply that this debate is a waste of time. I am rather with the hon. member who has just resumed his seat that the debate gives us an opportunity to express our views, and that it is the best opportunity we get during the session. Consequently, some good is derived from the debate on the Address-in-reply. I consider, however, that it could very considerably be shortened, and it should not be allowed to drag on as long as it usually does. I hope, therefore, that by the end of next week we shall have finished the debate. I have heard a number of members say that it is not their intention to speak, but I feel that the longer it drags on the more those members will be tempted to speak. I see no reason at all why we should not end the debate, say, next week. I shall set a good example, and will make the promise that I will not keep this House very long with the few remarks I have to offer. I have a number of requests to make, and one of them is that I hope the Premier will give members the opportunity to take part in the forthcoming Federal election, which is to be held towards the end of the year. It is most important that members should be permitted to take some part in that election

campaign, as probably it will prove to be the most important Federal election that has yet taken place. After having read this morning's paper I am more than ever anxious to take an active part in the campaign. I noticed that the Leader of the Labour Party is determined to bring about the nationalisation of banking, and there is no doubt that one of the most important questions the people of the Commonwealth will have to decide towards the end of the year is whether we are to have a socialised State or not. If any Government should acquire control of banking and should put their own men in charge, as it is proposed to do, and assume control of broadcasting, there will be no question about it that we shall be a socialised State. It will be the end of individual effort and initiative. Powers such as these are held only in dictator countries, and I am not favourable to such a position arising in the Commonwealth. I take this opportunity to commend the Minister for Industries for the enthusiasm he has displayed in connection with the campaign to support local industries. He and those associated with him deserve every credit for the manner in which they carried out the local produce display a little while back in Perth. Anyone who visited that display must have been impressed by what this country is capable of producing. One wonders why it is such a difficult job to get people to support local products and industries. The Government I supported when I was first elected to Parliament were particularly keen on getting the people to support local products. I think it can be said that that Government were the first actively to associate themselves with a campaign of that kind. In that valuable pocket Year Book which has just been issued I notice that the population of Western Australia at the end of last year was 451,557, and of that number 212,000 people resided in the metropolitan area, which embraces the districts of Fremantle and Midland Junction. No less than 40 per cent. of the people of this State live in the metropolitan area. The Minister will agree with me that this is not a healthy state of affairs, and we should try to give better facilities to those people who live in the country districts. As far as possible all the comforts enjoyed by the people in the cities should be extended to the people in the country. I do not think anyone will disagree with that. We hear a lot about the

housing conditions in the city, and I have no doubt there is room for considerable improvement. But I venture to say that the average house in the city is farther in advance in respect of comfort than the average house in the country. I have made application to the Workers' Homes Board to secure the erection of houses in my district for young men who wish to obtain them. Unfortunately, I have not been successful in respect of any application. When the previous Government were in power they did build a number of houses in my electorate, but since then, although I have made application on a number of occasions, it has not been possible for me to get one agreed to. Every time I approach the Board I am told that the applicant must wait 12 months, and even then there is no guarantee that he will succeed in his request. I do not consider that the money could be spent to better advantage than in the provision of homes for workers. We are told that money should be spent only on reproductive works. I agree with that, and I know the difficulty is to decide what are reproductive works. I would place the building of workers' homes within that category. The member for Claremont referred to the falling birth rate, and told us that the storks had left the country. Seriously speaking, the falling birth rate is our most serious problem, and it appears to me that it will be even more serious in the future. So I think that when we receive applications for the building of workers' homes, every effort should be made to provide them. I trust that more of our loan money will be made available in the future for the purpose of providing homes for the people who require them.

Mr. Styants: Will you support a scheme for child endowment?

Mr. McLARTY: I would support such a scheme. I consider that a man with a family is penalised today. I would give every consideration to the man with a large family. We have developed a peculiar habit in this country, and I do not know the reason for it. A man whom I know had a son and heir born to him, and visiting the local hotel he asked those around him to celebrate the occasion. One of those present, however, made the sensible suggestion that it was those around him who should shout for the proud father. I agree that that should be. I shall not make any promise to support a child endowment scheme until I know what

the scheme is. I can promise the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Styants) that if he has anything like a reasonable scheme, I will give it my wholehearted support. I agree with the principle. I shall not say anything more regarding workers' homes at the present stage, except to express the hope that I shall have better luck with regard to future applications I may make. I wish to draw the attention of the Minister for Education to the fact that I have experienced very great difficulty in securing the expenditure of any money in my district by the Education Department.

Several members: You are not the only one.

Mr. Thorn: The member for Middle Swan has done very well.

Mr. McLARTY: From time to time I have been promised that certain schools would be built, and other existing schools renovated. Every time I have approached the Director of Education regarding those matters, I have been told that no money was available for the purposes. Five or six years ago one school that I was interested in was, according to the information given to me, first on the list of urgent public works. It must have slipped from that position, but the fact that it was first on the urgent list shows how important a public work it was considered at the time. It is hard to convince many in the country districts that money is not available for the construction of schools. Country people provide a tremendous amount of money for educational purposes, irrespective of the taxation they pay. Voluntary organisations, such as the Parents and Citizens' Association, must have supplied the Education Department, during the past few years, with many thousands of pounds. I do not desire to make any comparison between the city and the country, but I do believe that such associations are more active in small centres with small schools, than they are in larger towns and cities.

Mr. Raphael: They do good work.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes, wherever they may exist. I am under the impression, however, that the requirements in the smaller centres tend to develop greater enthusiasm in the work. With regard to water supplies in country districts, I am convinced that we should spend as much money as we can in the rural areas, and I am just as anxious as anyone else that any such expenditure

should be only on what may be regarded as reproductive work. I am not particularly concerned as to which Government provided the greater number of agricultural water supplies. I know that the Government I supported spent a large sum of money in conserving water in the South-West, and I understand that at present survey parties are out with a view to ascertaining whether water can be conserved in the Darling Ranges so that it may be taken back to the drier agricultural areas. I do not know of any work that could be more highly commended. A district with an unreliable water supply cannot face the future with the confidence that is essential. I know that no Government, under present conditions, could make water available at once. The work would take a number of years to complete, and, therefore, the sooner we make a start with the conservation of water, the better it will be for the State. I know of no more important work that could be undertaken. In my opinion we have a right to ask the Federal Government to assist us in that direction, and certainly additional money should be made available for the purpose. One of the greatest difficulties confronting the rural areas to-day is that the settlers are unable to obtain the water supplies that their requirements demand. Another matter of importance is the spread between the producer and the consumer, which is a matter that vitally affects the country people. Members are aware that recently a referendum was taken regarding the marketing problem, and the proposal of the Federal Government was overwhelmingly defeated. That result, however, does not absolve Governments from the obligation to investigate the marketing problem. Much has been said in this Chamber regarding the metropolitan whole milk supply. Let us examine the spread in that instance. To-day the milk producer is receiving, in many instances, as little as 10d. per gallon for the milk that he forwards. Notwithstanding that low return, the consumer in the metropolitan area has to pay 2s. 4d. or more per gallon. That represents an enormous spread and it should not be allowed to continue. How can we expect to encourage greater consumption while there is that spread between the price received by the producer and that paid by the consumer?

Mr. Hegney: Do you want to increase the price to the consumer?

Mr. McLARTY: The consumer is paying enough already.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The price to the consumer should be reduced.

Mr. McLARTY: I would certainly not support any increase in that direction, but I claim that the producer is entitled to receive more for his commodity, and thus lessen the spread between him and the consumer.

Mr. Hegney: Is there not a fixed price?

Mr. McLARTY: There is a fixed price at 1s. 3d. per gallon, but various charges reduce the return to the consumer to 10d. or even 9d. per gallon. Milk may probably be an article of food to which this particularly applies, but the position is largely the same regarding fruit and other primary products. It should be the duty of the Government to minimise the spread between the producer and the consumer. I wish to draw the attention of the House to the manner in which the law is administered, particularly with regard to fines. We have heard references to the probable introduction of a Bill to deal with starting-price betting. I do not know what the Bill will contain, but I do know that wrong is very often done in this State. In my opinion, we should fix the minimum fines to be imposed in many instances. It is not uncommon to read of a man in Perth being fined £50 for keeping a betting shop.

Mr. Sleeman: Do you agree with that?

Mr. McLARTY: Very often the fines are £20 or £30. In the Fremantle district a fine of £20 seems to be the maximum, and such a fine is seldom, if ever, inflicted. In Kalgoorlie a middle course seems to be steered, while in the country districts the fines vary. If it is wrong to have starting-price betting shops in Perth, it is equally wrong to have them in Fremantle, Kalgoorlie or elsewhere.

Mr. Marshall: Or on the racecourse.

Mr. McLARTY: Why should a fine of £50 be inflicted in Perth and a fine of £20 in Fremantle, for similar offences?

Mr. Hughes: Why launch the prosecutions at all, seeing that the racecourse owners are allowed to flout the law?

Mr. McLARTY: We can deal with that phase later on. If there are to be such prosecutions, there should be some uniformity with regard to the fines imposed.

Mr. Fox: That is not the only direction in which fines vary.

Mr. McLARTY: No, I would instance the position regarding drunken motorists. The fines imposed upon that class of offender also vary. Some magistrates regard the menace of the drunken motorist much more

seriously than others. I would have a minimum penalty fixed for this offence also if I had my way.

Mr. Marshall: It should not be in cash either.

Mr. McLARTY: I would take the offender's license away as well. I was hoping to see something in the Governor's Speech about third party risk. Insurance rates are being put up. That will mean that fewer motorists will insure. Hospitals get a great number of motor accident cases throughout the year. In many instances the injured people are unable to pay. Frequently their health has been ruined forever, and they suffer the effects of the accidents which have befallen them for the rest of their lives. Notwithstanding this they are unable to obtain one penny piece. The time has come when we should go into the matter of third party risk. No motorist should be allowed on the road to-day unless he is able to provide some insurance in regard to third party risk. It is a most serious problem and one which this House should tackle and I hope it will be tackled this session. I notice that there is a proposition that the Federal Government should bring about national insurance, but I do not know that that will do us any good as far as motor accidents are concerned.

Mr. Styants: The State Insurance Office will. Legalise the State Insurance Office.

Mr. McLARTY: The hon. member and I had better leave that argument until a little later on. I listened to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition the other evening and I thought he made a very effective speech. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the financial emergency tax and full-time work for the unemployed. I cannot help but notice the attitude members opposite adopt when they are on these benches compared with that which they take up when they are on the Treasury benches. They must often think to themselves "what a kindly lot of people we are over here." But when we on this side of the House were over there I can remember that we were trounced on every occasion. The most we received out of the financial emergency tax, in one year as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, was £220,000. Yet hon. members opposite, who were then on this side of the House, and particularly the former Minister for Employment, used to stand up and slate the Government right

and left for not providing full-time work. He went to no end of pains to explain how the provision of full-time work would grow like a snowball, the work so provided leading to the provision of work for others. I think the member for Fremantle took a very active part in the discussion in those days as well. He used to be continually at the Government about providing full-time employment. The Government to-day are receiving over £900,000 from the financial emergency tax and have not provided full-time work. It is not surprising that the relief worker is wondering whether he will ever get full-time work.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Oh yes. It is the Government policy.

Mr. McLARTY: I am tipping that before the next election they will all be back on full pay.

Mr. Withers: I think that if the Labour Party are not returned to office the relief workers will be where they were before.

Hon. C. G. Latham: All on full time.

Mr. Marshall: Pulling grass out of the footpaths.

Mr. McLARTY: I remember we were told that we had no right to use the financial emergency tax for anything else but relief of unemployment. That was the popular cry on this side of the House at that time. How much of the tax is being used to-day entirely for the relief of unemployment?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Silence.

Mr. McLARTY: The latest move on the part of the Government to force private employers to employ unionists only will not help. I am rather glad in a way that the Government have done this because it will rouse the apathetic electors in this country to a sense of their duty. Hon. members strongly objected the other night when the Leader of the Opposition said that this was Trades Hall domination. That is the impression amongst many people outside this House, but I am rather inclined to believe that it is the enthusiasm of the Minister for Employment and Industries that is responsible. If the Premier will take any advice from me—and I would not like to give him any but good advice—I would suggest that he curb the enthusiasm of this young Minister or else I think it is certain to bring about the downfall of his Government.

The Premier: You are getting quite worked up from the political party standpoint, aren't you?

Mr. McLARTY: I was never a strong party man. It has been generally recognised that my views are very democratic and I could never work up any bitterness in relation to party feelings.

Mr. Cross: But you always vote for the National Party.

Mr. McLARTY: The hon. member is the best party hack in this Chamber. He has taken the place of the former member for Subiaco. He is the greatest champion the party could have had. There have been attacks on another place, the members of which have been blamed for a great deal. I do not know, however, that they are altogether to blame. I believe the laws of this country are probably the most democratic in the world and we would not have had them if another place had not agreed to them. I think the Premier must admit that a good deal of the legislation rejected last session was rushed down to the other place very late in the session.

The Premier: We will alter that.

Mr. McLARTY: I hope the Premier will alter it. If he does, his Bills will get greater consideration.

The Premier: We don't want consideration, but support.

Hon. C. G. Latham: So do we when we introduce Bills, but we do not get it.

Mr. McLARTY: I recently spoke to the Premier about the work of the Fish and Acclimatisation Society in Western Australia. We have heard quite a lot and much has been written about the tourist trade and how we should encourage it. I want to tell the Premier—although I think he already knows—that the Fish and Acclimatisation Society are doing a great work in trying to stock our streams with fish and in the preservation of game. The members of the society have put quite a lot of money into this project and have been most enthusiastic in regard to the work being attempted. Unfortunately they have come to the end of their funds. They have an expert, a Mr. Gregory, whom they have been paying and who has gone round and examined the various streams and given expert advice. I saw a letter that Dr. Serventy wrote just before his departure for England. He was very appreciative of the work the society was doing, and said he

hoped it would continue. I want the Premier to know that I am afraid this work will be greatly retarded unless funds are made available for it in the near future.

Mr. Wilson: The Premier is receiving a deputation on the subject next week.

The Premier: Yes, the member for Murray-Wellington has sown his seed on fertile soil.

Mr. McLARTY: I am glad to hear it. The members of that society are keen to carry on this work, and I hope that in the near future the necessary money will be made available for that purpose. I have tried not to be parochial while speaking on this debate, but, before sitting down, I should like to say something to the Minister for Country Water Supplies. I think what I have to propose will be a reproductive work; it is to provide more storage for irrigation in the Harvey area. A deputation waited on the Minister's colleague some months ago and urged that this work should be put in hand. On that occasion the Minister was given all particulars, for the case was well put up to him. I hope that in the near future he will be able to tell us that provision for this increased storage of water will be put in hand. It will take some time to erect the weir for the storage, and in the meantime those wanting the water will have to do the best they can. Even the Minister's advisers admit that there is not sufficient water available to-day. There is uncertainty about the project amongst the settlers, and they cannot farm as they should do while that uncertainty continues. I hope, therefore, that the Minister will be able to make an early announcement that the additional water will be provided.

On motion by Mr. Nulsen, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.3 p.m.