

fant class. In the summer it is very hot, being 16 degrees above the temperature of the ordinary school room, while in winter it is very cold and, there being no fireplace, the children have to sit with wet feet all day. Last year the department built a manual room which is used only once a week and at most by a dozen pupils. Yet the department will not build a class room. In my view, the classroom is more necessary than the new manual room, since they had a manual room there as it was. I approached the Minister for Education on this subject, but could not get any satisfaction. I hope that when the Estimates are being prepared this year the Premier will be sufficiently liberal to agree to this work being carried out.

On motion by Mr. Lamond debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 18th August, 1926.

Address-in-reply, Eighth day PA06 323

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eighth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [4.38]: I desire to offer my congratulations to you, Sir, on your accession to the office of President, and also briefly to express regret at the absence of former colleagues and to welcome new members. At this stage it would be seemly to express sympathy with the victims of the sad accident at the Ivanhoe mine. I have been closely associated with the mining industry and have been an official on a mine where a similar regrettable

accident occurred. Such disasters cast a feeling of gloom and depression over the whole community. Judging from the brief report in the Press this morning, I gather that this accident, as have many others, occurred without warning. Try as inspectors and foremen may, it seems impossible to prevent such calamities occasionally. I congratulate Mr. Gray upon his remarks in moving the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, but he made certain statements on which I cannot see eye to eye with him. I cannot subscribe to his statement that the greatest curse of the country at present is the unsatisfactory state of affairs amongst the workers in the farming industry. Mr. Gray and those associated with him are making every effort to bring the people employed in the agricultural industry under the Arbitration Court, in order to secure an improvement in their conditions. Mr. Gray, having worked in the agricultural industry, knows the conditions well, and I fear that if what he desires is brought about, it will interfere considerably with the development of the country. His remarks are calculated to cause a growth of ill-feeling between employers and employees who have worked amicably together, and as a result of whose work the development of the State has proceeded satisfactorily.

Hon. J. R. Brown: That would not be a new departure, would it?

Hon. H. STEWART: No, a certain section of the community are always endeavouring to stir up strife. I desire to show the other side of the picture, without stirring up strife outside or even wordy strife within this Chamber. During the last 12 months two efforts have been made to bring the rural workers under the Arbitration Court, namely, through the chaffcutters' award, a State matter, and the A.W.U. shearing claim, a Federal matter. In both instances the court decided that the very thing Mr. Gray desires should not be granted. In the proceedings for the chaffcutters' award, the chaff merchants, in an unholy alliance with the men employed in the industry, sought to compel every small farmer to come under the award.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: Not the chaff merchants.

Hon. H. STEWART: There were some who did not subscribe to that but, in the court, the representatives of the masters sought to bring within the scope of the award every

agriculturist who cut chaff on his farm, even if he cut it for his own use only.

Hon. J. Cornell: They were following the day-baking example.

Hon. H. STEWART: Exactly.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: Your remarks do not apply to the chaff merchants, though.

Hon. H. STEWART: If I mentioned merchants, that was perhaps incorrect. I should have spoken of the persons responsible for the cutting of chaff, the chaff contractors. In any instances where chaff merchants were chaff contractors as well, the merchants would be included. I could elaborate on the matter, but the point I want to draw attention to is that in both cases the court upheld the attitude of the average small farmer, the general mixed farmer of the State, and did not bring him under the award.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The majority of the court refused to do that.

Hon. H. STEWART: I am glad of that interjection because it gives me an opportunity to draw attention to certain remarks uttered by the minority of the bench, a bench that I for one have no faith in. To me it is amazing to find a member of the Arbitration Court bench concluding his remarks on the award by expressing regret that the union had not got more from the court, by strongly urging them not to be satisfied with what they had got, and by assuring them that when they came before the court again they would get more. Those expressions, coming from the employees' representative on the bench—

Hon. E. H. Gray: He is an experienced man, too.

Hon. H. STEWART: It is about time some person stood up and, instead of uttering complimentary platitudes, drew attention to such unseemly conduct on the part of an occupant of the bench. I am prepared to leave it to the good sense of the community to decide whether the language I have quoted is fit and proper language to emanate from the bench. The award delivered was for three years, but I believe a revision of the award can be applied for after the expiry of 12 months, and here we have a member of the bench assuring the employees they will get more next time they apply to the court. I regret that so far I have not heard a reference from any member to an event which is to take place in the near future—the meeting in this State of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science. That meeting in point of

importance is quite on a par with the visit of the Empire Press Delegates to Western Australia. The Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science is an institution which admits anyone upon payment of a nominal fee to hear lectures.

Hon. J. Cornell: Do the association lecture on political science?

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes, and on physical science, biological science, anthropology, entomology, medical science, psychology, and any other phase of research that the hon. member interjecting can conceive of. The leaders of thought and investigation in Australia will be meeting here, and their attention is directed to applied science as well as pure science. The president of the association for the current year is Sir John Monash, who is renowned not only as a soldier, but as an engineer and as the head of the great Victorian Electricity Commission. Another member of the association who will be here is Mr. Julius, late president of the Institute of Engineers of Australia and now chairman of the Bureau of Science and Industry of the Commonwealth. He also is a man engaged in practical applied science. Probably Mr. H. W. Gepp, a metallurgical chemist engaged in applied science and now chairman of the Royal Commission on Migration and Development, may also be there. As one who from his first speech in this Chamber has stressed the necessity for the application of science to industry, I think it not unseemly to draw the attention of the House to this great congress, and to point out the opportunity of hearing the very latest on any phase of investigation in which members may be interested. I believe that the visit of these scientists will have beneficial results on the development of Western Australia, and that it will lead to an increased measure of sympathy with this State on the part of people who count upon the other side of our island continent. Just as Mr. Gray and other members have drawn attention to requirements of their constituents, so I wish briefly to refer to some needs of my district and to point out certain mistakes which have been made there, in spite of which the district continues to progress. Seven or eight years ago the town of Pingelly was furnished with what was supposed to be a fine water supply. After a comparatively short time, however, the water turned salt, which indicates a lack of preliminary investigation. Pingelly residents who care to drink water have no potable supply in the summer unless they are possessed of privately conserved

water. It is urgently necessary that this matter should be dealt with. About £10,000, if not more, was spent on that work, which is now of no practical utility. The town of Wagin was provided with a water supply at a cost of £12,000 or £13,000. That supply did not prove satisfactory. According to the preliminary estimates, with a 12-inch rainfall the dam which was excavated should have conserved 12,000,000 gallons of water. When speaking on this matter in 1920 I pointed out from the official data that the result of a 12-inch rainfall was the impounding of only 4,500,000 gallons. The scheme has never fulfilled the estimates on the strength of which the municipality of Wagin undertook to pay interest and sinking fund. The necessary payments were largely increased by an endeavour to remedy defects in a bank which forms part of the scheme. At the beginning of last summer Wagin was without a water supply, the dam being empty. The new Engineer-in-Chief inspected the work, and condemned the site of the catchment and consequently the scheme. An investigation for a new supply with a different catchment has been in progress for some time.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And the municipality is paying interest and sinking fund?

Hon. H. STEWART: A certain amount was paid by the municipality on account of interest and sinking fund, but the late Government in their last and penultimate year of office sold the water supply to the municipality at about half-price. The municipality thought it was a good bargain, and purchased it accordingly. However, the pipes were secondhand pipes which had been put in during the war. At frequent intervals they have burst during the winter months, when there was water in the dam, and the scheme has been nothing but a source of worry and expense to the municipality. There is a crying need for a decent water supply at Wagin. Anyone coming to the town last summer could hardly stay there, because it was impossible to get a bath and almost impossible to get drinking water. There would have been no supply of water for ordinary domestic requirements in Wagin but for an early fall of rain, I believe in January, thanks to which water could be obtained from a dam four miles out of the town which had been constructed by Government for the use of settlers in the early days. Even then Wagin residents who had not conserved private supplies had to pay 5s. per 100 gallons for water right through the summer. Water was trans-

ported from Collie and Narrogin, and as far as Lake Grace and Newdegate as well as to Wagin itself. These facts emphasise the necessity of providing a sound water scheme for Wagin at the earliest possible moment, both to supply the necessities of the people and to save the cost of water haulage by the Railway Department. I am pleased that as the result of investigations the Engineer-in-Chief is able to state that a rock catchment only three miles distant from the town will enable the conservation at a reasonable cost of 20,000,000 gallons, which will meet the requirements of the town for some considerable time. That estimate is based on two successive years of low rainfall. There are other illustrations that may be given of works carried out that have caused worry and anxiety in parts of my province. I may instance the Torbay-Grassmere scheme, to which I have referred at intervals ever since I have been in this House. In 1918 I investigated the files in connection with that matter and at intervals since, I have taken part in deputations in order to secure some alleviation for the settlers. The scheme was inaugurated in 1913 at an estimated cost of £10,000, the intention being to drain an area of country to benefit the settlers. In 1919, and again in the following year, when speaking on the Address-in-reply, I pointed out that the scheme had been carried out at a cost of £15,000, and that it had been constructed so as to do away with the annual grant of £120 that had been paid for some time to remove a bar. After the expenditure of the £15,000, the position was as bad, if not worse than it was before the scheme was carried out. Previously to the expenditure of the money there were 450 acres of land under crop and after the work was finished the area under crop was reduced to 70 acres. I followed up the matter for several years, but could get no redress for the settlers. The engineers responsible for the work are still there but I must admit that it is an exceedingly difficult problem. The work was begun at the instance of a Labour member for the district. I am not blaming the present Government for the existing position because it dates back prior to 1919. Since Mr. Burvill has been elected as a member of that province, I have worked with him, and also with the late Mr. Greig, in the hope of securing some redress, but unfortunately nothing has ever been accomplished. Mr. Scaddan did not secure any amelioration while he was representing Albany; at least he achieved nothing.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Yes he did; he made the harbour.

Hon. H. STEWART: I am talking about the drainage scheme; I will deal with the harbour shortly. The hon. member is very free with his interjections to-day, I have instanced the drainage scheme as a disability at that end of the South-West Province that has not been remedied.

Hon. J. Cornell: Do you blame the engineers?

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes, but we must blame several Governments as well.

Hon. J. Cornell: I think you can blame the ocean.

Hon. H. STEWART: We can blame that also. Since the purchase of the Great Southern and Albany-Denmark railways there has been no railway authorised for that part of the State until the Albany-Denmark Railway Extension Bill was passed in February, 1923. The Denmark line was originally a timber line and it was in operation when the Great Southern railway was taken over by the State. Therefore, in effect, so far as the Albany section of the State is concerned, until 1923, when the extension was authorised, no part of the country was capable of being opened up. That has been the position ever since I have been in Western Australia, some 17 years. The people there have great cause for complaint. Something has been said about the haste with which that extension was authorised in 1923. Groups have been placed down there 30 miles away from the railway. That is the position obtaining to-day. It is conceivable that if the Great Southern line had not been purchased from the company the people in that part of the State would have developed their territory in their own way; they would have constructed their own line and in all likelihood that portion of Western Australia would have been a separate State by now. Under those conditions, development there would have been much further advanced than is the case to-day. Practically nothing has been done in railway construction at that end of the Province by any Government, except the authorisation to which I have referred, in February, 1923, and excepting also the authorisation of the line from the town of Tambellup to Ongerup, which is on the border of Albany and Katanning electorates. The railways have in operation a so-called zone system by which they say that the traffic is supposed to go to its nearest port. In connection with that system the department count the mileage by

rail route to that port and if it goes by a longer route, the freight that would have to be paid by the shorter route prevails. The distance from Wagin to Albany is about 12 miles longer than that from Wagin to Bunbury.

Hon. A. Burvill: It is 21 miles.

Hon. H. STEWART: I have been in correspondence with the Chamber of Commerce at Albany on this subject and I have had figures supplied to me by the member for Albany (Mr. A. Wansbrough) who is a railway man, and who has worked that section. My information is that it only takes three goods trains to transport to Albany what five trains can carry to Bunbury, principally because of the grades, and using "F" or "Fs" locomotives. The contention is that although it is 20 miles further from Wagin to Albany, because of the grades, it is possible to convey in three trains what five trains must be employed to do on the other route. I contend that it is more economical to convey produce over the slightly longer route where there are no difficult grades. Every port should have its fair dues and we should not build up one or two ports at the expense of others. We must look to the time when our area under wheat will be five times what it is to-day, and that period is not very far distant. If we had not the foresight to distribute our traffic and throw out our lines in a way that will enable us to use all our ports, and so handle traffic economically and effectively, there will not be that development that we all wish to see, and we shall not be doing our best in the interests of the ports and the State as a whole. I know that there are many circumstances involved in saying where the traffic shall go, but if reasonable facilities for development are not afforded to any particular part of the country, that part falls behind year by year, decade after decade. People will always go where they get the quickest despatch, and I am seeking to point out some of the factors that militate against the development of that part of the country I represent. Last year only 40,000 bags of wheat were despatched to Albany from the Albany zone. Forty thousand out of 161,000 bags that were grown south of Wagin! Then from Wagin to Newdegate, there were another 150,000 bags produced, and none went down to the port of Albany. The position being as I have stated, the question should be looked into to see whether it is economically sound to pursue the policy that has been adopted. That matter is entirely in the hands of the buyers and shippers of wheat. It is not one

merely for the Railway Department, although they have some say in it in connection with the rates that are charged.

Hon. E. H. Rose: Fremantle gets much more of it than Bunbury does.

Hon. H. STEWART: This problem should be considered on its equitable basis. If the hon. member asks that it should be considered on a basis that is not equitable, or can show that what I have said is not a fact, he has some justification for finding fault. If he merely opposes my request for fair consideration for the part of the country I represent, merely because it will take some of the traffic from the part of the country he represents, and will not consider the question from the equitable and ethical point of view, I must join issue with him. Ever since I entered the Chamber in 1917 I have been present at deputations to different Governments when Albany has asked for the establishment of a harbour board. I believe that one reason why shippers do not ship more wheat from Albany is that it has not a harbour board such as Bunbury and Fremantle have. The Railway Commissioner is responsible for the wharfage charges, and he puts on an extra cost that militates against the port, the cost being a fraction higher than exists at Bunbury. The result is that shippers go where the conditions are most favourable for them. Some seven or eight years ago I was present at a deputation that asked for a harbour board at Albany and for the necessary legislation to be introduced. The present Chief Secretary extended to us his fullest sympathy. He said he would have liked to see legislation introduced to give Albany a harbour board as well as to give one to Geraldton. The people, however, can go on asking but they get no further. The people of Albany feel that if they had a harbour board, some endeavour could be made to attract trade. There used to be a brisk and considerable maritime trade, but to-day there is practically nothing. Trade was killed by the war and the Navigation Act. The table of loan expenditure in connection with harbour works shows that the total expenditure at Fremantle to date is 2¼ millions, at Bunbury £419,000, at Geraldton £74,000, and at Albany £163,000. At Fremantle £222,000 was spent on a graving dock and slip, but the money was thrown away. During the last six years £288,000 has been spent at Fremantle, £241,000 at Bunbury, only £6,000 at Geraldton, and £37,000 at Albany.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There is a natural harbour at Albany.

Hon. H. STEWART: Wheat cannot be shipped from a natural harbour without some facilities. The Government of which the hon. member was a member was asked for this harbour board, but did not give it. There has been no redress over the Torbay-Grasmere drainage scheme; only 40,000 bags of wheat were exported from the Albany port last year; and these numerous requests for a harbour board, to enable the people to handle their own affairs, have been ignored. Is it any wonder that the people have asked the Government to consider their disabilities? There is no justification, when we consider this state of affairs, for the Premier making any reference to the whining of the people of Albany.

Hon. J. Cornell: I would give a lot to see the Albany harbour facilities at Esperance.

Hon. H. STEWART: Probably, but I do not think the hon. member would like to bear the cost. The people of Esperance should be in a favourable position. The Engineer-in-Chief was sent down to investigate the matter, and to suggest facilities for the export of wheat from that place. If the Government are doing this at a new port, around which there is not the settlement or the production that is found near Albany, that is all the more reason why Albany should complain against its treatment by successive Governments. It is not fair that an old-established and settled place like Albany should be passed over, and facilities provided for a new place where there is not the same amount of development. The people of Albany are asking for a classification of the land that extends out east from Albany to Newdegate. At Forrestania, about 50 miles east of Newdegate, there is a large area of first class forest land which is now being classified.

Hon. J. Cornell: All the products from there should go to Esperance.

Hon. H. STEWART: That may be so. A line should be constructed from Albany to tap that country. Since that land was first known about five years ago, my opinion has been that the position can only be handled with a railway to pass through that country out to Forrestania. The distance as the crow flies will be a shade shorter to Albany than it would be to Fremantle, and the former much shorter than the shortest railway route to Fremantle. It would be most injudicious to attempt to tap the whole

of the wheat belt by using the main line and hauling the products to Fremantle.

Hon. J. Cornell: The line from Newdegate eastward ought to junction with Salmon Gums.

Hon. H. STEWART: The distance is too far to go right across the country. We want a line run north-east to Forrestania, one that will give quick transit to a good port, such as Albany, where facilities should be provided for the handling of the wheat. The desire of a large portion of the residents in the southern portion of the State and about Albany is to have a line to junction with the railway that runs out to Ongerup, Pingrup and Newdegate. The line to Forrestania would be about 141 miles long. There would be a belt of country in between the long distance haulages to Fremantle and Albany in the vicinity of the Great Southern areas, the traffic from which would be shared by Bunbury. For the wheat belt as a whole it would be necessary to develop Geraldton, Fremantle, Bunbury, Albany and Esperance. I am looking at the matter from a broad point of view. We want a strategic line that will give quick despatch for the products, fully utilise the rolling stock, and give a minimum amount of haulage over the longer distances as well as the best grades. A request was made for a detailed classification of the land to the northeast of Albany. No Government has yet acceded to that request. I have seen a great deal of first class land there to the north of the Stirling Ranges, more than 12 miles from a railway line. The inferior classes of land are good for grazing. If we can judge from the class of land that has been afforded railway facilities west of the Great Southern, there is ample justification for constructing the strategic line I have indicated. I regret that neither in the Speech nor in Mr. Gray's remarks was any mention made of a redistribution of seats Bill. There will be a general election in the near future; we know that from the indications we have seen. Why this "seeing more devils than vast Hell can hold" on the part of the Premier? In this fine frenzy of his he has scathingly denounced the member for Katanning. I do not speak of the latter gentleman as the leader of the Country Party, in connection with the per capita payments. When he wrote what he did about the per capita payments he was writing as Alex. Thomson, member for Katanning. I think all those who are in politics understand that the

scathing misrepresentations and denunciations of the Premier represented a beautifully simulated fury, or a winter madness. What Mr. Thomson said was entirely different from what the Premier suggested that he said, or put into his mouth. We will agree that in connection with State and Federal finance we want to be assured of our position. We should not, if it can be avoided, place it within the power of any Federal Government to give us what they think fit. As to the statement that was made in the Press by Mr. Thomson, anyone who took the trouble to read it would see it was made clear that we should endeavour to safeguard the position so that we might not be left high and dry. It is not in the best interests of Western Australia that we should depart from a position assuring repayments to the State of not less than the per capita basis of payments. In contradistinction to the fine frenzy of the Premier we have the Minister for Works coming into the question. I suppose it is also an indication that the elections are drawing nigh. We have had specimens of his roaring in the past.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Mussolini!

Hon. H. STEWART: The roaring was changed, as it was in a Midsummer Night's Dream, and became as gentle as that of any sucking dove. We have the Minister for Works, speaking at a dinner to the delegate attending the Road Board Associations Conference, saying—

The finances of the State have never looked better, but if the proposal to stop the per capita payments becomes law, Western Australia will receive a severe setback. I hope that better judgment will prevail and the existing state of affairs continue.

How mild the Minister was! Then we come to the following passage, which I was most delighted to read:—

The income tax in Western Australia is a high as is bearable. In fact, it is too high and it is time to talk of reductions, not of increases. Increased taxation would scar capital away, and have a bad effect upon the country. I hope that the proposals will not be carried.

What a change of tune! It is one that was welcome; particularly as it affects the question of decreased taxation. On the other hand, as against the almost siren-singing of the Minister for Works, we have the recollection that it is only two sessions ago that this House rejected three amendments sought by the Government in connection with land taxation. Those proposals were

ultimately carried at the conference of managers from both Houses. To-day, however, not only is there largely increased taxation imposed upon people owning land, but, relatively speaking, a most harmful method has been adopted. I refer to the differential treatment meted out under that taxation. In the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill that was submitted to the Council some sessions ago, certain allowances and deductions previously provided were disallowed. The Council decided against the Government's proposals and, in the interests of the development of the State, those deductions were perpetuated. The tax upon unimproved land was 1d., but the person who utilises his holding within the meaning of the Act was taxed to the extent of one-halfpenny in the pound. The land tax has been doubled, however, and the person who utilises his land is charged 1d. in the pound, and the person who does not utilise his holding has to pay a tax of 2d. in the pound. While the tax has been doubled, that does not take into consideration the re-valuation of holdings which has meant heavy increases. It will be understood that in many instances people did not have to pay any and tax because the exemptions and allowances wiped out the taxable amount. Many of those people now have to pay substantial taxes. Then again, instead of encouraging primary producers of all descriptions, who have small holdings fully utilised within the meaning of the Act, a provision has been made whereby there is an exemption on the first £250 of the unimproved value of the holding. If a man has held his property for less than five years, he is exempt from taxation. If a man has 1,000 acres, valued at 15s. per acre, the unimproved value would be £750, of which the first £250 would be exempt from taxation. He now has to pay income tax on that proportion of his capital represented by the value of the land which is used for the production of his income. Previously if the land tax was less than the income tax, the former was rebated. In the opinion of the Council, that was a wise provision, but in New Zealand there is an exemption of £1,500 on the unimproved value of a holding, as against our lost exemption of £250. If a man has 1,000 acres of first class land that is being utilised, and he pays income tax that amounts to more than the land tax, then the land tax is rebated and consequently he has nothing to pay under that heading. To-day, however, the position leads to a peculiar result. We

find that a man who has land that is not improved is, under existing amendments, actually offered indirectly an inducement not to improve it because, whereas his tax is merely doubled, those who have improved their holdings have had to pay at least four times the amount of their previous land tax, apart from the re-valuation, and in some instances enormously more than what it was before as many holders formerly paid nothing. If the Government knowingly introduced legislation that would have such an effect, their action would be almost unforgivable. I do not think they did it knowingly, but probably the measure was introduced without consideration being given to its effect. That, however, is the position with so much of our legislation. In this instance the defect should be remedied. I had intended to deal at some length with the question of land valuation and our method of taxation. Since 1922, when the first Closer Settlement Bill was introduced, I have looked into this problem and, when speaking on the question of land valuation in previous sessions, I have had the sympathy of the Chief Secretary. When speaking on a past occasion, I stated that the method adopted in the States regarding the valuing of land was "empiric." I have since learnt that the officers of the Taxation Department thought I was very hard and had said something unkind about them. I do not like to talk about derivations and meanings of words in this Chamber, where we are all intelligent people who understand, but in the interests of the officers of the Taxation Department, it is perhaps well that I should make an explanation. Sir Edward Wittenoom always likes to introduce a bon mot into our discussions and on one occasion he used the word "academic." The context of his remarks caused some slight misunderstanding with another hon. member. The sense in which I used the word "empiric" meant that it was the result of observation or experiment. In connection with various sciences, such as natural philosophy, mathematics, and so on, the word is used in that sense. It indicates the steps in the development of science. Observations are made and recorded, and on them people act in an empiric manner, guided by the information to hand. The collection of further data is followed by the formulation of theories or hypotheses and when further facts are established, there are evolved natural laws that become laws of the sciences.

Hon. J. Cornell: If the hon. member proceeds much further, I will require an interpreter.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Anyhow, he is giving us a lecture.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. H. STEWART: I understand, however, that officers of the Taxation Department looked up the dictionary and found that among the meanings attached to the word *empirie* was "the opinion of quacks." Perhaps that is the idea that has become established by the conventional use of the word, but I did not use it in that sense. The departmental officers have shown me the methods adopted by them, and they are following lines that have been adhered to for some time with, they claim, fairly satisfactory results. My contention, however, is that the principle is wrong. In the State Department, land is valued by the officers who are also the taxing officers. It is fundamentally wrong that the taxing authorities shall be the valuing authorities. I also object to this method because we find that the valuing authority is also the court of appeal, and thus people desirous of appealing against their valuations have merely an appeal from Caesar to Caesar. If there is to be provision for a review of values, a more equitable and satisfactory method should be adopted. In the New Zealand Valuation of Land Act that has been in operation without amendment since 1908, an exemption is provided up to a value of £1,500. The exemption applies on a sliding scale, disappearing at £3,000. Where a person's income is under £200 there is a further exemption of £2,000 in the unimproved value, if it can be shown to the Commissioner that the individual concerned is suffering because of the paucity of his income. In contradistinction to our method here, the New Zealand Act is administered by a Valuer General, who is as unassailable as is our Auditor General. A simple and equitable method of appeal is available, to which any citizen may have recourse without expense. That Act has been in operation for nearly 20 years and, so far as I can learn, has given complete satisfaction. To be sound, any taxation of land must depend on the valuation, which in turn, must be fair and equitable. In the New Zealand Act a simple court of appeal is provided, consisting of a magistrate of the district, a representative of the local authority—who is not a member of that local authority—and a representative of the Government. If the valuation fixed by the board of appeal is,

in the opinion of the owner, too high, he can call upon the Valuer General to reduce the valuation to a figure which he considers the value and to purchase the land at that lower valuation. If the Valuer General will not within 30 days purchase at that valuation, or the parties agree on a valuation, then the valuation must be lowered to that at which the owner offered to sell. *Per contra*, if the Valuer General thinks that the valuation is too low, he can call on the owner to accept a higher valuation; and if the owner refuses to do that, the Valuer General is empowered to purchase the property at the increased valuation. If he is not prepared to purchase at that increased valuation, then the lower valuation as fixed by the board of appeal must stand, unless an intermediate valuation is mutually agreed upon. With a simple method of appeal such as that, there is not much room for serious dissatisfaction. In conclusion, let me say I was delighted with Mr. Gray's recognition of the tremendous power for good possessed by this Chamber. I rejoice at his confidently expressed belief that members of this Chamber, regardless of party, would do whatever they considered best in the interests of the State. I join with Mr. Gray and others in supporting the motion for the Address-in-reply.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [5.49]: It is with some diffidence that I rise to address the House. There are two reasons for this. In the first place I suppose I am the first President that ever left the Chair and returned to the floor of the House; secondly I feel that I cannot say all I should like to say, because for a long time past I have not been used to making speeches, and so I have some hesitation about beginning this one. I wish to express my regret at the loss of those members who were not returned at the last election. Before they left I said we had a very good House indeed, representing all the political views of the community, from the best to the worst. The least of those members we have lost had six years' experience of the House, and as an old member I can say it takes a great deal of experience to make one's influence felt and to induce other members to follow him. I am particularly sorry that Mr. Moore should not have been returned; this, not on account of his personal qualifications, but because of his connection with a particular party. His absence reduces the number of that party in this House from six to five

Hon. J. R. Brown: You come over to our side, and our number will be restored.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Personally I should like to see the numerical strength of that party in this House eight, instead of five. That would carry out the view I have always entertained, namely, that the House should be fully representative of the various political views of the community. Perhaps we should have had eight Labour members here before this, but for one reason: it is that one can hardly expect candidates to be elected, when the first plank of their platform is the abolition of the House to which they are seeking election. In those circumstances they have only themselves to blame if they fail to get here as against those who say, not only that they will maintain the Council, but that if possible they will improve it. I do not blame Mr. Gray for having come back, even though he says he wishes to abolish the Council. It does not follow that because a man belonging to an organisation and failing to agree with it should voluntarily leave it. Mr. Gray has come back to point out to us the error we are committing in helping to maintain the House. Whether or not he will be successful in that, I cannot say. Probably we shall find proof of his sincerity, not so much in his remarks as in his future actions. I am afraid I cannot reconcile the sincerity of his remarks with the pleasure he exhibited on being again returned here. Let me say that if he carries out the views he expressed in moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply, when he touched upon the workers on farms and on stations, he will be making a very grave mistake. It is not that he will do any harm to the farmers and the pastoralists, but that he will put a tremendous number of people out of employment. If he thinks the same conditions can be provided on farm or station as are to be found in a Perth factory, he is sadly mistaken. If any attempt be made to impose such conditions, the farmers will carry on with their own families and we shall have more unemployed than ever. Although sorry that we should have lost those members who have gone from amongst us, I am pleased to see those who have taken their places. In those new members we have three good men; two of them I know personally, whilst the third, from all I have heard about him, is an equally good man. If those who have left us have crests and mottos, probably they will change their

mottos and adopt in lieu thereof, *sic transit gloria mundi*. Whether or not people believe in that motto I cannot say; all I can say is that I wish those ex-members well and *Requiescat in pace*.

Hon. J. R. Brown: I thought that was exclusively for the dead.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Surely it may in all good feeling be applied also to the politically dead. His Excellency's Speech seemed to me to be a detailed account of what has happened. Generally we expect that the Speech His Excellency presents to Parliament will deal with the intentions of the Government for the future. But in this latest Speech intentions are to a very large extent curtailed, whilst the happenings of the past are set out very clearly. So much is this so that the Speech might be said to be an epitome of the past rather than an anticipation of the future. If future opening Speeches by His Excellency are to follow this model, they might well be largely curtailed, for if members were to deal with every paragraph of the Speech before us, the Address-in-reply would be interminable. What we ought to be considering now is what the Government intend to do. The first thing we come to in the Speech is the financial question. Our finances have been so well dealt with by Mr. Holmes and others as to leave me little to say, except that I am glad to see the deficit as low as it is. The Government are to be congratulated on having so greatly reduced it. Whether or not one, if he were to look carefully into the figures, would be satisfied that the result has been correctly arrived at, I cannot say. However, it is a very great improvement on what we have had for many years past. Had the Government not increased wages and granted the 44-hour week and a few other concessions of that sort, we might almost have had a credit balance this year. The Government have been blamed for three things: firstly, for having given extra wages to railway and other employees; secondly, for having reduced the hours of the working week from 48 to 44, and thirdly, for having insisted upon preference to unionists. I do not blame the Government in the least; I think they have actually done the proper thing. During the election campaign these were the promises they made. They said, "If you return us to power"—they never dreamed of being returned to power—"we will give you better wages, reduce the work-

ing week to 44 hours and grant preference to unionists." Therefore they have merely carried out their promises.

Hon. J. Nicholson: In other words it was a political bribe.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: If it was political bluff, the electors certainly gave the Labour Party a majority on the strength of it. They distinctly said they were going to do those things; they were elected on the strength of that promise and I honour them for having carried it out. They have been so careful in the past to carry out promises that I am quite sure any promises they make in the future will be honoured in the same way.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I hope they do not make any promises of the same kind again. They need to consider the success of the country.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: That is a matter for the electors. The hon. member may say what he likes and other people may say what they like, but the electors put the Labour Party in power. From the other point of view, however, there is not the smallest doubt that the finances are in a very serious state, not only in Western Australia, but throughout the Commonwealth. I know a little about finance, and when I tell members that the debt of the Commonwealth is over a thousand million sterling, and that interest on it at five per cent. means fifty million sterling per annum, they will realise how serious the position is. That immense amount of interest has to be found somewhere. Last night Mr. Holmes pointed out our responsibilities, which are exceedingly heavy. The Speech indicates that the Government intend to build additional railways; no railway can be expected to pay until years after its construction, and if we continue to borrow in order to build railways, we shall be faced with very real and very serious difficulties that will require the most careful consideration. When the concessions were made to the railway employees, the Government were really breaking faith with the people in England who lend us money. Every loan we have put on the market has contained a condition that the money would be spent on reproductive public works. How can works be reproductive when the manager—the Commissioner of Railways—is harassed by having to concede conditions under which he cannot possibly make the railways pay? If he does make them pay, he will be the ruin of half the farmers and other people who have to use the railways.

While the Government carried out their promises, a question they should have considered was the expediency of their proposals. I am sure that aspect occurs to the Government, but they cannot help themselves.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They were compelled to do it.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Yes, and quite right, too. If anyone makes promises, he should carry them out. Now I come to the proposal of the Federal Government to take over the northern portion of this State. This is an important matter to which I have given much careful consideration. I am absolutely in favour of the State parting with that portion of our territory north of the 20th parallel, but not the portion north of the 26th parallel as proposed by the Federal Government. The 20th parallel passes in the region of Condon, which is about the limit of what we might term the tropical part. If we retain that portion south of Condon, we shall have all the best pastoral country, leaving the Federal Government to deal with the rest.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Giving them what we do not want.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: No, what we cannot deal with. It has often been said that we should not part with any portion of our State because the Federal Government have handled the Northern Territory of South Australia so badly. It has been said that the Commonwealth were unfit to have control of any country. That is an entirely different matter. The manner in which the Federal Government propose to deal with the northern portion of this State is quite different from what was done with the Northern Territory. South Australia handed over its Northern Territory to the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth made quite a mess of it. The proposal now is to divide that section of country north of the 26th parallel—I suggest the 20th parallel—into two territories, one to be known as North Australia and the other as Central Australia. It is proposed to have two Governments subject to the Federal Parliament, and those two Governments are to be conducted on almost the same lines as Western Australia was run from the Colonial Office in the early days. Probably members have read the Prime Minister's explanation in the Press to-day. The idea is to have in each territory a Government Resident who would have an executive council of four constituted of himself, two nominated members, and a member elected by the Legislative Council. Each

territory is to have a Legislative Council of its own, which will advise the executive council. The Legislative Council will consist of four elected members and four nominated members. The chief centre of North Australia will be Darwin and the chief centre of Central Australia will be Alice Springs. If the franchise for electing members of the Legislative Council is to be the same as that of the House of Representatives, namely adult suffrage, and if the election took place while the meat works at Darwin and Wyndham were operating, we would have four meat works employees returned for the Legislative Council of North Australia. The question arises whether it would not be wise to adopt a qualified vote, which would involve residence or a property qualification, but suppose a qualified vote in these democratic days would be impossible. On the other hand, if adult suffrage were adopted, we might have returned as members, men who had been only three months in the district and never five miles outside the town.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You want a few more vegetarians?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Men would never leave the meat works employment to enter Parliament; it is too good a job to leave.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I understand that someone left a shearing shed in order to enter the Legislative Assembly. The constitution, however, is not a matter for consideration at present. I wish to place on record the fact that I favour the Federal Government taking over that part of Western Australia north of the 20th parallel and doing what they like with it. Whether they will develop it by means of stations only or whether they will undertake banana growing, I cannot say. How they will obtain labour to develop it, I cannot say. Still, the Federal Government will be free to do as they like in the matter of the labour they employ in those new States without interfering with us. Our white Australia policy, to which we all adhere, might not suit up here. It is impossible to grow bananas and such like commodities under irrigation without labour, and labour must be obtained somewhere. Where will they get it? The policy of this State as far north as Condon would be one of white labour, but it could be no concern of ours what the Federal authorities did with the part north of Condon. My opinion is that unless they can get some European people able to work in a tropical climate and prepared to live in it from year to year, it will be impossible to

populate the centre of Australia. As long as the white Australia policy applies, the centre of Australia will never be populated. The question is whether it would be wise to adopt some other policy of our own accord rather than have a foreign policy forced upon us in some way we might not like. I do not think I need go further than express the hope that members will consider the advisableness of handing over that portion of the State, leaving us with what I consider is the better portion. The Federal Government are prepared to deal with the northern portion on the lines laid down in the Act I have before me.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Is that Act on the statute-book?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Yes, it is an Act to make further provision for the development and government of the Northern Territory, and it was assented to on the 4th June, 1926.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Before tea I was under the impression that I had finished with the question of the North-West but, stimulated evidently by an excellent dinner, I find that there are several matters which I had largely overlooked. One was what would happen to my constituents east of the line drawn through Condon which I have advocated in the event of the North-West being taken over—because they are my constituents. I am pleased to say that I think they would then be under better conditions than they are under now, because according to the Act they would be governed to some extent by men of their own choice. Some of the representatives would be nominees and some would be elected. In such circumstances those people would probably be far better looked after than they are under other conditions. It has been stated, and I think with a good deal of truth, that when the South Australian people sold their Northern Territory to the Federal Government for an excellent sum, the Federal Government proceeded to make a terrible mess of looking after the territory. I am one of those who are prepared to concur in that opinion. I have arrived at the conclusion that the decision of the Federal Government to place these two States or Colonies—I do not know what they would be called—under a certain measure of self-government will perhaps be a solution of the problem. North of the 20th parallel conditions are so different from what they are south of it that

we may well leave that part of the State in other hands, hands of more experience. Inasmuch as the Federal Government are thoroughly inexpert in the management of the Northern Territory, they are likely to prove equally inexperienced in the management of our North-West. Therefore if we can get the place divided up in such a way that the government of it will be conducted by people who understand it, I think that would be a much better arrangement. I have come to that conclusion for the reason that in the year 1883—before most members present, judging by their faces, were born—I was elected to Parliament in Perth, and the Parliament was a Legislative Council. The Legislative Council held exactly the same position towards the Colonial Office in England as the proposed new States or Colonies will hold towards the Federal Government. In 1883 the Legislative Council of Western Australia had three official members, four nominee members, and 13 elected members; but the people of Western Australia instead of having the privilege of electing members, as I understand will be the case under the Act before me, on an adult suffrage, had to choose them on a qualified vote. So far as I remember, the first time I went into Parliament, in 1883, I was elected on a qualified vote. At all events, we were in the same position relatively to the British Government and were under the Colonial Office in just the same manner as it is proposed that these two new Colonies or States shall be under the Federal Government. For instance, our Governor was appointed by the Colonial Office. He had a veto on everything we did, but everything he did was subject to the Colonial Office. The Government Residents of the proposed new States or Colonies will be in exactly the same position. They will be subject to the Federal Minister. So far as I can see, the Government Residents will have great powers delegated to them from the Governor-General. It looks to me as if the Act to which I have referred proposes a repetition of the position which obtained here in the days when Western Australia was a Crown Colony, and therefore I am hoping that the interests of my constituents north or east of the line from Condon will be better looked after than they are under the Government of Western Australia, since those people will have the opportunity of electing their Government and will therefore be governed by people who thoroughly understand the position. I do not think I need deal with the question further except to say

that as one of the members representing the North Province I am prepared to agree to the handing over of that portion of the State north of the 20th parallel on conditions which may be agreed to by our Government. It must not be forgotten, however, that the proposal of the Federal Government is as from the 26th parallel, while mine is as from the 20th. I urge that the State Government should be reasonable in their requests for compensation. They are quite entitled to reasonable compensation for what they have done in the North, and I am not sure that the offer already made is not reasonable. However, I will only say that if the Federal Government's proposals are reasonable, I as a representative of the North Province am in favour of that part of the State being handed over to be a new province north of the 20th parallel. Now I come to a most important point, in dealing with which I am perhaps anticipating the resolution from another place which is to be discussed here to-morrow. In the Governor's Speech it is stated—

At a conference convened by the Commonwealth Government, and held in Melbourne in May last, proposals were submitted to the State Premiers by the Prime Minister involving the abolition of the per capita payments to the States, and the partial evacuation by the Commonwealth of the field of direct taxation. These proposals were unanimously rejected by the Premiers. My advisers are determined to resist any proposal which will deprive the State of a share of the Customs and Excise revenue.

I think that last sentence has been inserted erroneously. It does not seem to have been carefully thought out. I am, however, in absolute accord with the resolution from another place. I am now treating the resolution as if it had been endorsed by this Chamber. Why I take an interest in the matter is that in 1897 I happened to occupy the same position as Mr. Drew occupies to-day. I was then Leader of the Legislative Council under the Forrest Government. Although I never agreed with Federation, I had at that time to put through a Bill which was entitled "The Commonwealth Bill as drafted by the Convention sitting in Adelaide in the months of March and April last to suggest Amendments to the said Bill." The measure gave authority for Western Australia to be represented at a further convention, and also authorised the members who were to be selected to sit on the convention, to state the conditions we were prepared to carry out. Referring to the question of Customs and

Excise I find the following in "Hansard" for the 19th August, 1897—

The Minister for Mines (Hon. E. H. Vittenoom), in laying on the Table a report on the draft Commonwealth Bill, said: This report will afford hon. members a great deal of valuable information. It has been compiled by an actuary, and it shows the probable loss of revenue that will accrue to Western Australia for several years. It also contains an estimate by the actuary of the probable population for the next seven or eight years. I will not move that it be printed, as hon. members will no doubt like to have it here to refer to it.

At the present moment I am sorry I did not move that the paper be printed. However, on the following page Mr. Crowder is reported as asking the Minister for Mines—

What will be the probable loss to Western Australia for the first five years, provided she joins with the other colonies in Federation?

The reply was—

Years.	Total Loss. £	Loss per head. £ s. d.
1897-8	13,920	0 1 8
1898-9	386,865	1 19 4
1899-1900	411,847	1 18 0, 4/5ths
1900-1901	433,975	1 16 9, 3/5ths
1901-1902	452,560	1 15 6, 2/5ths

I have quoted the question and answer to show that members of that day took a great deal of interest in the amount of the probable losses. I had to move the Bill which have mentioned, and amongst other things said—

We then come to chapter four dealing with "Finance and Trade." Clause 84 provides that "The Parliament shall have the sole power and authority subject to the provisions of this Constitution, to impose Customs duties, to impose duties of Excise, and to grant bounties upon the production or export of goods. But this exclusive power shall not come into force until uniform duties of Customs have been imposed by the Parliament."

It will be remembered that two years after the Federation began, uniform duties were imposed. The same section further provided—

Upon the imposition of uniform duties of Customs, all laws of the several States imposing duties of customs, or duties of excise, and all such laws offering bounties upon the production or export of goods, shall cease to have effect.

In my speech I went on to say—

All the moneys collected from all sources by each State will be placed to the credit of that particular State, and the cost of collecting them will be charged against it, and any balance will be left to the credit of that

particular State. But before that balance is returned a proportionate amount will be subtracted for the Government of the Commonwealth, that is a proportionate amount according to the number of the people. For instance, suppose that the cost of working a Commonwealth amounted to one million sterling, the population of Western Australia being about 122nd part of the whole, £46,000 would have to be deducted from any balance towards the working of the Commonwealth. Any balance remaining would be handed back to that particular State. This is to be done before the uniform duties are imposed.

In a statement made by Sir Edmund Barton to the New South Wales Parliament, he said—

The most important and most complex question attending Federation is that which is involved in the question of the distribution amongst the States of the Federal surplus arising under the uniform tariff law.

I am quoting these speeches to show that it was considered at that time that we should have a claim on the Customs and Excise. The nature of the claim was not then disclosed, but afterwards, what became known as the Braddon blot was discussed. It provided that for 10 years the States should have three-fourths of the Customs revenue returned to them, and the other fourth should go to the Commonwealth. Instead of being a blot, I consider it was a good amendment. Then, after the expiration of the 10 years, some other method was to be provided. I cannot remember the circumstances, but a compromise was arrived at by the State giving up its claim to the Customs revenue and accepting the per capita payment of 25s. from Consolidated Revenue. That is the position to-day.

Hon. V. Hamersley: It was a Labour Government that did it.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Whichever Government gave it up must have done so on one condition. If it was a Labour Government, I give them credit for having displayed foresight. They naturally expected that Western Australia was going to be a splendid producing country, that it was going to produce everything it wanted, and that there would be no need for Customs duties. But they did not know that an Arbitration Court would be constituted in later years, a court that has imposed such conditions and awards that have made it practically impossible to produce our own requirements. Consequently, we need to-day the revenue that is collected through the Customs and Excise. Had the originators of the

proposals the foresight to see what has since taken place, they would certainly have made some provision in the Constitution for the protection of a State like ours, and possibly we would have continued to draw the three-fourths of the revenue derived from Customs and Excise. We absolutely forfeited our right to collect Customs revenue when we entered into the arrangement to accept the 25s. per capita payment. Therefore, all this talk about our moral and legal rights is nonsense.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The 25s. was provided for under the Surplus Revenue Act, 1910.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I only wish to know what were the conditions that induced our Parliament in those days to accept the substitution of the 25s. for the payment of three-fourths of the Customs and Excise revenue. It is no good our arguing now that we have a moral or legal right to that Customs revenue.

Hon. V. Hamersley: I think we have.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Then the hon. member and I do not agree. We have a substituted right to revenue from somewhere; we care not whence it comes. We must therefore stick to that, and it is that that I propose to support. Do not let us get rid of that now.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The 25s. was to be paid only until Parliament otherwise provided.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: To-day I listened attentively to the remarks made by Dr. Earle Page, who told us that we had no power to prevent the Commonwealth Government, if it wanted to do so, taking away that 25s. per capita payment. My opinion is that if the Commonwealth Government did anything like that, they would incur the resentment of the whole of Australia, because they would be wiping out what was in my opinion an absolute pledge. We should never give away one fraction of the 25s. because, as Mr. Hamersley seems to think, we have a moral or legal right to a share of the Customs duties. I say that the 25s. is a substitution for the payments that we formerly received from the Customs, and it carries the same right, although it is not the same thing. Dr. Page camouflaged the whole business by drawing attention to the unfair distribution of the 25s. Of course, we all know that. He went on to point out the absurdity of a place like Sydney, with a population of over a million people, as well as a State like Victoria,

which is nearly all developed, drawing that per capita payment, and Western Australia with its sparse population and undeveloped territory and population of only 370,000 people, receiving the same amount. That was the best thing he said in the course of his speech.

Hon. J. Ewing: He was very cunning, I should say.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: If I had anything to do with the Government, I should simply say, "We agree with your views entirely, and we will submit to an amendment of the distribution, but it must be on the basis of the recognition of the 25s." We should not take any offer that does away with our claim on the Consolidated Revenue of the Commonwealth, because that was part and parcel of our birth-right. If we did away with that, the State would be practically done for. They can do as they like.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Unless something else of a more solid character is put in its place.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Whatever the basis is, we must see that the 25s. is part of it. Once we relinquish our claim upon that we are done for. We can have no further claim under the Constitution to any of the funds of the Commonwealth. Reference has been made to secession. That is all nonsense. If we seceded and took over so many miles of railways east of Kalgoorlie, how much would we have to pay for it? If we had our own Customs duties for 25 years what would happen? We are free now as between the States, and cannot compete with the other States. I put this down to Arbitration awards. If we seceded and put on our own duties to stop products coming from the other States, what would it cost us to live, even if we produce much more of our requirements? Even if we put on duties, probably because the other States are so much better settled than we are they could land their stuff here cheaper than we could produce it. I always opposed Federation, but it is now impossible to secede. I take exception to the remarks in the Speech to the effect that public confidence in the future progress of the State and its industries has never been more marked. It has never been less marked. No one dares to invest any money in industries on account of labour troubles and industrial awards. While the Arbitration Court gives awards such as it does no one will put money into

anything. I think group settlement is a good thing, but at least 50 per cent. of the money will have to be written off. I do not know who will stand the loss.

Hon. J. Nicholson: We shall all be the losers.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: It is, however, a good thing from a national point of view to get these people here. It was a mistake to give to group settlers votes for members of Parliament while in receipt of sustenance. The tendency of the system is for one political party or another to endeavour to get their votes. The Minister in charge allows them about £21 a month on contract. He could, if he wished, say that if the group settlers voted for his party, the amount would be increased. I do not say that the group settler is not worth the money, but he may use his position in order to get a greater amount of sustenance.

The Honorary Minister: There would be a lot of farmers in the country disfranchised.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: The Speech refers to the first section of the Agricultural College being completed, and to experimental farms. In my opinion people who are put on these farms should be young fellows, who have come out from England for experience.

Hon. H. Stewart: Would that be a good place for them?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I know of no better.

Hon. H. Stewart: They would do better on a working farm.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I have had boys on farms. It is not a good place to which to send them. Nearly every farmer has a wife and family, who have to do all the work. When a boy goes there he wants to be fed and clothed as if he were in a factory. The wife does the cooking and the daughters manage the fowls, and yet the boys expect their bedrooms to be done out and their clothes washed. This may be in detail, but it is an important one. For this reason farmers will not take boys. The wife and daughters already have as much as they can do. It is very difficult to give a boy the accommodation he expects. The washing alone is a difficult problem.

Hon. H. Stewart: But for that disability they would get more practical knowledge on a working farm.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: The farmers will not take the boys.

Hon. H. Stewart: The position is different from what it was 40 years ago.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Yes. The Government ought to start a farm of 10,000 acres, and place it in the hands of two or three people who understand that class of work. A man came to me the other day with £10,000 to invest in farming property. He asked me where he could go for experience. I could not tell him at the time, but eventually my son took him to his station in the Murchison. Another man with £2,000 came to me. Great trouble was experienced in placing him where he could gain the requisite knowledge. I said as far back as 1891 that we ought to start a 10,000 acre farm, place it in the hands of a practical man under a committee of management, and work it entirely with new-comers. The young fellows who arrive here could then go to that farm, and all the work connected with it could be done by them under supervision. Arbitration awards have ruined the gold-mining industry. They have provided for wages and conditions that the industry cannot stand. There are three obstacles to the progress of the industry. The first is the heavy Federal duties imposed on everything used in mining. The second is the high freights charged by the Railway Department, due to the 44-hour system, increases in wages and preference to unionists. The third is the high rates of wages that are paid under awards of the courts. I do not say that the miners are getting more than they are worth. It is a question as to what the industry can pay. It is no use making awards to cover an industry if the industry cannot work under them. In one case a gold bonus was asked for, but the Arbitration Court made an award for an increase in wages. If the awards were reasonable it would be possible to keep the industry going. The miners need not engage in that occupation if they did not like to do so. Mr. Justice Higgins argued that if a man could not get a whole loaf, he should not have any bread. In effect he said that if an industry could not pay the best wages it ought to cease operations. I say if a man cannot get a whole loaf he should get half a loaf. The court should award wages that the industry can afford to pay. The worker could then say whether he would accept them or reject them. It is very difficult to get payable ore, although there are hundreds of thousands of ounces of gold still on the fields. If wages, general

expenses, duties, and railway freights were all reduced to some extent the industry would go ahead again. If a gold bonus were granted, the union leaders would immediately apply to the Arbitration Court for a better award. They would get an award and the gold bonus would all disappear in wages. It would not result in any stimulus to gold production. If I thought it would be devoted to the development of the mining industry, I would vote for the gold bonus in a minute. Next I come to the question of railway construction. We find that our railways are proving unprofitable and are showing losses. There are proposals for new railways and we know that lines do not pay during the early years of their operations. That simply means that if these lines are to be constructed, the losses will continue to mount up still further. In my time the railways were looked upon to provide a certain amount of revenue for the purposes of government. To-day we find the reverse. It may seem a little inconsistent, but I believe there is a railway that should be constructed immediately. I refer to one from Midland Junction to Fremantle.

Hon. G. W. Miles: On the south side of the river?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I do not know that it could be built in any other way. Of course, it would have to be constructed on the south side of the river. Hon. members may be aware that some time ago I bought the house adjacent to the Guildford railway bridge. That house formerly belonged to Mr. J. T. Short, one-time Commissioner of Railways. I have sat on many occasions on the balcony and watched the many trains that go over the bridge daily conveying the whole of the traffic and produce of Western Australia through to the city.

Hon. A. Burvill: Goods are brought up from Bunbury and elsewhere via that bridge.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Not over that bridge?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: At any rate that helps my argument. I have often wondered what would happen if that bridge were swept away. At one time I took the trouble to write a letter to the newspapers pointing out that danger. A day or two later I saw the Commissioner of Railways and asked him if he had seen the letter. He replied in the affirmative and I asked him what he thought of it. The Commissioner replied that he had no money for the construction of another bridge. My idea is to build a branch line to Fremantle

or if that be not possible, to construct it as far as Burswood, thus doing away with the bridges. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, the Fremantle bridge went instead of the Guildford bridge. Under existing conditions goods can be taken to North Fremantle and the ships can be moored at the north wharf. It would have been indeed terrible had the Guildford bridge gone, because that would have meant that nothing could have got through to the port and the charges that would be made for demurrage because of the ships being held up in the harbour, would have been enormous. I have raised a matter that should be reviewed by the Government and I asked the Minister to give it consideration. In my opinion the line from Midland Junction to Fremantle should be constructed at once. I would advocate expenditure in another direction. Perhaps I should not do it in the face of a deficit of £99,000, although there should have been a surplus of £200,000 or £300,000. The additional expenditure I refer to would be in providing a building to house our various public departments. When I look round and see Government departments distributed in different parts of the city and consider the enormous amount that must be paid in rents it brings to my mind the fact that at one time I endeavoured to have erected a building to house all the departments. In Sir John Forrest's time when I was a Minister, we had an opportunity to buy the whole of the Barrack-street block from Hay street to St. George's terrace for £35,000. Mr. Richardson, Mr. Sept. Burt and I urged Sir John Forrest to agree to the purchase but he would not do so. Later it was sold in separate blocks. Subsequently I bought the block where the University stands to-day opposite Government House. The purpose was to erect a building where we could house our Government offices. It was the closest suitable site to the centre of the city and I considered that if a building comprising three or four stories had been built, it would have proved advantageous. There are three frontages to the block and it is indeed a fine site. I guarantee that if the Government were to undertake some such proposition now, the saving in the rents for the offices distributed throughout the city would easily pay interest on the capital expended. On the opening day of this session I gave notice of a couple of questions. The first related to the police engaged upon point duty. I asked whether it would not be wiser to substitute returned

soldiers who were lame. It seemed to me such a waste to have eight or ten men of splendid physique engaged upon such work, standing at street corners and waving their hands like scarecrows or automatons. I do not desire to ridicule the policemen, because I hold them in the highest respect. Not long ago a lady returned to her home and noticed a light she did not expect to see in one of the rooms. She thought burglars might be at work and rang up the police station asking them to send a constable. The reply she got was that no policeman was available and therefore no one could be sent. At Fremantle recently a policeman tried to arrest an individual and eight or ten bystanders tackled him. He was nearly killed, although he fought the offenders for upwards of an hour. Then some kindly disposed person rang up the police station and reported the attack on the constable. He was told that no policeman was available to go to the assistance of the constable. It was in the face of such instances as these that I conceived it unnecessary to keep ten highly trained constables on point duty when the public require protection from the lawless elements among the community. It is not right to keep constables at such duty in the circumstances and I believe their duties could be carried on by lame returned soldiers. I was ridiculed by many people because of that question, but surely men of this calibre could be reserved for other duties and a lame corporal or a sergeant, who was in charge of large numbers of men during the war, could effectively carry out point duty! It is a mistake to keep the constables on point duty.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Perhaps they are not good unionists.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Perhaps they are.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Never having been a unionist, I cannot say. The next question I asked also resulted in much ridicule. I asked whether the Commissioner of Railways proposed to allow women to drive engines. I had an object in view. We see thousands of men and women driving motor cars around the city. It occurred to me, therefore, that I would compare the position with engine drivers. If hon. members will bear with me for a moment I will demonstrate to them the difference. A man drives a train that runs on two rails and he has the assistance of a fireman who knows theoretic-

cally as much as he does about the engine. If anything should go wrong, the fireman can probably attend to the defect. The engine cannot hit anything and the engine driver cannot drive beyond a certain pace because he has to keep to his time-table.

Hon. J. Nicholson: There may be a cow on the line as there was in Stephenson's time.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: At any rate we never hear of accidents on the railway lines. Yet what have these engine-drivers to do? They have to go through a long course of training and have to secure licenses. They have to pass examinations and so on. On the other hand, what do we find in the city? There are 13,000 people holding licenses to drive motor cars anywhere and anyhow. Is it suggested that there are 13,000 fit and proper people to drive motor cars through the crowded streets of the city, where there are all sorts of obstacles confronting them? What guarantee have we that those motorists are sober enough or capable enough to drive the cars? Yet we find women and young girls driving them! Hon. members will see the difference when it comes to driving a railway engine.

Hon. A. Burvill: If there were women engine drivers, they would have the firemen to assist.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: We might even get firewomen! Here we have these thousands of people permitted to drive motor cars through our crowded cities, and goodness knows what examination they have to submit themselves to. It is useless telling me that we have 13,000 people who are fit to drive motor cars through our congested streets. My object in asking the question was to draw attention to present day conditions. Finally, I wish to draw attention to the concluding paragraph in His Excellency's Speech. I do not know who allowed His Excellency to make the statement, but this is what he said—

I now declare this session of Parliament open, and trust that divine Providence may bless your labours in the interests of the State.

The Governor has no power to declare a session of Parliament opened. The session is declared open by means of a proclamation that is issued, I suppose, by the Executive Council. We find from the minutes that the position is outlined as follows:—

The Council met pursuant to the Proclamation of His Excellency the Governor dated

14th July, 1926, which was read by the Clerk of the Council, as follows:—

PROCLAMATION

WESTERN AUSTRALIA, } By His Excellency Colonel Sir
TO WIT. } William Robert Campion, Knight
W. R. CAMPION, } Commander of the Most Dis-
Governor. } tinguished Order of St. Michael
[L.S.] } and St. George, D.S.O., Governor
in and over the State of Western
Australia and its Dependencies
in the Commonwealth of Aus-
tralia.

WHEREAS under the provisions of "The Constitution Act, 1889," it is made lawful for the Governor of Western Australia to fix the time and place for the holding of the first and every other session of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly: Now therefore I, the said Governor, in exercise of the said power so vested in me, and of all other powers enabling me in this behalf, do by this my Proclamation announce and proclaim that the Third Session of the Twelfth Parliament of Western Australia shall be holden for the despatch of business on Thursday, the 29th day of July, 1926, at the hour of 3 o'clock in the afternoon, at the House of Parliament in the City of Perth; and Members of the Legislative Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly are hereby required to give their attendance at the said time and place accordingly.

Given under my hand and the Public Seal of the said State, at Perth, this 14th day of July, 1926.

By His Excellency's Command,

P. COLLIER,
Premier.

GOD SAVE THE KING!!!

Parliament was opened by means of that proclamation. I say it without disrespect to His Excellency, but he had no right to say that he declared the Parliamentary session open. I do not know who put into his mouth the words of which I complain. I have been in the House for a great many years and certainly this is an innovation. On the 26th July, 1923, in opening the session the Governor said: "I now leave you to your labours trusting that by the aid of divine Providence" and so on. He says nothing about declaring the session open there. I say the Proclamation opens Parliament, and that it would not matter if the Governor did not come along till the next day. His mission here is to tell us the intentions of the Government for the ensuing session. He does not come here to open Parliament. Parliament is opened by the Proclamation. Therefore it was quite wrong to prevent us the other day from swearing in our new members before Parliament actually sat. I thank you all for the kind hearing you have given me, and I hope our de-

liberations this year will be characterised by the same success as has marked them in the past. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.32 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 18th August, 1926.

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

QUESTION—POLICE, ASSAULT CASES.

Mr. MILLINGTON asked the Minister for Justice: 1, Has his attention been called to the recent assault on a little girl at West Leederville? 2, In view of the prevalence of such offences will he instruct the police to show greater vigilance for the prevention and detection of such offences, and to proceed against offenders of this kind, who are caught, to the utmost limit the law allows?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, Yes. 2, Every endeavour is made to prevent such offences and the utmost vigilance possible is exercised, but extreme difficulty is experienced in securing sufficient evidence to justify the arrest of offenders, owing to the children offended against being of tender age and unable to give a description of or identify the criminal. Additional patrol will be provided. Wherever sufficient evidence is available the police prosecute with the utmost rigour of the law.