

amount. We are aware that every time we purchase a motor vehicle we are sending money to America, and that means a distinct loss in hard cash to Australia. The same authority writing on this subject says—

In Australia every pound that we have sent to America in payment for motor trucks, tractors, parts or fuel, represents a pound less that should have been distributed either amongst our farmers or amongst those secondary industries which have been forced out of existence through the displacement of the horse by American methods of mechanical traction, that is to say, we have in effect reduced our gross income by the amount we have sent to America.

Those remarks are perfectly true and should be carefully considered by anyone who has any form of traction at all. It would be of great assistance to the Minister if he found that there was a distinct demand set up for horse traction. Just one other subject before I conclude my remarks. I wish to express pleasure that the Minister has given notice of his intention to introduce a Bill to amend Section 55 of the State Trading Concerns Act. I am satisfied that if the Bill is passed greater encouragement will be given to the individual who desires to develop along some line of industry on his own, free from competition by a body that does not pay rates or taxes, a body that uses methods of trading quite distinct from those adopted in ordinary commerce. I shall defer any further remarks I may have to make on this subject until the Bill is before us. At the same time it should be remembered that we have two lines on the statute-book which could be put into operation next week without any further appeal to Parliament. Those two lines refer to fish and meat shops. I am satisfied that the previous Government were disposed to get rid of the State trading concerns. They did actually get rid of one—the State butter factory. The proviso to Section 55 of the Act did not stop them in that action. Before closing I wish to add that the electors who sent me here would expect me to watch closely their particular interests in the different parts of the province, but I also realise that it would be quite wrong on my part to put up for consideration any project that might harass the Government in any way. We are all aware that works such as the rebuilding of the causeway and the river reclamation must stand aside for awhile. Still we must not forget that the causeway is an artery that leads out of the city, that

its present condition is dangerous, and that it will become worse with the succeeding years. At the present time I am prepared to tell any of my electors who urge that this work should be taken in hand, that it must stand over until money becomes available and conditions are easier. When that time comes around I shall not remain silent if less important jobs are submitted for consideration.

Hon. H. Stewart: It will be a reproductive work.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Quite so. It must be admitted also that from a health as well as an aesthetic point of view the work of the reclamation of the river cannot long be delayed. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, and thank hon. members for the attentive hearing they have given me.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Gray, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.23 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 3rd September, 1930.

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

QUESTION—UNEMPLOYMENT SUSTENANCE.

Mr. RAPHAEL asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Under what conditions are the men on the Greenmount deviation engaged? What amount of sustenance does the 14s. per week man receive while awaiting re-engagement? 2, What amount of sustenance does the 21s. per week man receive

while awaiting re-engagement? 3, What amount of sustenance does the 28s. per week man receive while awaiting re-engagement? 4, What amount of sustenance does the 35s. per week man receive while awaiting re-engagement? 5, What amount of sustenance does the 42s. per week man receive while awaiting re-engagement? 6, What amount of sustenance does the 49s. per week man receive while awaiting re-engagement? 7, What is the period of the engagements? 8, What is the period lost between engagements? 9, Do the 35s., 42s., and 49s. per week men work week about; if so, are these men not working for less than their sustenance would be, if they were not employed at all? 10, Is it his intention to increase the rations of married unemployed to the same ratio as the Blackboy single men? 11, Is it the intention of the Government to grant sustenance to girls and boys, when dependent on their parents, when such parents are dependent upon sustenance for their daily bread? 12, Is it the intention of the Government to subsidise with sustenance those members of the State Saw Mills who are working one week in three?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: As life is short, the replies are attached hereto. 1, The work is rationed according to family obligations and the period of work is five days per week at award rates. 2, 14s. sustenance each alternate week plus 14s. in the first week of work. Average weekly earnings £1 13s. 10d. 3, 21s. sustenance each alternate week, plus 21s. sustenance in the first week of work. Average weekly earnings £1 17s. 6d. 4, Nil, plus 28s. sustenance in the first week of work. Average weekly earnings £2 5s. 5, 35s. sustenance, plus 35s. sustenance first week of work. Average weekly earnings £3 3s. 8d. 6, 42s. sustenance, plus 42s. sustenance first week of work. Average weekly earnings £3 8s. 7, 49s. sustenance, plus 49s. sustenance first week of work. Average weekly earnings £3 13s. 8, 14s. sustenance men—one week on and two weeks off. 21s. sustenance men—one week on and two weeks off. 28s. sustenance men—one week on and one week off. 35s. sustenance men—one week on and one week off. 42s. sustenance men—one week on and one week off. 9,

Answered by No. 8. 10, Answered by No. 2 to No. 7. 11, Single men at Blackboy do not receive rations. 12, Consideration is being given to this matter. 13, Not aware that such conditions exist.

QUESTION—BILLS OF SALE ACT.

Mr. PIESSE asked the Attorney General: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce this session a Bill to amend the Bills of Sale Act more especially in regard to the unfair incidence of repossession of hire purchase goods?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: The matter is under consideration.

QUESTION—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

Mr. PIESSE asked the Attorney General: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce this session a Bill to amend the "Workers' Compensation Act," more especially in regard to the liabilities and crushing burdens upon industry?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: This matter is under consideration.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence granted for two weeks to the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Corboy) on the ground of urgent private business.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Sixth Day—Amendment defeated.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the amendment moved by the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally)—

To add to the Address the following words: "But regret the action of the Government in attacking the established industrial standards of its employees especially in the matter of the hours of labour and the payment of district allowances."

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam—on amendment) [4.36]: The member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) and I are very old friends. Years ago I listened to his electioneering efforts at a time when we were opponents and he was

contesting the Northam seat against me. The hon. gentleman, I am sure, has not lost any of the eloquence he displayed to the electors on the occasion to which I refer. At any rate, he is a good sport. On each occasion after his defeat he said that he was perfectly satisfied. I hope he will be equally well satisfied when this amendment has been disposed of. I do not propose to take up the time of the House for more than a few minutes. Actually only two points were touched upon by the mover of the amendment, the question of the application of the court, and interest as this affects the other question. I wish to make it clear that the Government have a right to approach the court and ask it to deal with two points, namely, the hours of employment, and district allowances. We have not asked the court to deal with wages. These matters were discussed at considerable length by the hon. member. One would imagine from his speech that we were attacking wages as well as hours and district allowances. The court will, of course, take no notice of what is said in this Chamber. The hon. member bases his attack on the Government if it can be called an attack, upon what he terms the standard of living. It is surely understood by all that the standard of living is based upon the amount we earn, plus the amount we can borrow from outside the State. These are the moneys upon which we live, and upon which we provide for the standard of living. I should like to see the standard of living better than it is. For many years in this State we have borrowed considerable sums of money. They might be called very large sums of money. These have been used to supplement the amount we have earned. We can no longer borrow on the same scale, and for some time it will be impossible to borrow on the same scale as heretofore. As members know, the State will borrow this year £1,750,000. This is not more than one-third of what we borrowed in 1927. Over a long period, in order to develop the country, we have borrowed large sums of money. We cannot now borrow to anything like the extent we did. When money is raised in Australia perhaps not very much is taken from this State, but each loan represents an outgoing from Western Australia of approximately half a million. When we do get a loan, therefore, it means that we do not get the full amount of it. The full amount is not available to us, even of the £1,750,000, because of the contributions

made by our own people. The hon. member referred to the cost, including interest, as an important factor, which it undoubtedly is. I would point out that borrowed money is one thing and the interest we have agreed to pay quite another. It would be a happy state of affairs if we could borrow money without interest. It is the payment of the interest bill on the accumulated total, except where the interest is earned by the investment, that is causing a good deal of the trouble. I do not know if the hon. member noticed the other day that we in Australia were able to borrow £5,000,000 in London at a little more than 3 1/3rd per cent.

Hon. P. Collier: Was that at par?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: It did not say so in the paper.

The PREMIER: Treasury bills are always at par.

Mr. Willcock: For how long was the loan?

The PREMIER: For six months.

Mr. Willcock: That is 6½ per cent.

The PREMIER: The interest is at 3 1/3rd.

Mr. Willcock: The bills were floated at a discount of 96¾.

The PREMIER: We were advised that that is what the interest worked out at. Treasury bills in London are always regulated by our overdraft.

Mr. Willcock: I thought they charged £3 6s. 8d. discount.

The PREMIER: I am advised that the interest is about 3 1/3rd per cent. The bank rate on overdrafts even now is only 4 per cent.

Hon. P. Collier: Three and a half per cent.

The PREMIER: It was three, but went up to four. Short-term loans in London are at a different rate from money borrowed over long periods. Compared with Australian conditions it is an extraordinarily low rate for money got under any circumstances.

Hon. P. Collier: Especially at a time when we cannot get long-dated loans.

The PREMIER: Yes. It will tide us over for the time being. I hope the member for East Perth will realise that it is impossible to borrow money in these times at as low a rate as in former years.

Mr. Munsie: At what rates were the bonds issued that this loan is to redeem?

The PREMIER: This renews Treasury bills that had a currency of six months.

Mr. Munsie: At what rate?

The PREMIER: I think at a little more than this. The money was raised when the Leader of the Opposition was in office. I think it was just about the same rate.

Hon. P. Collier: I think it was more than this. They were issued about February.

The PREMIER: It is not very much more. The member for East Perth got very close to repudiation of our interest bills. I would point out to him that in the Savings Banks of Australia there are on deposit funds to the amount of £230,000,000. In our own Savings Bank a little over £8,000,000 is on deposit.

Mr. Willcock: You could make an arrangement with them to pay half per cent. or one per cent. less.

The PREMIER: That would be repudiation, whatever you did.

Mr. Willcock; No, it would not be repudiation.

The PREMIER: There is the position regarding the State Savings Bank.

Mr. Kenneally: Presumably it is always a matter of repudiation, except when it is an attack on wages.

The PREMIER: It is not a question relating to our savings bank, but of the other savings banks of Australia as well. It would not be possible for us to reduce our rate of interest unless some arrangement were made. There is over £230,000,000 involved.

Mr. Willcock: If the Treasurer of the Commonwealth and of the other States agreed to reduce the savings bank rate of interest, could it not be done? Could not one per cent. be taken off that interest?

The PREMIER: If that were done, it would be very satisfactory. If all the interest rates were lowered, it would be all right, but we could not do that ourselves for fear of losing the money deposited with our bank.

Mr. Willcock: You could come to an agreement with them, and if a reduction of one per cent. were agreed upon, it would mean a saving of £2,300,000.

The PREMIER: That would be a considerable saving indeed. That is not what the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) referred to; I doubt if he had it in mind at all. The Leader of the Opposition knows that we are forced to follow the Commonwealth rate of interest or else lose our money.

Hon. P. Collier: There has never been any co-operation between the Federal and State Governments regarding savings bank interest. There should have been co-operation, and because of the lack of it we have been forced to increase our rate following upon action taken by the Commonwealth.

The PREMIER: You were forced to follow them up.

Hon. P. Collier: That is so.

The PREMIER: There has been no co-operation at all. In addition, we have had to raise our interest on fixed deposits.

Hon. P. Collier: This is a matter on which all the States should reach an agreement. They should decide not to increase rates, unless an agreement is arrived at.

The PREMIER: The question of overlapping is being inquired into. I agree with the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) that if we could reduce the rate of interest to the extent he suggested, we would save an enormous sum of money on the total amount I have referred to. I would like the member for East Perth to remember that that is not all. We have loaned to our people £20,000,000, on which we charge an interest rate up to seven per cent. It would be splendid for them if they could get out of paying their interest in the way the hon. member suggests we could avoid paying interest on the money we have borrowed. It surely must be patent to everyone that the sooner we can borrow overseas for developmental purposes, the better it will be for this State. Australia itself has loaned all the money that can possibly be spared for Governmental borrowings. Possibly the transactions have been overdone in that direction, with the result that the interest charged against industry is enormously high. There will be no change from that position until our exports exceed our imports considerably. I agree with those who say that is part of the cost of production in industry, but I do not agree with any suggestion that we should repudiate our responsibility to meet our obligations.

Mr. Kenneally: Who has suggested repudiation?

The PREMIER: The hon. member got very close to it. However, that is how the position applies to the Government—3½ per cent. on short-dated loans in London; 4 per cent. minimum rate paid by the savings bank and 7 per cent. on money loaned

to our own borrowers. When we talk lightly about avoiding our interest obligations, we are likely to do a tremendous amount of harm and we should avoid doing that. If any good could arise out of such a suggestion, it would be a different thing.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We do not desire to avoid our responsibilities, but at the same time we do not want to see these attacks on wage standards.

The PREMIER: Two points have been raised in that regard.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Do not misrepresent them.

The PREMIER: There are two points regarding the cost of production. Surely the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson), who has been a Minister of the Crown, would not suggest that we should go to the bondholders and tell them we intend to pay them half per cent. less interest.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No, but you could negotiate with them.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows full well that there are thousands of bondholders all over the country! It would be utterly impossible for any Treasurer to negotiate with them at all. What would be the result of any suggestion made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Scullin), when he reaches England, that the interest paid on money Australia has borrowed is too high? The average rate is not particularly high. There are some old loans that were floated years ago in respect of which the interest rate is very low. As a matter of fact, our interest was a little over four per cent. until just lately. Ours was a half per cent. better than South Australia's rate, and much lower than the rates the other States had to pay. Before making suggestions of this description, will hon. members first think if what they propose is at all possible, and ask themselves what good their contentions would represent to the workers? How will it help the workers if we shut out money that may be borrowed in the Old Country? Obviously there is no advantage to be gained for borrowing in Western Australia for Governmental works, because there is no money available for that purpose. On the other hand, it is surely indisputable that, in an undeveloped country such as ours, it will be good for the worker when we can borrow at a low rate overseas. That is all I wish to say on that point. We are not approach-

ing the court with the idea of reducing standards. As a matter of fact, the standards of living will reduce themselves, and it must be obvious that unless we earn more than we are doing to-day, that will be the inevitable result. It is not a man's pay that represents his standard of living, but the amount he is able to earn.

Mr. McCallum: That is a queer argument.

The PREMIER: The sooner we can supplement our present production, the better it will be all round.

Mr. McCallum: You say that what a man earns, and not what he gets, constitutes the standard.

The PREMIER: I dare say it is queer to the hon. member, but it is nevertheless true.

Mr. McCallum: That argument would not stand investigation for two minutes.

The PREMIER: If the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) delves a little further into the book of economics he read recently, he will find that that is the position. It is the work a man does and what he earns that go to create his standard of living. It is impossible for the standard of living to be maintained if the worker has to pay excessive prices for the commodities he needs.

Mr. McCallum: No matter how much you can get out of it!

The PREMIER: I do not get anything.

Mr. McCallum: No matter what you get out of what you produce, it is what you produce that makes the standard.

The PREMIER: How hopeless it is to make the hon. member understand!

Mr. McCallum: Yes, to understand your argument.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member realise that 80 per cent. of the work done in this State is done for the worker, and that if all do their work well and produce well, it must obviously be to the benefit of the worker?

Mr. Kenneally: Does that apply to wheat now that the price is so low?

The PREMIER: It applies to everything we produce or manufacture. It does not apply only to material.

Mr. McCallum: You should write a new treatise on economics.

The PREMIER: The member for South Fremantle works here in Parliament and,

when he was sitting on the Treasury Bench, it depended to some extent upon how he worked, whether or not the State progressed. That applies also to every man who works. I shall not say anything further. I did not intend to speak at such length, but the member for East Perth did go to Northam and talk to my friends there. I shall get a full report of all he said. I do not think he has lost anything in modesty since we fought at a past general election. I remember at one time before the election was held, I was going to Northam and, as we are on friendly terms, we had lunch together. He said, without a smile on his face, "Well, to-morrow I will be member for Northam." We met again after the election, and the hon. member said he was satisfied that he was beaten. He showed a proper feeling and I hope that when he discusses questions of importance, the influence of which may be felt in other parts of the world, he will use a little more moderation than he displayed last night.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan—on amendment) [4.52]: Before plunging into the sea of political contention in this House, I desire to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your elevation to the impartial and honoured position of Speaker of this House. At the outset of a new member's career, I learn with interest, *May* lays it down that the Speaker may extend a certain amount of indulgence and leniency to the newcomer. I am sure I echo the sentiment of all new members when I say we are thankful to *May* for his consideration and our belief that you, Mr. Speaker, will exercise your authority accordingly.

Hon. P. Collier: We may suspend *May* on this occasion!

Mr. HEGNEY: As the representative of Middle Swan, a large working-class constituency, I support the amendment moved by the member for East Perth (Mr. Kennelly). In doing so, I believe I shall act in accordance with the opinions of at least 75 per cent. of the electors of Middle Swan. When the present Government, through the Premier, asked for the suffrages of the electors, the various speakers indulged in general statements. When opening his campaign at Northam on the 28th January, the Premier himself made the sweeping assertion that he would find work for all. Conse-

quently, many electors in my constituency voted in support of Sir James Mitchell and his candidates. Many of those electors were formerly supporters of the Labour Government but voted against the party in expectation that political promises made would be honoured. Many of them are disillusioned to-day. Some of them said they would vote for the return of Sir James Mitchell because the position could not be worse than it was then, but I am afraid the position is immeasurably worse now than it was then.

Mr. McCallum: There has been a rude awakening.

Mr. Marshall: There is no difficulty in convincing them about it.

Mr. HEGNEY: The present Government are seeking to impose a longer working week on the workers and to take away many privileges they have held for many years. In Australia in particular, and in many other parts of the world generally, the workers consider they are entitled to a shorter working week, and they desire to participate more in the products of their labour than hitherto. There is no gainsaying the fact that invention and machinery have so increased the productive capacity of industry that the workers are demanding and will continue to demand a greater share in the product of their labour. But we know that whenever they desire to participate in the fruits of their labour, prices are always advanced against them, and then wages have to be chasing prices in an endeavour to hold their own. So the workers have found themselves in a vicious circle and have become determined to get some advantage from industry by securing a shorter week. On that issue we have had arguments throughout Australia for many years past, and the workers of this country have proved their case in the Arbitration Court. Before the late Mr. Justice Higgins, in both the engineering case and the timber workers' case, they proved conclusively to the court that they were entitled to a shorter working week in those respective industries. So to-day we find that the 44-hour week is generally applied throughout Australia, particularly in the engineering industries. We remember how the Federal Arbitration Court was reconstituted and an adverse decision was given against those industries, with the result that for a period of years we have had strikes—we had one in this State last-

ing six months—against that adverse decision, and the workers for a period had to go back to the 48-hour week. Just now I am speaking in a general way about this shorter working week, because we cannot dissociate this State from the Eastern States, any more than they can dissociate themselves from us. In New South Wales elections have been fought on the shorter week issue. I was in New South Wales when the 44-hour Week Act was given effect to by a Labour Government. Subsequently a Nationalist Government repealed that Act. Then, later, a Labour Government were again returned, and they reintroduced the 44-hour Week Act in that State. At the last election in that State Mr. Bavin pledged himself to the electors that he would not repeal that 44-hour Week Act. However, it has been repealed, and the 48-hour week now obtains in that State.

Mr. Munsie: It was one of the very first things he did on attaining office.

Mr. HEGNEY: In this country a Labour Government had a mandate from the people in respect of its industrial administration, particularly in the extension of the 44-hour week to the workers. Six years ago, when that Government appealed to the electors they expressed themselves favourable to the extension of the shorter working week in industry, and until leaving office, so far as they were able they made the 44-hour week applicable to those in the industries directly under the control of the Government. That attitude was confirmed at a subsequent election. When the present Government were appealing to the electors they made no statement to the effect that they would attack the existing position, or that they would try to take away the conditions now obtaining. They have no mandate for that. The only mandate they have at present is to find work for all. That is the mandate they received from the electors, yet of course they are following out the traditional policy of those opposed to labour by seeking to smash down the conditions of the workers. If we look at the position in Australia to-day we find that some of the State Railway Departments have forced the workers back on to the longer working week and have cut their wages, notwithstanding which the position has not improved in the States concerned. Take Queensland and New South Wales: In those States the position is becoming much worse than it was 12 months ago or even less. Yet we are told by econo-

mists writing in the newspapers that if the workers were to accept a reduction of 5 per cent, in their wages, everything would be all right. We know that even in this State many of the workers have no income at all at the present moment, while the incomes of many others have been halved, notwithstanding which the position here has not improved. So we are coming to see that the creating of unemployment and the cutting down of wages will not result in improving the position. As I have said, in New South Wales and Queensland the position has by no means improved, despite the fact that the hours of labour have been increased. I cannot understand the Government of this State moving the Arbitration Court in an endeavour to get the hours of labour extended, when we find that private employers are asking the same court to grant shorter hours to the workers because of the existing position. It seems to me a very illogical attitude for the Government to take up. As to the shorter working week in industry, as one who has worked in the railway workshops and in most industrial establishments in the engineering line in Australia, I want to say that, although the workers in the engineering industries may not have the work quite as hard as they did some years ago, the machines have so come into vogue that the position in many industries has actually improved. That is to say the productive effort of the worker is immeasurably better to-day than it was ten years ago. I know that the men in the industry in which I worked have proved their case up to the hilt in the Arbitration Court, and in consequence the 44-hour week has obtained in that industry for many years past. Consequently I think the present Government in this State very ill-advised in trying to get the men back on to the longer working week. There is no mandate from the electors, and so I hope that even at this hour the Government will see fit to revoke their decision. We find that Sir Otto Niemeyer, who came here to advise the Governments regarding the question of finance, has made some statements reflecting upon the workers; indeed, I think they constitute a slander on the Australian worker. For instance, he said their productive effort was diminishing. In one part of his statement he said that in Australia, between the years 1924-25 and 1927-28, there was a 5 per cent. rise in the

number of workers employed, but the volume of industrial output only rose by 3 per cent. His statement continues—

Compare this with the United Kingdom or the United States. In the United States in the same interval while factory employment has fallen 5 per cent., output has risen 15 per cent. In the United Kingdom between 1924 and 1928 the British industrial population rose by 5 per cent., while the output rose by 7 per cent., and the rate of industrial reorganisation in Great Britain is definitely an accelerating one.

He goes on to say that the productive output of the workers in this country has only increased by 1 per cent. I remember some time ago reading the evidence of Mr. Wicken, the Commonwealth Statistician, before the South Australian Royal Commission on Manufactures and Secondary Industries. Here are some of the remarks he made—

Mr. Wicken said that in connection with manufacturing there was a widely-held opinion that there was a tendency for the production per employee to diminish. In 1908 the total added value of production in Australia was £36,000,000. That was labour's contribution, plus whatever contribution was made by capital. For 1923-24 the total was £141,000,000, or nearly a four-fold increase in fifteen and a half years. In 1908 the value of production per employee was £141. In 1923 it was £328. Taking 1911 as 1,000, the price level of the manufacturing products in 1923 was 1,881. Prices in that year were 88 per cent. higher than in 1911.

Mr. Wicken said he had made a correction for the price levels in the two years, and according to the returns which he had, from 1911 to the present time, there had been practically a continuous increase in the output per employee. This was quite contrary to what was generally thought. The increase in output per employee from 1911 to 1923 was 6½ per cent.

If one takes the Commonwealth Statistician's book and gets the value of the output per employee from that time till now, we find the position has improved in respect of the workers. Sir Otto Niemeyer said the productive output of the worker had only increased by 1 per cent. That statement can be taken for what it is worth. I prefer to take the statement of Mr. Wicken, who is on the spot and continually dealing with this question. So I think that disposes of that statement of Sir Otto Niemeyer. It is the workers that are carrying on the industries of this country and keeping the services going. So for Sir Otto Niemeyer to come here and say they are not produc-

ing to the extent they were formerly, is an absolute slander on them. There is another phase of the matter, and that is the position as it confronts us to-day. A member of another place mentioned that under-consumption prevailed to-day. That is not the general consensus of opinion in the Commonwealth. On the contrary, most of the economists confirm the fact that production has immeasurably increased, and that that is one of the reasons why there is so much unemployment. I do not make that assertion myself. We have the evidence of that from many, but I am going to quote from Sir Henry Braddon, who is not a Labour man. He was speaking in Sydney recently at the Institute of Engineers. In the daily "Commercial News and Shipping List" he is reported to have said this—

When, after a period of agony, the surplus stocks were sufficiently dissipated to permit of a return of production to "normal" conditions, the whole world made a new and bewildering discovery. For years philanthropists, philosophers, altruists and humanitarians had dreamed of the abolition of poverty. To secure that halcyon state of affairs it was necessary that supply should equal demand. The world had to produce enough to satisfy the requirements of everybody.

By 1924 the world fully realised that the state of affairs had changed so thoroughly that the supply exceeded the demand. The white man's world was producing more than it could sell. Every nation wanted a foreign market for its surplus products. To keep its own markets for its own producers every nation, excepting Britain, indulged in legislation that taxed the products of other countries right off its markets. They called it "Protection."

The effect of this world-wide movement was the partial destruction of world commerce. Britain, as a nation, lived by the importation of raw material and the exporting of finished manufactured articles, by the freight and fares earned as the world's carrier, and by services rendered all over the world in the form of insurances of every sort. With hostile tariffs rising everywhere against her products, British Dominions manufactured goods decreased gigantically. Other nations tried to become their own ocean wagoners by lending money for shipbuilding and by fostering ships when they were built with subsidies for ocean-going ships, and exclusion of foreign ships from the coastal commerce.

To-day there are more ships in the world than can be profitably utilised. There is more wheat, meat, sugar, rubber, fruits, wool, cotton, and everything else (excepting hides) than man can use or consume. Stores and silos, shops and emporiums, are crowded with goods that are unsaleable. They cannot be sold because the purchasing power of the world is seriously

reduced by the fact that over 16,000,000 of white wage-earners are unemployed. They are unemployed because the stores are bursting with surplus stocks of what they produce, and it is useless and often impossible to produce more until the surplus stocks are cleared off the markets. The greater the material wealth, the worse off the workers seem to be. Revolution will not help us out of the situation, and the statesman of the world will find themselves up against a new riddle of the Sphinx. Unless the problem can be solved, civilisation will either die or commit suicide.

From the works of economists who have specialised in these questions, we realise that this is one of the phases of the present social system. Yet we are told that we ought to increase our production in order to solve the problem.

Mr. McCallum: And we cannot sell what has already been produced.

Mr. HEGNEY: There should be some other way of attacking the problem. If the hours of labour were further reduced, it might be possible to solve the problem, but for the life of me I cannot see how it can be solved by striving to increase the hours of labour. The Premier stated this afternoon that the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) was standing for repudiation. It is axiomatic that Governments honour the contractual obligations of their predecessors with regard to loan and similar commitments, but as has been pointed out, the present Government would put the workers into a different category. When it comes to a question of the workers' wages, we are told it is quite competent for the Government and for capitalists to repudiate their obligations. Let me give an instance of what a Minister controlling one of the public utilities did shortly after taking office. I refer to the State Quarries for which Mr. Baxter is the Minister. For a number of years the employees have been working the shorter week and have enjoyed a 10-minute smoko at 9.30 a.m. Quarry work is very laborious, and anyone who has studied the subject of industrial fatigue knows that if men are given a brief spell after having worked a couple of hours, they are invigorated and enabled to produce more during the next two hours. Capitalists who have studied scientific methods admit that. An American engineer named Taylor studied the question and said that the idea of expecting a man to bend his back at 7.30 a.m. and keep it bent until 12 noon had

gone by the board. By giving a man a short spell, he was rejuvenated for the ensuing period of work. That is only common sense. Mr. Baxter, however, has abolished the 10-minute smoko, although the men had enjoyed it for six or seven years. It is wrong to abolish the smoko in that industry, because the work is laborious. The men start work early and to give them the brief spell would not decrease their output. This I regard as repudiation of a condition of the industry that has prevailed for years past. During the war munition workers in England worked excessive hours. When many of them fell ill, what did the Government do? Mr. Lloyd George was Prime Minister at the time, and his Government reduced the week's working hours to 47 and eliminated overtime. The result was that the productive effort of the workers increased. If a reduction of the hours of labour from 56 or 54 to 47 was beneficial there, it should apply also to Australia. I defy anyone to contradict the statement that the Australian worker is the equal of any worker in the world. He has initiative, resource and physique, and I contend he is the best worker in the world. The excellence of his work is demonstrated by the figures disclosed in the Commonwealth Statistician's report. Many references have lately been made to arbitration. In another place last evening it was contended that the Arbitration Courts should be abolished. Not long ago the "Sunday Times" published a statement that the absence of unemployment in Italy and other countries was due to their having no Arbitration Courts. Some years ago I read a statement dealing with the conditions in another part of the world. Mr. D. R. Hall, one time Attorney General in the New South Wales Government, made a visit to the countries of the East, particularly China. I wish to quote his remarks on his return, in order to give some idea of the conditions with which the Australian worker has to try to compete. Mr. Hall said—

I had an opportunity of visiting many factories at Shanghai and elsewhere in China. In that country there is absolutely no interference by the Government with employer or employee. There are no factory laws, no Employers' Liability Act, no Arbitration Court, no Workmen's Compensation Act, no trade unionists, no Trades Hall, and no strikes. Every one in China has that perfect liberty so much believed in by political economists of a bygone age, and even supported by some employers to-day. The results are appalling.

In the silk factories children of six and seven years of age work eleven hours a day. In the cotton factories thousands of stunted little children of nine years of age work from six in the morning till six at night, and are then replaced by thousands of others who carry on till six next morning. The wheels of the cotton factories never stop, for meal time, Sundays, or holidays. Once a year Chinese New Year is celebrated. Otherwise the factories work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. If any great degree of skill were required, no doubt such conditions would make for inefficiency, but to-day the machine does the work. The worker merely puts in the raw material at one end and takes out the finished product at the other.

These cotton factories are not owned by Chinese. They are owned by Britishers, who have interests in factories in England, and who, instead of extending operations in the Old Country, where wages are relatively higher and hours shorter, prefer to pay Chinese children threepence per day for 12 hours' work and to establish their factories in a country where income taxes and labour troubles are unknown.

This condition of affairs is recognised as a *menace* even in Japan, where, although labour conditions are improving, they are still far below those existing in Australia. China will, I am sure, be in the future one of the great consumers of the world's products, and, comprising as it does one-third of the world's population, it has a store of available cheap labour and raw material which may, in ten years, cause it to be the great producing centre of the world.

Journals dealing with the conditions of labour in other countries show that Australia enjoys a high standard. The edict has gone forth in Sir Otto Niemeyer's report that our standard of living is too high relatively to production. The ukase is that the workers have gone as far as they can go, and must not go any further. As one of the representatives of the workers, I intend to do my best to see that they do go further, and by organisation demand more of the good things of life which many other people enjoy. Unfortunately many of the workers are without employment. They are out of work because of over-production and because of the financial crisis. That position has been accentuated by the happenings during the war. We in Australia are feeling the effects of the war now. The debt of Australia is £1,100,500,000, and on that we have to pay an annual interest bill of £55,300,000, or more than £1,000,000 a week. Undoubtedly that is a heavy burden on the industries of the country. It is a first charge on the country, and has to be met before any return is made either to labour or on investments.

One-half of the interest bill is payable in Australia and the other half abroad. We know that war commitments cost the Commonwealth £710,000,000 to the end of 1929. The yearly interest rate on the unextinguished portion of the war debt, which now stands at £282,000,000, is £15,176,000, and our commitments in respect to pensions and schemes of repatriation total another £15,000,000. These sums have to be met, and there is no question of their being a drag upon the productive capacity of the workers. Labour is but one of the factors in production, and it is only fair that the other factors should have to bear their share of the burden. It should not be the workers only who have to do the suffering all the time, not they alone should have to pinch their bellies. The other factors, especially interest and rent, should be reduced substantially. As member for Middle Swan, a district which is particularly affected, I have much pleasure in expressing those views on the question before the House. I support the amendment moved by the member for East Perth.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury—on amendment) [5.34]: I thought a case would have been put up by the Government in opposition to the amendment and in support of their attitude towards the workers, more especially the workers employed by the Government. It should not be necessary for members on this side of the Chamber to rise continually in support of the amendment. There seems something like a conspiracy of silence on the other side. Surely the matter is not one to be ventilated only from one point of view. The position to which the amendment refers is most serious. Had the amendment not been moved, I should have elaborated on the subject whilst speaking generally to the Address-in-reply. During the whole of this discussion no defence has been attempted by the Government of their action in seeking to increase working hours from 44 to 48 and to abolish district allowances. The Minister for Works, when on a former occasion he endeavoured to reply to the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum), put up no case whatever. The records he read had no bearing on the position. One could go back in the history of Western Australia for many years and contrast the position obtaining then with that which exists to-day. The Minister for

Works said the district allowance was never granted until the goldfields water scheme was being constructed. However, I was working in Southern Cross long before the pipe line came within sight of that town, and I was receiving a district allowance at that time. As an old employee of the Railway Department I went to Southern Cross in 1901, and the district allowance I then received was 1s. per day.

The Minister for Works: The pipe line reached Kalgoorlie in 1901.

Mr. WITHERS: No; in 1902. I left Southern Cross in May of 1902, and the pipe line had not reached Southern Cross then.

Mr. Willecock: The water scheme was opened at Kalgoorlie towards Christmas time in 1902.

Mr. WITHERS: I was then receiving 8s. per day, with 1s. per day goldfields allowance. I may add that my fortnight's pay frequently amounted to £11. The hours then were 54 before one got one's week in, and there was no time and a-quarter for overtime, or time and a-half for Sunday work. My ordinary pay amounted to £5 10s. per fortnight, and I could double it because of the way the department were asking me to work. In Kalgoorlie I had to go to bed during the daytime in the heat of the goldfields summer, get my sleep and my bath and my food and be back at work within eight hours, and at Southern Cross, my home station, I had 10 hours off duty. Work was then practically a continuous process. Really we were working all round the clock, and we did not even know the day of the week to go to church. Such were the conditions of work existing when I went to Southern Cross. In 1902 considerably improved conditions were secured. We did not get an increased district allowance, but we got the week's work down to 48 hours, with time and a-quarter for overtime and time and a-half for Sunday.

The Minister for Railways: You did not get time and a-half for Sunday work?

Mr. WITHERS: We did.

The Minister for Railways: In what year was that?

Mr. WITHERS: In 1902. I am speaking of work in the locomotive branch. A great deal has been said about the district allowance and comparisons have been drawn

and the question has been asked why railway men should get the allowance and Public Works Department employees should not. I speak with knowledge when I say that almost throughout the railway service it was the rule that before a man could obtain employment he had to pass firstly an educational test, then a physical test, and thirdly an eyesight test. These qualifications were not demanded in the case of a man whom the Public Works Department were sending on an ordinary job of dam-sinking. To become a member of the railway service, a man has to be above a certain age and below another age. After working a year or two in the Railway Department he is cut off from learning any other trade or following any other occupation. Being too old to learn anything new, in the event of retrenchment a railway servant has to become a hewer of wood or a drawer of water. Suppose a man joined the railway service under certain conditions in the metropolitan area. After working there for a certain time and perhaps getting married, he is transferred to some isolated place. I have had experience of that; I am not speaking without my book. I can testify that there are various isolated places where a district allowance is absolutely essential to bring the worker, whether in the railway service or in the Public Works Department, to anything like the level of a similar worker in the metropolitan area. One can judge how much discontent there would be if some public servants were constantly detained in the metropolitan area on certain wages and conditions, while other public servants were transferred to isolated spots without receiving some consideration in the nature of a district allowance. What inducement is there to build homes in places like Cue, Leonora, or Laverton? While I was in the railway service I was transferred to Cue three times, and as a married man I know what the district allowance means. To call in a doctor or a nurse for the birth of a child meant an expenditure of £18. That was the kick-off before the days of the maternity bonus. I may mention that I was the first to claim the maternity bonus in Cue. After all, what did Andy Fisher's £5 baby bonus really mean? Do not hon. members agree that people going out back are entitled to some consideration? A person going merely to a casual job outside the metropolitan area is possibly not entitled to

a district allowance; but the man who has had to undergo tests before securing employment, and who is called upon to bear heavy responsibilities, should receive some special consideration. The member for East Perth was quite right in moving the amendment. The result has been to get the question thoroughly ventilated. No doubt it would have been fully discussed in the course of the Address-in-reply debate, but the amendment brings it prominently before the public. The amendment serves to test in this Chamber the attitude of certain people who made promises on the hustings. Let us see whether they are prepared to adopt the same attitude here as they adopted on the hustings. Let us see whether they are prepared to keep the pledges they gave when canvassing for votes, when asking electors to support them in preference to other candidates. Those hon. members said on the hustings, "We are not in favour of reducing the standards of the workers in this country." I shall vote for the amendment, and I hope that all those hon. members who on the hustings declared themselves unwilling to lower the standards of the workers in Western Australia will also vote for it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Lindsay—Mt. Marshall—on amendment) [5.43]: Like the Premier, I intend to be brief. However, I wish to take this opportunity of replying to some of the statements made by the mover of the amendment. Last night I interjected a remark to the effect that the Commissioner of Railways had applied to the Arbitration Court for a reduction of the district allowance—

Mr. Kenneally: Reduction, not abolition.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: —and that the previous Government had stopped him. The member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) immediately declared that the Commissioner had not applied and that the Government had not stopped him.

Mr. Kenneally: That is as regards abolition.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have here a file dealing with the subject. It contains the report of a deputation from the joint railway unions committee to the Minister for Railways. Here is portion of what the deputation stated—

Yet, in spite of that, it was now proposed to oppose the unions' application for increased allowances. Indeed, the intention was to apply

for a reduction of allowances in certain places and for the abolition of the allowances altogether at Kalgoorlie and some other centres. They thought it necessary to bring this matter before the Minister, because they did not think a Labour Government would support the action proposed to be taken by the department. The railway unions would be placed in an invidious position if, in applying for increased allowances or extension of the districts where allowances were granted, they were faced with a counter-application for a reduction. Moreover, the miners' union were also coming before the court, and Mr. Haynes would be called to give evidence in this direction, and he was of opinion that the case would be prejudiced by the fact that his own union's application would be opposed.

Here is the Minister's reply—

The Minister pointed out that when the resolution referred to was carried in Parliament—

That was the resolution carried at the instance of the present Leader of the Opposition—

—there was no doubt the cost of living in those districts warranted extra pay. That might be so still, but conditions might have altered. He did not know. But he thought it was reasonable that all the information available should be placed before the court so that they could determine whether there should be any alteration.

Mr. McCallum: What is wrong with that?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: When I was dealing with the question, I asked what was the difference between a worker living in Kalgoorlie, not employed by the Government, and one that was. If a man employed by the Government is entitled to the privilege, so is everyone else.

Mr. Pantou: We agree with that.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The position is that the previous Government, in the claim of the Commissioner, applied for the abolition of the district allowance in Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Willcock: The Government did what every Government had done in the last 35 years—left the thing severely alone.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Commissioner of Railways had lodged his application at the court and had proposed to abolish the district allowance at Merredin and up to Southern Cross.

Mr. McCallum: Not the Government.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The department. Up to that point the Government had not interfered. Considerable pressure was brought to bear upon the Govern-

ment by various unions and the result was that this appears in the then Minister for Railways, own handwriting—

The policy of the Government in regard to allowances is to allow present conditions to stand with regard to additional amounts, the claim to be resisted in the Arbitration Court. Will you arrange accordingly?

That was addressed, to the then Commissioner of Railways.

Hon. P. Collier: Well, what about it?

Mr. McCallum: What is wrong with that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The other evening I was told that the late Government had not interfered, that the Commissioner of Railways had not applied. I have replied to that statement.

Mr. McCallum: You have replied to the abolition.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I agree that there is a slight difference.

Mr. McCallum: I don't know what you would do if there was a big difference.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have asked that allowances should be abolished in certain districts. The Leader of the Opposition said that we were appealing to the court before the award had expired.

Hon. P. Collier: I know you had the right to do so; I did not say you had not the right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There are a number of cases now before the court—painters, decorators, dredge workers, carpenters, joiners, plumbers, engineers on Goldfields Water Supply pumping stations, moulders, engineers (amalgamated), mental hospital attendants, mental hospital domestics, Old Men's Home, etc.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not denied that you have the right to apply to the court.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have not asked for a variation of the Water Supply award for the simple reason that the first 12 months do not expire until next April, but we can apply for the alteration of district allowances any time after the basic wage has been fixed. We have asked the court to act because we believe the court to be the proper body to deal with wages and conditions. The result of our action is that we have been attacked. I have also been told that this matter has not been dealt with previously. I did make the statement that the court had not dealt

with district allowances. In 1923 the Mitchell Government applied to the court for a reduction of district allowances.

Mr. Kenneally: It seems a habit of the Mitchell Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have a list of the claims for considerable increases. In that particular case Mr. Justice Draper was the presiding judge, but he was not asked to decide whether district allowances were justified or not. All he was asked was to give a decision on the departmental claim and the union's claim. The district allowances were discussed at considerable length, and in speaking to the minutes, Judge Draper, then President of the court said—

I have no hesitation in saying that these district allowances of the Government are not very logical, and they will not be repeated again, so far as I am concerned.

Now we are asking the court whether they shall be continued or not. It naturally follows that as there are two parties to the question, we are asking the court to decide an issue which we believe to be right and proper. I hope the amendment will be defeated.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle—on amendment) [5.53]: Before addressing a few remarks to the amendment, I desire to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on being appointed to the Speakership. There are others also to be congratulated, but I shall reserve those congratulations to a later stage, when I shall be speaking to the Address-in-reply. Reverting to the amendment, it seems to me that the Government have made out no case at all in their reply to the charges advanced by the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally). A lot has been said about those who are working not for the Government, but for private enterprise, and it has been argued that because private employees do not get district allowances or other similar considerations, Government employees should not receive them. I do not take that line of reasoning at all. I believe that the Government should be the model employer and should point the way to the private employer. If all employees' conditions were based on those imposed by private employers, then Government employees would be in for a bad time.

Mr. Sampson: Do you suggest that approaching the court is doing something wrong?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do suggest that the Premier denied that had nothing to do with it going to the court and that the Commissioner for Railways was responsible. Now, a little while afterwards, we find another Minister saying that he took the responsibility. I contend it is wrong for the Premier to try to mislead the House.

Mr. Sampson interjected.

Mr. SLEEMAN: If the member for Swan does not wish to hear what I have to say, he can at any rate keep quiet. The Government have said that in applying for the abolition of district allowances, they are not applying for the abolition in places like Marble Bar and Port Hedland. Everyone will agree that in outlandish places such as those, the people who are working there should be left as they are. God knows things are bad enough in the State and the Government should be ashamed of their attitude of attacking people in outlying parts of the State. The action of the ex-Government shows that they were friends of the workers, but the present Government, no sooner do they take their seats on the Treasury bench, than they attack the workers' rights by interfering with the district allowances and the hours of the workers. It seems to me that there is only one thing that the present Government are prepared to do, and that is attack the hours and conditions of the workers, and it does appear very funny that while they are attacking the hours of workers, they are prepared to reduce the hours of their own Ministers. We find that some of the holders of portfolios leave their offices to carry on their private business and in that way reducing the number of hours that they should be devoting to the work of the country.

Hon. P. Collier: Times are hard.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Government are rationing their own work but not rationing their own wages.

The Minister for Railways: That has applied to all Governments.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not care: I do not believe in it. If the previous Government had professional men in their ranks competing against outside professional men, I would have said it was wrong. I will criticise such conduct no matter to which

side of the House Ministers may belong. I intend to be fair. The present Government believe in increasing the hours of the workers and they believe in rationing wages. In that case, they should start at home, they should ration their own work and the salaries they receive when they are engaged in outside work. We find members of the present Cabinet taking briefs at the Supreme Court and I suppose, drawing big fees when they should be attending to their Ministerial jobs.

Mr. Parker: And when there are private members available.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr. SLEEMAN: It would be interesting to hear that Ministerial salaries were being reduced by the amount received for briefs, and that Ministers were being paid actually for what they were doing for the Crown. In these times of depression, there must be amongst the budding legal fraternity those who would be pleased to get some of the fees that Ministers of the Crown are drawing in addition to the salaries they are receiving from the State.

Mr. Panton: Not only budding lawyers, but full-blown ones.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Yes, and capable of pleading cases. When rationing starts, it should start from the top—the Ministers themselves—and go to the bottom. There is one thing I mentioned before that previously the Premier had denied, that the Government attacked the standard of living by attempting to increase the hours and abolishing the district allowances. To-night he has admitted that the Government have attacked the standard of the workers. There is one feature of the debate to which I would draw attention. Last night the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) declared himself in favour of keeping the district allowances for the workers. Now it will be interesting to see when the division is taken whether the hon. member will stick to his expressed views so that the workers at Merredin shall not suffer, or whether he will be brought to heel, when the whip is cracked, and vote against his own belief. I have raised the point I wished to raise, and will have an opportunity on the Address-in-reply to speak upon a greater variety of subjects. I hope the Government will see the error of their ways and withdraw their application to the Court. If members vote according to their

conscience, I believe the amendment will be carried.

The Minister for Railways: Are you going to talk again on the Address-in-reply?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I hope to.

Mr. Parker: And so do we.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is a pity the Minister for Railways has not had something to say on this amendment. I hope it is not too late for him to speak even now, and to explain the attitude he will adopt. I support the amendment.

MR. CUNNINGHAM (Kalgoorlie—on amendment) [6.2]: I wish to congratulate you, Sir, upon your election to the position of Speaker. Knowing you as I have done for many years, I realise that all sections of the House will get a measure of fairness at your hands. We know that will be the case from your long association with this Chamber. I also desire to congratulate the members of the Mitchell Government. Many of the Ministers have previously held office.

Mr. Withers: They ought to get on with their promises.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Some of them have held Ministerial office on previous occasions, and will therefore be used to the job.

Hon. P. Collier: They have not settled down too much.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I am the more surprised to learn of this proposal to alter a policy that has been in existence for a number of years when I remember that some of the members of the present Government once lived on the goldfields, and represented goldfields constituencies. I am surprised that they have given their consent to the alteration in a policy which strikes a blow at the standards of living of those they previously represented.

The Minister for Railways: I do not know that I ever drew a district allowance.

Mr. Pantou: What would you expect when you were always asleep at the engine?

Hon. P. Collier: That was through working long hours.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: At that time the Minister for Railways represented people on the goldfields. The district allowance was in existence. As an old goldfields representative he knows well the reason why this was provided.

Mr. Pantou: And he was an ardent supporter of it, too.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: It was realised that people who lived in outback centres had not the comforts nor the opportunities enjoyed by the more civilised localities in the metropolitan area. The dwellers outback were not accessible to our seaside resorts. They had not the pleasure of looking at our beautiful river or our ocean beaches without first contributing to the State by way of railway fares and incurring additional expense besides.

The Minister for Railways: The conditions vary from street to street. How are you to allow for that?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: There was also the question of family life. It is more expensive to rear a family in an outback centre than it is to do so in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Angelo: I question that.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Arbitration Court says it is cheaper.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: As an offset against the high rents in the metropolitan area we have to consider that people are better served there in the matter of educational facilities and in numerous other directions that in a large measure concern the welfare of a family.

Mr. Sampson: The educational facilities at Kalgoorlie cannot be questioned.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: They are superior to those at Leonora, but the educational facilities at Kalgoorlie cannot be compared with those in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Railways: Yes, they can, judging by the large percentage of those who pass through the higher standards.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The University is free to the man in the metropolitan area who can afford to send his son or daughter to it instead of putting them to work. How does the child of a man at Kalgoorlie, Menzies, Leonora, Cue or Meekatharra fare compared with the child of a man living in the metropolitan area?

Mr. J. H. Smith: That does not apply only to Kalgoorlie, but to the country districts.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I am speaking of the outback centres. The district allowances which it is proposed to abolish have been in existence for 35 years. I am sure the amendment will have the support of the member for Nelson and the member for Carnarvon.

Mr. Pantou: The member for Carnarvon looks like it.

Mr. Angelo: If you can satisfy me that a district allowance will enable people to send their children to the University, I may be with you.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I am sure that the hon. member will view this matter fairly and will do his utmost to have it put right.

The Attorney General: He knows the court will view it fairly.

Mr. Angelo: I have not the wisdom of a judge.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I cannot interfere with the work of the court. I have not mentioned it.

Mr. Angelo: Neither have I.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I have referred to the alteration of the policy and the abolition of the district allowances and the institution of the 48-hour week.

Mr. Kenneally: It is the first hit at the workers.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Government have been badly advised. They have seized the first opportunity within a few weeks of assuming office to strike a blow at a custom that is 35 years old. Surely a custom which has stood the test of so much time deserves more consideration at the hands of the Government than it has received.

The Minister for Works: The court will give it all due consideration.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Government have shovelled this proposition bolus bolus before the court.

The Minister for Railways: Have you no confidence in the court?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, but I am not going to allow the Minister for Railways to side-track me as to the work of the court.

The Minister for Works: That is the crux of the whole thing.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The Minister for Works has effected an alteration in a policy which was the policy of previous Governments over a matter of 35 years, and also seeks to increase the working hours per week.

The Minister for Works: That should not be the policy of any Government. The wages and working conditions should be decided by the court.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: A few years ago the leader of his Government agreed that it was a proper thing to do to give these allowances. Allowances were given in those centres where the same Premier now proposes to abolish them. The Government have been ill-advised to take this step, and should have given it more consideration. When they have taken all the circumstances into account I am confident they will see the wisdom of withdrawing the application from the court. Meanwhile I support the amendment.

MR. WILLCOCK (Geraldton — on amendment) [6.10]: I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, upon your appointment to the high and honourable position you now hold. I am sure with the knowledge we have of your career in Parliament that we need have no misgivings, even if sometimes we do not agree with all your decisions, as to the honesty and fairness of such decisions you may be called upon to give. Regarding the amendment, members of this side of the House consider there has been a vital change in the settled policy of the country which for 35 years has been favourable to the granting of district allowances. It was a serious step for the Government to take. No matter what political parties have been in office, every Government for 35 years, almost without exception, approved of the principle of district allowances. Some members of the present Government were in the Cabinet which approved of these allowances, and it now remains for them to alter the position. Any Government with the precedent of a settled policy which has endured for many years should show some justification for the change and give good reason for the departure from the custom. It appears to me, however, that this is taken as an opportunity, perhaps, to administer a blow at the workers' conditions. It can be argued that there is a good case for district allowances. Members opposite may say the proper place to argue that is in the Arbitration Court. That tribunal, however, must arrive at its decision upon the evidence that is placed before it.

The Minister for Works: Quite correct.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is quite possible that the requisite evidence may not be forthcoming when the time comes to deal with these district allowances. The evidence varies from week to week according to the

personnel of the men who are affected. The member for Bunbury spoke about the maternity allowances. There may be times in the year when only single men would be living in a particular centre and they would not be affected by such an allowance. It may be that in some places the argument as to educational facilities does not arise, because at that time there may be no married men in a particular district. So it goes on through all phases of domestic life that must be affected considerably by the proposed alteration to this old custom.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. WILLCOCK: We all agree that the Arbitration Court was established for the purpose of settling disputes in industry. The ground upon which the no-confidence amendment has been moved is that the present Government have taken up an attitude contrary to that of every other Government during the past 35 years. There has never been a dispute regarding district allowances before. That provision has been part of the settled policy of the State, and every Government, every administration, and every Commissioner of Railways agreed it was a just provision to make. It has always been recognised as right to extend consideration, by way of a monetary allowance, to people who, in the interest of the country, and in the course of their duties, have had to be sent to the outback portions of the State. It will readily be recognised that there are serious disabilities attached to life in the outback. No railway employee or Government employee of any description would desire to work in the outer areas. In some departments that fact is realised by using it as a method for meting out punishment. Because of something that has met with the disapproval of the department, an officer is sent out into the back blocks. To those whose duty requires removal to the outer districts, the fact that they are paid district allowances is accepted as a recognition of the disabilities under which they will live. That has been the settled policy of the State for the past 35 years. I am not a young man, but I have spent considerably over half my life in this State. Yet district allowances were in vogue long before I ever dreamt of coming here. The payment of those allowances is not some innovation that has been tried for a brief period and found to be unworkable, unjust or unneces-

sary. It is something that the people of Western Australia, and particularly those who have been charged with the administration of the State's affairs, have always agreed upon as a measure of justice to those affected. Apparently the Government are perturbed regarding railway finances, and this is one method to be adopted to bring revenue and expenditure more into line. It will be agreed that officers in the Railway Department have given excellent service to the State for many years in transporting produce from one end of the State to the other. This is a time of serious stress, when everyone is appealed to in order to secure goodwill in industry and co-operation and co-ordination of effort on the part of all sections, particularly the workers. In those circumstances, the present is the wrong time to choose for asking a section of the workers to suffer an additional disability that has never been experienced before. I was surprised at the attitude of the Premier when he spoke this afternoon. Without reflecting upon you, Mr. Speaker, I do not think the Premier discussed the amendment at all. Rather did he deal with the speech made by the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) with reference to interest charges. The Premier's speech was not in vain because it did adduce some workable means by which the desire of the member for East Perth regarding a reduction of interest could be attained. The fact remains that the Premier did not touch the subject matter of the amendment. After taking up 20 minutes of the time of the House, he sat down and did not give us any information regarding the charge we make, that at this stage in the history of the State, the Government should select such a time for an attack on the conditions of labour. There was no mention in the Premier's policy speech regarding his intention to take away this particular privilege.

Mr. Panton: Rather the contrary.

Mr. WILLCOCK: If anything, there was an indication that no attack would be made on the workers at all. Had the Premier been frank, straight forward and candid, and said, "If I take over the Government, one thing I shall do is to take away the district allowances," the position to-day might have been quite different. I believe that there would have been so much opposition, even in his own electorate of Northam, that in all probability Sir James Mitchell would not have been returned to power.

The Premier: We do not get a district allowance there; you are getting out of your depth.

Mr. WILLCOCK: No. I said that if the Premier had mentioned his intention in his policy speech, there would have been aroused sufficient opposition to have made it impossible for him to be elected.

The Premier: What did you do a few years ago?

Mr. WILLCOCK: I will discuss that in a few minutes. I ask the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) what he would have said had some inquisitive elector asked him what action we would take if it was proposed by any Government to abolish district allowances. I can imagine the indignant denial he would have given to any suggestion that he would be a party to such a move.

Mr. Griffiths: I have already told them my attitude regarding district allowances.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The hon. member will have an excellent opportunity to demonstrate by his vote in the House what his attitude will be. He would not have been elected had he said he favoured such a proposal.

The Premier: You tried it, and you were elected again.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I tried it?

The Premier: Yes, you did.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Premier cannot understand plain English. The Minister for Works repeated statements he previously made and quoted Mr. Justice Draper's remarks that already appear in "Hansard." He talked for a little while about different matters and then said, "The Minister in his own handwriting" and so on. I wondered what I had put in writing that was inconsistent with our present attitude.

The Minister for Works: You told the deputation that waited upon you that the matter would have to go to the court because an alteration was suggested. You said it was for the court to decide.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I said that the court fixed the district allowances and if there was any additional allowance to be granted, the facts in support of the application would have to be proved.

The Minister for Works: Before that you told the deputation that you agreed with the Commissioner.

Mr. WILLCOCK: If the Minister will show me the file, I can see what it contains.

The Minister for Works: The file is here.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The file is supposed to be here. If a Minister quotes from a file, he must place it on the Table so that we can see it and know what was quoted.

The Minister for Works: You can have the file.

Mr. WILLCOCK: What does the file show that is inconsistent with our attitude to-day?

Mr. Angelo: Why not get the file?

Mr. WILLCOCK: The hon. member can do so. When the Minister referred to what I, as the then Minister for Railways had put on the file in my own handwriting, I thought we would get some definite information. What did the Minister place before hon. members that indicated our inconsistency with our present action?

The Minister for Works: You did not disagree in the first place; you agreed that the Commissioner of Railways could ask for a variation in the district allowances and told the deputation so.

Hon. P. Collier: It was not proved that there were half-a-dozen different rates applicable; you showed that last week.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I have now secured the file, and I will see actually what I put on it. Here is what I said—

The policy of the Government in regard to allowances is to allow present conditions to stand. With regard to any additional amendment, the claim to be resisted in the Arbitration Court. Will you arrange accordingly.

That means that whatever is done in regard to additional district allowances, the case on behalf of the Railway Department will have to be put up and presented to the court.

The Minister for Works: Read the last part.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Here is the reply to the deputation—

The Minister pointed out that when the resolution referred to was carried in Parliament, there was no doubt the cost of living in those districts warranted extra pay. That might be so still, but conditions might have altered. He did not know, but he thought it was reasonable that all the information available should be placed before the court so that they could determine whether there should be any alteration.

The Minister for Works: That is, the court should decide.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Any alteration to the existing district allowances should be decided.

The Minister for Works: And then you say the court is not to make any alteration in regard to existing conditions.

Mr. WILLCOCK: We object to your attempt to alter them.

The Minister for Works: But you told them the court was to decide.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The hon. member reads into this something entirely different. Whatever was said to the deputation was consistent with the attitude we have taken up at present. If the Minister would only agree to the policy set out in reply to the deputation—

The Minister for Works: That is what we are doing.

Mr. WILLCOCK: No. If the Minister would do that, we would be more satisfied than we are at the present time. I do not want to discuss the merits or demerits of district allowances; that will be discussed in court. There are many phases to which the court cannot give sympathetic consideration because the court deals only with facts. It is no use presenting opinions or asking for sympathetic consideration. The court has to arrive at determinations in accordance with the law and will give its verdict in accordance with facts. For instance, if the court were considering the district allowances to be paid at Kalgoorlie, and if someone produced the State Statistician's figures in order to inform the court that the rent in Kalgoorlie for an ordinary house was 9s. a week, and could prove it the court would accept that as evidence and give an award based on it. But the goldmining industry is of a temporary nature, and in consequence people will not build houses of a satisfactory type because the industry may, and sooner or later must, come down. People do not build permanent structures on the goldfields, and so comparatively miserable dwelling-houses are erected in Kalgoorlie. Because they are cheaply constructed, and have not the ordinary conveniences that are always provided in the metropolitan area, and because the people up there have to submit to all those inconveniences, and a man cannot get proper housing accommodation in a goldfields town such as Kalgoorlie, Leonora, Meekatharra or Cue, why should his salary or wages or remuneration be lowered on that account? It should be a matter of Government policy to say that

there are disabilities inescapable by people living in those parts of the State, and that consequently it is considered there should be some allowance given to those Government employees who have to live in those districts.

Mr. Angelo: Do they get a district allowance in Geraldton?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, they get a district allowance in Geraldton because Geraldton has prospered during the last five years, and in consequence a lot of rapacious landlords have raised the rents very rapidly. I notice in this morning's paper that the Government Statistician's report shows that during the last few months rents in Geraldton have risen still higher. Some members would say it is merely an indication of the prosperity of the place when landlords can get considerably higher rent than would be paid in other circumstances. Whatever may be said, high rents are charged in Geraldton, and in consequence the department have granted district allowances in that town. There are many things that ought to be taken into consideration in regard to district allowances. The statistician's figures do not prove that the climatic conditions of any place are such that a man or a woman should receive extra allowance for having to live there. It used to be considered that when a man misbehaved himself or committed some misdemeanour for which the department did not wish to punish him too heavily, the department merely sent him away to one of these remote places.

Mr. Angelo: And then offset his punishment by giving him a district allowance?

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, but it was considered that in consequence of the disability of having to live in such a place a man should receive a district allowance. I know of the dissatisfaction and discontent the want of a district allowance has caused amongst officers, particularly railway men, for I have worked amongst them; and I know it was always recognised as a punishment for a man to have to go to any of these outback districts, and that punishment or no punishment he took the first opportunity to get back again.

The Minister for Works: But the climate of Geraldton is not so very bad.

Mr. WILLCOCK: No. I have explained that the district allowance given in Geraldton is given because of the high rent, just as the

district allowance in the metropolitan area is given on account of high rent. Possibly if the previous Government had had their way with their policy, rents would not have the effect they are having now. I noticed in the paper that the Railway Department had to pay £40,000 last year because of that effect. I do not think any member would agree that any man would be satisfied to be sent from Perth or from any other coastal district up to Meekatharra or Leonora to live in all the discomforts of those places without getting some monetary consideration for going there. I was in Cue for a considerable time, and I can honestly say that for 100 days on end the average temperature was above 100 degrees.

Mr. Angelo: Well that must have meant a saving in firewood.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is true. But what a man saved in firewood probably he had to spend in beer in order to be able to withstand the climate. Then, again, for health reasons it is very necessary that the women and children living in such places should have an annual holiday down at the coast. In many instances district allowances have been granted as a recognition of that extra cost. Only last week I had a letter from a man in my electorate referring to the disabilities he had to suffer through living in that district. He declared it was costing him £45 per annum for the education of his children, because he had to send them away to another town for that purpose. Apparently if the policy of the present Government is going to be put into operation, and if that man continues in his desire to have his children decently educated, he will have to suffer a distinct disability of about £45 per annum as against what it would cost him for his children's education if he were in Perth or in any other place where reasonable facilities are provided.

The Premier: You have a High School in Geraldton.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, that is so. But it is not only in Geraldton that the district allowance is to be attacked; the Government want to take away district allowances from all districts.

The Premier: But I thought you said that letter was from a Geraldton man.

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, it was from a man in the Geraldton district. If I read

the Press reports correctly, during the election campaign several members now on the Government side of the House definitely pledged themselves not to do anything to take away a man's wages.

Mr. H. W. Mann: That was in respect of wages.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Well the district allowance is part of a man's wages. I suppose if the Minister for Works wanted to erect a building on his farm at Wyalkatchem he could not get the necessary labour for the same price as he would get it in Perth, but would have to pay a district allowance.

The Minister for Works: No, it would be constructed by a local builder.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I think even a local builder would require a higher daily rate in Wyalkatchem than he would if he were working in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Works: Railway men do not get any district allowance in Wyalkatchem.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That does not alter the principle that wherever it is thought a district allowance is necessary and just it is paid. The question has been asked what is the difference between Merredin and Wyalkatchem when it comes to the payment of a district allowance. I suppose the answer is that there must be a line of demarcation somewhere. As I was saying, on reading the election speeches made by members on the Government side, I found that my friend the member for Canning (Mr. Wells) said he did not agree with any policy which would have the effect of making the conditions of the workers any worse than they were, that he would not be a party to any cutting down of wages or a reduction of industrial conditions. I think, too, my friend the member for Katanning (Mr. Piesse) was very emphatic about it. He went to a meeting of the railway employees called to consider that very question one Sunday. He told them he was seeking their suffrages and he would not be agreeable to any attack being made on the workers' conditions.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Is there any district allowance in Katanning?

The Minister for Works: There are no district allowances in the South-West at all.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The district allowance is one of the workers' conditions. I think

that before the election the Minister for Railways was very emphatic as to what he was going to do for the workers.

The Minister for Railways: You are not entitled to think; you are entitled to say only what you know.

Mr. Munsie: Well I will say that you did say so.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I was not there, but I know what the hon. member would say.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I should like the hon. member to deny it if he can. These sentiments were not confined to the one or two members I have mentioned. Amongst members supporting the Government there was a general repudiation of any desire to do anything prejudicial to the workers, and some said the Government they were going to support would not think of attacking any of the industrial conditions of the people.

Hon. P. Collier: Most emphatic of all was the member for Perth.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I think every country member in this Chamber must consider that the action taken by the Government regarding industrial conditions is a distinctly retrograde step. Surely they must agree that if there is any sacrifice to be made in industrial conditions, everybody must share in it.

Mr. Raphael: Parliamentarians included.

Mr. H. W. Mann: You will have a chance very soon. We shall see how you go then.

Hon. P. Collier: What self-sacrificing heroes you are!

Mr. WILLCOCK: Regarding industrial conditions, I say that if sacrifices have to be made—and in the light of the extensive propaganda going on in the newspapers most people will come to think that sacrifices must be made—there is no necessity to select for the sacrifice those men who have had certain conditions of employment for the past 35 years, while leaving out others who have not had to suffer the same disabilities. I strongly resent it. It is not just or warranted, and I do not think the Government are entitled to deprive those workers of something they have enjoyed for many years. The whole burden of our complaint, particularly with regard to district allowances, is that it has been the settled policy of the country for a long time to grant them and that the present Government select this time to make an attack on industrial condi-

tions. The people of the State, I think, generally agree that the Government should be model employers, and should give just and generous conditions to their employees.

Mr. Angelo: Generous with other people's money?

Mr. WILLCOCK: The policy of successive Governments has been to make the conditions of employment as high as could be expected, and there has been no objection to that.

Mr. Angelo: At the expense of the taxpayers?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Everything the Government do is supposed to be done on proper, just, and generous lines. Even when building a house or quarters, the Government seek to do a satisfactory job, something of which we might be proud.

Mr. Angelo: The Government should cut its coat according to its cloth.

Mr. Munsie: If they do that, you will have no steamers for the North-West.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Because some sections of the community do not get what they are justly entitled to, the Government should not endeavour to bring down their servants to that level. Their aim should be to help everybody on to a reasonable plane.

The Minister for Lands: You can do that only so far as industries will permit.

Mr. WILLCOCK: We are not discussing that aspect. If certain sacrifices have to be made in the conditions of industry, there is no reason why one section should be singled out and made to suffer something which no other section are called upon to forego.

The Minister for Works: Which no other section of the industrial community get.

Mr. WILLCOCK: This has been a settled condition of industry for 35 years, and because there is talk of financial depression, an attack has been made on one section of the community. It may happen that no other section of the community will be required to make any sacrifice at all. If other sections of the community do have to make a sacrifice, the employees who are being deprived of their district allowances will have to make a double sacrifice.

Mr. Angelo: What about the producer? What is the value of his produce now?

Mr. WILLCOCK: I do not think the worker has any say in the value of the produce. When we had prosperous times, there was no inclination on the part of the producer to share his profits with the workers.

Mr. Withers: He was not over-generous then.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But when bad times come, if only for a year or six months, the producer wants to see the workers' conditions lowered immediately.

Mr. Angelo: What has been the increase in wages paid to workers during the last two decades?

Mr. Panton: Five per cent. behind the cost of living.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The wages figures do not make any difference. What concerns the worker is the amount of commodities he can purchase with the wages he receives. There have been certain slight improvements in industrial conditions, but I do not think that the worker can now purchase any greater quantity of commodities than he could 30 years ago when the basic wage was 7s. 6d. or 8s. per day. With the higher wages prevailing to-day, I doubt if the worker is any better off.

Mr. Hegney: Only in respect of hours.

Mr. WILLCOCK: His conditions may have been improved somewhat, but the purchasing power of his wages has not increased, even though the wages have been doubled.

The Minister for Works: What is the cost of it all?

Mr. WILLCOCK: I cannot say offhand.

The Minister for Works: About £90,000 a year.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is spread over the whole of the Government service. The Minister talks about the cost. The people of this State undertook a heavy burden in approving of low freights for the carriage of primary produce and fertilisers, and there has been no squealing about it. What is the cost to the country for carrying fertiliser at the present cheap rate as against the average rate charged by the railways?

Mr. Panton: You would require a ready reckoner to find out.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I know it without resorting to a ready reckoner. If fertiliser were charged at the average rate, it would mean that the freight receipts from the quantity carried last year would have been £250,000 greater. Am I to understand from the Minister's interjection that the railway workers must have their conditions lowered in order to counterbalance railway losses?

The Minister for Works: The railway workers enjoy special privileges that no other class of the community get.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The producers of this country get special privileges which no other section of the community get.

The Minister for Works: The member for South Fremantle told us the other day that 75 per cent. of them were bankrupt or would be next year.

Mr. Panton: They are always bankrupt.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I understand the Premier has given instructions to the Commissioner of Railways that he is not to incur any expenditure that cannot be met out of revenue. The Railways have never been conducted as a commercial undertaking or regarded as such. It has always been recognised that they should be used to assist the development of the country. If they were a commercial proposition and the Commissioner had a free hand, he would not dream of carrying fertiliser at the present low rate.

The Minister for Agriculture: The rate on other primary products makes up for it.

Mr. Withers: Would you get that cheap freight from a private company?

The Minister for Agriculture: What about the freight on wool?

Mr. WILLCOCK: The producers for whom fertiliser is carried do not always have wool. I suggest that the Minister ask the opinion of the Commissioner of Railways on those freights and ascertain whether the low rate charged for fertiliser is compensated by the rates charged for other primary products. It is not.

The Minister for Railways: You are not advocating an increase of the fertiliser freight, are you?

Mr. WILLCOCK: No.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is going a long way from the amendment when he talks about fertiliser freight.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Premier has told us that the Commissioner of Railways has a free hand regarding industrial conditions. If that is so, the Commissioner should have a free hand in regard to other matters, whereas he has not.

The Minister for Lands: He does have a free hand if he finds his own revenue for it.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is impossible to find revenue when a commodity is carried at such a low rate.

The Minister for Lands: If not, the Premier must have some say.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Last year I pointed out that if superphosphate represented only a small proportion of the total freight transported, it might be carried at a cheap rate, but when the quantity is increasing so greatly, it becomes impossible to carry it at such a low rate. The Government expect the co-operation and help of the workers at the present time. I think it can be safely said that during the last four or five years better team work, more good feeling, greater co-operation and better esprit de corps have existed in the department than for many years previously. Yet this one proposal regarding district allowances will create greater discontent and dissatisfaction and do more to disturb the good feeling that has existed than any other action the Government could have taken regarding industrial conditions. The Premier says he wants to give the Commissioner of Railways a free hand in many things. The Commissioner is supposed to run the railways, but apparently the Premier interfered with him regarding the coal supplies during the last four or five months. The last I heard about the Collie coal was that certain coal which was under test was entirely unsatisfactory, and the Commissioner did not want to take it. The Government of which I was a member did not interfere with the Commissioner in that matter. I think it has since been demonstrated by the impartial investigation of one of the highest officials of the Mines Department that the contentions of the Commissioner were absolutely correct. Yet according to the Commissioner's report, a considerable quantity of that coal, which is entirely uneconomical, is still being used, quite against the wishes of the Commissioner.

Mr. Withers: To the extent of 400 tons a week.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes. From what I can remember of the commercial value of the coal in question—

The Minister for Railways: Be careful! The member for Collie has his pencil out.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am not concerned about that. According to the Commissioner, we are losing £2,000 or £3,000 a year be-

cause the present Government have done the direct opposite of what was done by the previous administration.

The Minister for Railways: No.

Hon. P. Collier: Who instructed the Commissioner to give an order to the Griffin mine?

The Minister for Railways: Neither the Commissioner nor anyone else has asserted that the Griffin coal cannot be economically used during the winter months.

Mr. WILLCOCK: He will assert that the economic loss to the department amounts to £2,000 or £3,000 annually.

The Minister for Railways: But no one has asserted that that coal is not economical during the winter months.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But is it as economical as other coals are?

The Minister for Railways: What you are trying to make out is not correct.

Mr. WILLCOCK: My assertion is that this particular coal is not economical, and that its use involves a loss of £2,000 or £3,000 a year. The Premier represents to the House that the Commissioner of Railways has a free hand as regards, for instance, retrenchment of employees. But no high public official decides on a drastic alteration of policy without first obtaining the endorsement of the Premier or the Minister in control. It is ridiculous for the Premier to assert that the Commissioner of Railways did the retrenching off his own bat. I am sure the Commissioner had the endorsement of his Minister. I consider that the Premier is not frank—in fact, not quite honest—when he tries to make the House believe that a certain set of circumstances operates, while an entirely different set of circumstances is in fact operating. The Government may be merely concurring in an alteration of policy, but they must take the responsibility of having concurred. The Government are responsible for the alteration in policy.

Mr. Angelo: Probably the Government told the Commissioner to balance his ledger, and has left him to do it.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The longer hours and abolition of district allowances mean taking it out of the workers.

The Minister for Railways: You know that the Commissioner has never been told to take away the district allowances.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Someone is asking the court to take them away.

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister for Works says he is responsible for that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Geraldton has the floor.

Mr. WILLECOCK: The question has been adequately discussed by the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) and the member for Middle Swan (Mr. Hegney), and I must congratulate the latter hon. member on his first speech in this Chamber. The Government would be ill-advised not to secure a continuance of the co-operation of the workers. That co-operation has been extremely apparent in the Railway Department, and the Government would be acting wisely in withdrawing the application. If it is necessary to have sacrifices, let them be made by the community. We must all be sufferers. However, deliberately to select one section of the community and inflict hardships upon them must create ill-feeling, which we do not want in the transport system of the country. The action of the Government represents a retrograde step. They would be well-advised to take notice of the amendment and withdraw the application they have made to the Arbitration Court.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan—on amendment) [8.20]: There is no use in talking about co-operation, team work, and esprit-de-corps. Those features have never been called in question. The industry of the railway men is not disputed. No one contends that the railway workers are not earnest and industrious.

Mr. Willecock: Do you think they will be as well pleased under the proposed arrangement?

Mr. SAMPSON: The fact is that the railways and other Government activities are showing tremendous losses. The work the Government have to face is by no means pleasant, but in order to do their duty by the country they must face that work. The only way to face it is to refer the question to the court and apply for new conditions.

Hon. P. Collier: Are these two things the only factors in the loss on the railways?

Mr. SAMPSON: Of course they are not the only factors; but they are factors, and a start must be made. Not long ago I heard the Leader of the Opposition speak about the age at which a lad might be permitted to drive a motor car. The hon. gentleman said that there was no special virtue in the age of 18, but that a start had to be made

somewhere, and so some age must be fixed. Similarly, a start is being made by the present Government with the Railway Department. This is no reflection on the railway men of Western Australia. There is not a member of this Chamber but is anxious to give the railway men the best conditions possible. However, conditions in the Commonwealth generally, and also in Western Australia, to-day are worse than has ever been the case before. If the Arbitration Court decides that an alteration is to be made in the case of the railwaymen, that will be one step forward. Last year there was a loss of over £400,000 on the railways, and I question whether any considerable percentage of the railway men themselves would raise objection to a consideration of hours and other conditions by the tribunal appointed to deal with the subject.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What about the super rates? Would you tackle those at the same time?

Mr. SAMPSON: As regards tackling the super rates, if it proves possible for us to retain our wheat growers on the farms we shall be very fortunate indeed. In view of the heavy disabilities our primary producers have to face, I am convinced that it would be the last word in foolishness to impose any increased charge upon them. Already they are being clubbed to death by the taxation of Federal Governments, present and past. Our first duty is, if possible, to retain the farmers on the land. Undoubtedly we have great problems to face, and I am sure, knowing members on both sides of the House, that every one of them would extend the utmost consideration to the railway men, or indeed to any other section of Western Australian workers. No one section is being singled out by the Government, but a start is being made. The Government have a tremendous battle to fight, and no one knows that better than the Premier and his Ministers. I realise that there is at least a flavouring of party politics in the amendment, and I am anxious to deal with the question from a disinterested standpoint.

Mr. Wansbrough: Who threw the first brick?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not prepared to say that any special disability or special advantage attaches to living in Kalgoorlie as compared with, say, Bridgetown. Many people, in fact, would rather live in Kalgoorlie than in Bridgetown. If the cost of living at each place were looked into, possibly it

would be found that the Kalgoorlie resident was not called upon to pay more than the Bridgetown resident. In Kalgoorlie there is an ample water supply.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And an ample dust supply.

Mr. SAMPSON: There is electric current. Apart from the absence of the sea or of a river, Kalgoorlie has all the facilities which town residents require. Some of the gardens in the neighbourhood of Kalgoorlie have amazed me. Although the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) may not have seen them, the Leader of the Opposition must often have noted the magnificent growth in some of the vegetable gardens of Kalgoorlie.

Mr. McCallum: What have those gardens cost?

Mr. SAMPSON: The prices of fruit and vegetables in Kalgoorlie shops are remarkably low. Fruit is sold in Kalgoorlie at practically the same price as in Perth.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is nonsense.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is not nonsense.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What is sold in Kalgoorlie is inferior stuff.

Mr. SAMPSON: No. The fruit and produce sold at Kalgoorlie are of high grade. In fact, some vegetables, tomatoes for instance, are occasionally cheaper in Kalgoorlie than in Perth. Generally speaking, fruit and vegetables are sold at remarkably low prices in Kalgoorlie. The other day I noticed in Hannan-street eggs priced at 1s. 2d. per dozen. Since then there has been a further reduction in price. In view of the distance from Perth it is amazing to note the many advantages and facilities provided for the Kalgoorlie people. However, it is not my duty to discuss the rights and wrongs of the provision of district allowances. That is the duty of the Arbitration Court. I have every confidence that that court will give the matter fair and full consideration. It is our duty, I consider, to support the Government whole-heartedly in their earnest effort to adjust the finances, square the ledger, and bring this country to a fairer, better and more prosperous condition. As things are to-day, the lot of the worker is indeed a desperate one. To find work is exceedingly difficult. The amount of work available is more limited than I have ever before known

it to be during the period I have lived in Western Australia. We are facing extremely difficult times.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You are attacking the question piecemeal.

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member's interjection reminds me of a remark made by a negro lady in church. The preacher was saying, "One by one our congregation is passing away, passing to a better world," and the negro lady got up and said, "Well, Mr. Preacher, would you have us go by the hundred?" The Government cannot handle the matter in one comprehensive sweep, but must take it little by little. I shall vote against the amendment moved by the member for East Perth, and I venture to suggest that that hon. member would be the last to do anything that would injure the worker. Possibly he has brought this amendment forward without having given the subject full consideration. It is the duty of the Government to submit these matters to the Arbitration Court. That body is established for the purpose of dealing with these conditions, and I have no doubt they will be fairly dealt with. I can only hope, as a result of what has taken place, and the other steps that I assume the Government will adopt, that our present most deplorable position will be improved, and that instead of having an increasingly large number of unemployed, the number will be reduced and that we shall be able to pay our way and restore to many homes some degree of happiness.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland—on amendment) [8.32]: I desire to support the amendment introduced by the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally). I congratulate that member on the manner in which he presented it to the House. He dealt with it very broadly and has left comparatively little for one to add especially in view of the fact that no reply has come from the Government regarding matters the hon. member dealt with. It is an extraordinary position that an amendment should be moved to the Address-in-reply, moved in a definite and emphatic way, and that no answer should be submitted by the Government. In the whole of my experience of Parliament I have never known a Government to fail to reply as has been done in the present instance.

The Minister for Lands: You mean that we have not satisfied you.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There has been no reply at all.

The Minister for Lands: The Arbitration Court will reply.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We say that the Government have singled out from the industrial conditions two established standards for attack, namely, the recognised working week and the extra payment for isolation disability, or in some cases the increased cost of living, that is covered by what is called district allowances. We contend definitely that the present industrial financial depression cannot be adjusted, or equitably adjusted, in a piecemeal fashion. We say it is quite wrong to single out piecemeal certain industrial standards for attack for the purpose of effecting economies. We ask, why single out these two; they are not unique in regard to Government employees. The 44-hour is not limited to Government concerns and neither are district allowances limited to Government activities. So we ask the Government why it is that they single out these two items for attack. It is no use the Government saying they are not attacking. They are the aggressors. The matter would not be under consideration to-day if the Government had not taken some action, and it was definite Government action, wilfully done, and dictated by the Minister for Labour who accepts full responsibility for what has happened.

Mr. Sampson: You do not suggest that the Government would take action in regard to workers not employed by them?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Government's responsibility to-day is to tackle the economic problem in a comprehensive way. I contend that if it is our desire to maintain peace and contentment in industry, the Government are going the wrong way about it. How can it be expected that the workers in this country, or those specially singled out for attack, will rest content while two of their standard conditions are assailed and the rest of the workers are left untouched. If we are able to tackle the economic situation in a manner to create satisfaction we cannot do it by singling out one section of the community and pitting that section against another. Neither can it be done by attacking the workers and ignoring all other

economic considerations. When the present Government went to the country, they declared that they were not going to reduce the standards of living in Western Australia. They conveyed it to the people that they were going to increase work and foster industry. That was their policy. To day we find they are retrenching wholesale, and attacking the standards of living as established by the workers and enjoyed by them for some considerable time. I am prepared to admit that the conditions to-day are not altogether as they were at election time. I am prepared to admit that certain complications have arisen. But we want the Government to explain to the people, to whom they appealed only a few months ago, and with whom they arrived at an honourable understanding by means of election pledges, that their policy would be in a certain direction—work for all and progress in industry. Why do not the Government come down and say that the conditions now are such that they have to reconsider their election pledges, and that they will adjust their policy then propounded in such a way that all the people will contribute towards the complications that have arisen. We cannot expect those people who are likely to be affected to take the Government's action lying down.

The Minister for Lands: You will agree to help the Government if they apply their proposals generally?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, provided the Government tackle the economic problem in a comprehensive way. I am even prepared to sit on a committee and assist in that direction; I am prepared to do anything that will help to establish an economic readjustment, provided I am guaranteed that all will subscribe in proportion to their ability to do so.

Mr. Kenneally: Not while they are flourishing the club as they are doing.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Government are not asking for co-operation and assistance; they are making it impossible for us to assist them, and there is no question that they are creating an industrial atmosphere to-day that will be a serious menace in regard to the readjustment that we have to face. It will take a longer time to do it in the Government's way, and we shall go on in a happy-go-lucky style and get into a bigger mess than we find ourselves in now. The Govern-

ment should admit that there are complications, and if they will agree to tackle the position from a Western Australian point of view, and say "We know the recuperative power of the State, and provided readjustments are made to help the State to respond to the labour conditions, and leave the other parts of the world out of it, we shall get somewhere." The Government should not take any notice of newspaper propaganda. That will not help us to put Western Australia right. What we want to-day is a Big Government, or, if you will, Mr. Speaker, a Big Parliament, so that we may deal with the conditions as we find them, and adjust them in Western Australia from a Western Australian point of view, and not take dictation from outside organisations, or pay heed to newspaper propaganda which is endeavouring to influence us from day to day in the direction of making an attack upon the standard of living of the workers of the country and leaving other considerations untouched. What I want to do, and what the party with which I am associated want to do, is to help to readjust the conditions of things, but we want to do it on a sane, fair and comprehensive basis. We hold that there are many questions that require to be considered side by side. It has been said that the Government at some other time did do something in connection with district allowances. I do not want to go into those details, but I submit that those questions were raised as only part of a comprehensive renewal of an expired award for the purpose of continuing another award for three years. Naturally, district allowances had to be reviewed in conjunction with all other matters. What is the use of the Minister for Works quoting that a Government did something or other in connection with district allowances? District allowances are quite a small matter compared to what was taking place generally, and the need for getting another award. There is no expiration of an award now; there is no necessity by law to say that there shall be a review of the position. The review that is being made to-day is being made in an aggressive spirit, by way of an attack. The Government have singled out a special section to do a vicious thing. The Government are trying to divide the workers and to create dissatisfaction and discon-

tentment, and as I have already said, their action will do more harm than good. Let us look at some of the questions that have been raised. There has been a lot of ridicule by way of laughter and jeers at the suggestion that has been made that the question of interest should be reviewed. It is generally accepted by members on the Government bench that interest should not be questioned at all. I should like to give a little experience that I had with one who holds a fair number of war bonds. He asked me who it was that offered him another 1 per cent. interest on the money he had advanced to the Commonwealth by way of these bonds. He said, "I did not ask for that additional 1 per cent. interest, and there has been no agitation for it. I was surprised when it was offered. What influence has caused the offer to be made."

Mr. Angelo: It is one in a thousand.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: They do not ask for any more money. All they say is that they will continue to use the money they have already had and expended, and will give another 1 per cent. in interest for it.

The Minister for Lands: Why does he not put it into the State Savings Bank?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is the sort of interjection I want. Why do not Ministers get busy, and suggest to these people who are getting increased rates of interest in what direction the money can be used to better advantage for Western Australia? Let them suggest by their speeches and activities exactly how interest can be used as a factor in improving our economic condition. In his economic contributions to the Press, the Premier might go into the question of interest, and point out that there is a way in which people may get rid of their war bonds, and use the money within the State at a rate of interest that would be reasonable for them and fair in comparison with the needs of the State. By such means they would be brought to realise that they had responsibilities towards the State as well as towards the workers. It is wrong for the Government to single out a section of the workers, the Government employees, and say to them, "You shall contribute directly to the needs of the State by working longer hours and suffering a reduction in wages." The man who holds war bonds is not appealed to. When we suggest that he

has a responsibility, Ministers jeer and laugh.

The Minister for Lands: Ministers have done nothing of the kind. We have neither laughed nor jeered.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I did not hear anything else when members were raising their voices to the amendment. It would be possible for the Government to get out a kind of propaganda which would not be an intimidation to these people but an appeal to them. We want to get a better understanding amongst the people of the State, and there would be a better reconstruction of the position, as well as a speedier improvement, if such an appeal were made.

Hon. P. Collier: Ask them to attain a patriotic level and put their money into State funds.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The member for South Fremantle, with apologies because of the danger of misrepresentation, had to make it clear that he had no desire to be unpatriotic, or to cast aspersions upon those who had lent us money and who did certain things during the war. He said, however, that various matters required to be reviewed. I hope members will be honest and ask themselves what results have been obtained from that speech. We find that the Acting Prime Minister has dealt with the problems. Newspapers have also dealt with it, and members have congratulated the Minister for doing so. The speech has created public thought. From the public opinion that resulted we find that the "Observer" in London, one of the most reliable papers, and one which voices a sound British opinion, has also taken up the matter. It has contributed to the question the statement that after all there is room for doubt as to whether Australia can continue to carry the war liability. I do not say there should be any repudiation, but I do say the debt should be funded. Just as we got £5,000,000 the other day at 3 per cent., so should it be possible to re-arrange the war loan on such a basis that we pay for that money, too, 3 per cent. If it is right that we should get £5,000,000 at 3 per cent., why should not the war burdens, which are crushing Australia to-day, be reviewed? Why should not representations be made to that end, and why should we not ask that the same concessions that have been given by Britain to other loans should be extended to Australia? Why should we not get

relief from the payment of at least 3 per cent. instead of suffering the burden of a 6 per cent. payment? When Sir Otto Niemeyer was here it would have been quite correct to wake up public opinion, and for Governments to have said at the psychological moment that the opinion of the people of Australia was that they were prepared to admit that they had been extravagant, that their extravagance was not their great burden, but it was the extravagance during the war period that constituted the burden. It would have been quite right for Australia to create the kind of thought the member for South Fremantle has created. If it had been done at the time when Sir Otto Niemeyer was dealing with the economic problem, he might have been prepared to discuss that question with other matters. Some of us must be glad that this has now become a public question. People are discussing it in the highways and byways. We hear it spoken of in the trains, and in every office the matter is being discussed. Public opinion in Australia is interested in the question as to whether we cannot get some consideration on this important matter. The discussion now going on will make Mr. Scullin's task the lighter. This is one of the means by which Australia can be put on a possible basis instead of continuing to carry the enormous burden she is trying to carry to-day. In the course of his speech the Leader of the Opposition dealt with the price of flour and the price of bread as compared with the price of wheat. Simply because public opinion has been directed to this matter flour has come down in price by £2 a ton.

Hon. P. Collier: I wish I had spoken earlier.

The Attorney General: You do not know what your powers are until you try.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: This is not a laughing matter but a very serious one. Had the Government tackled the question in a comprehensive way, it would not have been necessary to wait for the speech of the Leader of the Opposition.

The Minister for Lands: How much has bread come down? Take the price of bread!

Mr. Munsie: The less you have to say about that the better.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Minister for Labour was very active in tackling a section of the workers in a limited way. He

should have said he declined to tackle one section of the community when there was this much bigger question affecting the whole community waiting for him to tackle. He might have reviewed the question of district allowances and of working hours, but he should first have had a look at the Flour Millers' Association and seen what they were doing as compared with the price of wheat, and the revenue the producers were getting from their products.

Mr. Angelo: How do you know he did not do so?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Having done that he could have had a look at the relationship between the Flour Millers' Association and the Master Bakers' Association. He could have ascertained the difference between the price of flour and the price of bread, and seen whether it was reasonable and just. We know the master bakers have been making more profit in recent times than for many years, because the price of bread is out of all proportion to the price of flour. The price of flour compared with that of wheat is also out of proportion. In both directions the people have been suffering. I have no need to tell the Minister for Labour about that, for he knows it as well as I do. Why does he not go into these questions and say these problems will have to be solved? Instead of tackling one section of the community he should have reviewed all the factors which make for these conditions. If these conditions continue, wages will have to go to a very high level in order that our standard of living may be maintained. We would welcome a review of wages if the cost of living was tackled at the same time, but we object to wages coming down when the cost of living is going up. So far as the activities of the Arbitration Court are concerned, the worker always carries the burden. We cannot expect the court to adjust all the economic problems. We cannot go piecemeal to that tribunal and say, "Here is one proposition; review it, but without regard to the factors surrounding it." That is what the court has been told to do. It is all the court can do. It cannot go into all the factors because it is limited by the application of the Government that it should deal with the hours of labour and district allowances. The Leader of the Opposition also raised the question of meat prices, which have not yet been reduced in comparison with the cost of stock.

Stock on the hoof is at a remarkably low level, and yet meat, particularly in the suburbs, is not reduced accordingly to any appreciable extent. In the big city shops, where the turnover is large, cuts have been made in certain classes of meat, but the ordinary housewife, who deals with suburban tradespeople, and cannot go to the central shops, finds there is no great reduction in the charges made.

Mr. Angelo: It is all right in some suburbs.

Mr. Sleeman: But some are all wrong.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not care if one or two are wrong and the others are right. If the Minister for Labour wants to do a fair thing to the public, he should deal with this question of meat instead of confining his attention to district allowances and the hours of labour. Parliament would gladly give him power to tackle it so that the difficulty might be overcome. Another matter has been raised during the debate. It was referred to by the Leader of the Opposition when he dealt with rents. Already there has been a meeting of the central shopkeepers of the city, and an association has been formed for the purpose of making representations for the lightening of their burdens.

Mr. H. W. Mann: To get the rates down; not rents.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not care what it is. If the shopkeepers secure a reduction in valuations, it will be a contributing factor towards the other matter. If valuations come down, then it is a clear indication that properties are over-valued. We know they are over-valued, because of successive sales of properties in the centre of the city. That has raised values beyond a reasonable basis, and now these people have taken action.

Hon. P. Collier: Valuations are fixed upon rental values.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Of course they are. Rents are too high because if one comes down, the rest must follow. What I want to convey more particularly is the fact that these things have taken place since this debate started. If private members can, by their speeches, create public opinion and cause public activity leading to citizens forming an association with the object of securing a review of a burden they cannot carry, how much more could be done

by the Government? If the Premier and Treasurer had gone into the question of rents, investigated interest charges and discussed the cost of living in connection with the necessities of life, and if he had devoted the same space and activity to those problems as he did to the others that have been referred to, he would have done a lot to help the country and would have done much more than he has achieved to date. I venture the opinion that any re-construction worth while that has taken place, has been carried out since the speeches were made by members of the Opposition side of the House during the currency of the Address-in-reply debate. There is another matter of importance. The Minister for Works and Labour laughs! I expected him to do so. That is all we can get from such a member, who is active against the interests of the workers. The hon. member prides himself on the strength of his stand against the demands of trade unionists. That has been his attitude for years, and I do not expect anything else from him. In his own way he says, "Blame me, I did it." That may be quoted as evidence that the hon. member is not likely to take into consideration various factors that are depressing the State and causing grave anxiety to the whole of the people. Of course, he would say that the question of rents must not be touched. No facts regarding it may be reviewed, yet the Government could expedite some such review if they were as active in that connection as they are in attacking industrial conditions.

Hon. P. Collier: If they were to drop some of the talk about the sins of the Commonwealth and discuss some of these matters, the Government might achieve better results.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is so. Another important matter that might be investigated has reference to the profits made by certain people and particularly by newspapers. The State extends special consideration to newspaper companies. We do certain things for them under special rates and supply them with assistance in various directions. It is a reasonable proposition that the Government, in view of the present situation, should make representations with a view to suggesting to these people that the profits made as the result of charges levied for ad-

vertisements and for the newspapers themselves are out of proportion with what is reasonable and fair.

Hon. P. Collier: By the way, that phase has not been mentioned in the Press yet!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Nor is it likely to be.

Mr. Angelo: Ask them to commit harakiri.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: While I may deal with these phases, nothing I say will be reported; I know that. The only consideration we get in that regard, and the only satisfaction we get from it, arises from the fact that our remarks are reported in "Hansard." If the Government were active, voiced the views of the people, and considered the interests of the community, there would be exceedingly speedy reform.

Mr. Withers: That would be a cut at the "West Australian" newspaper.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is all very well for members opposite to laugh at these matters, but I tell them that the workers of this State are thinking. It is useless for members to laugh because the workers are not going to stand profiteering and 15 per cent. dividends while their wages are being reduced. I do not say there will be a drastic revolution or anything of that sort, but there will be a mighty lot of hard thinking done by the workers. There will be such action that ultimately the Government will have to realise that the prices of commodities, profits, rents and various other matters will have to be reviewed. It is not going to be a question of pressure by workers' organisations, but by public opinion. The Government will have to bow to public opinion and take action. If they do take action, newspapers will report, and newspapers will reform. Therefore, the question of advertising rates, profits and dividends, charges for newspapers and so forth are quite legitimate phases for investigation and quite within the legitimate functions of Government. These newspapers say that the whole economic conditions of the State must be reviewed. They want all the people to pull together and to contribute towards securing reform. We will not secure any speedy reform while newspapers pay 15 per cent. dividends.

Mr. Marshall: What about the banks?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There is another important matter. I refer to the action of the Government in making such a sudden and aggressive attack on the conditions of a section of the workers. That has caused a certain amount of stampeding. There are a number of workers in workshops who hold meetings for the purpose of considering the situation, and there are some who attempt to arrive at a compromise in regard to the Government proposals. The fact that the rank and file meet and consider matters that should be taken into account in reviewing the position, is evidence that had the Government approached the Labour organisations and workers, there would have been co-operation between all sections in an effort to help the Government to do what is equitable and just. To-day the workers are not invited by the Government to discuss the problem. They are allowed to discuss it in the factories and the workshops in an irresponsible way, to some extent, but I venture to make this assertion: If the Government wish to get a permanent basis of reform, then negotiations should take place, not with the rank and file in the workshops and the factories, but with the registered bodies—the trade unions appointed for the purpose of considering working conditions in a proper way. They represent the only bodies competent by law to go into questions affecting any permanent reform or alteration of existing conditions. The Government cannot go to individual workers and suggest to them what reform should take place and what conditions should be reviewed. The Government can go only to the recognised trade unions, and the legislation passed by this House limits the Government to that extent. Yet to-day, by their aggressive attitude and refusal to meet the unions, the Government have disregarded the advantages of round-table conferences and conciliation. When they were in Opposition, there was talk on their part against arbitration and in favour of conciliation and round-table conferences. Why do not those members, now that they are in office, practise what they preached in the last Parliament? Just at a time when it is least warranted, we find the Government, new from the people, having neglected to make it an issue at the election, now embarked upon an attack against industrial condi-

tions. They did not tell the people that if elected they would use their power in such a direction, but by misrepresentation they have achieved power and now use that power in an aggressive attitude, without consulting the unions at all. In my opinion, the Premier failed in his duty in not submitting to the workers his suggestion that some measure of sacrifice was required from them and discussing the position with them in order to ascertain how best it could be dealt with and how they could get other people to help in the same direction. No doubt the Premier knew, and other members of the Government knew, that they could not make out a case. I believe they were afraid to meet the workers to discuss it, because they knew the workers would be justified, through their representative trade union leaders, in urging that if they were to be called upon to make sacrifices, there were others and other means to be exploited as well. Had there been a round-table conference and these other factors taken into consideration, there would not be the present division in the House. Both sides would have co-operated to arrive at a solution, and we would have seen the workers in agreement to bring about equal sacrifices on the part of all interests that go to make up our economic life. This is no time in Australia for any disruptive move. The Attorney General repeatedly asked the question the other night as to whether we did not think the Arbitration Court would do justice. Of course the court will do justice, but what we submit is that the court cannot make an adequate review of the situation. They will be circumscribed by the limitations placed upon their activities. They cannot take the full view in considering economic reconstruction or readjustment. The court have been told by the Government that the work must be done piecemeal. Rents may be most unfair and the members of the Arbitration Court are authorities on the rental question. Upon that phase they were compelled to increase the basic wage in Western Australia. The court may consider that rent collectors should contribute towards the economic readjustment, but the court cannot take that into consideration. All the court can do is to consider the limited questions submitted to them on the evidence that will be limited accordingly. What we say is that we do not suggest the

Arbitration Court will not do justice, but that this is not a question that the Arbitration Court should deal with.

Mr. H. W. Mann: In fact you say the court is not capable of dealing with it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I claim we cannot secure an economic readjustment by means suggested at present. If the Government persist in attempting to do it in the present way, they will not live long. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) endorses the suggestion that it is right for the Government to proceed along these lines and to question the 48 hour week, and he also agrees it is right for them to attack the district allowances to-day. By these means the Government will get the workers on the run. And 'having got that through, they are going to tackle something else and go on piecemeal until the State will get into a deplorable condition. Not only are we wrong in going as far as we have, but it will be disastrous to go any further. I want to make it clear to members that they are creating public discontent by the fact that they are tackling a section of the workers, and are also creating a very great deal of discontent in the union ranks. The unions are made up of Government employees and workers outside the Government service, and instead of the unions having an opportunity to consider it from a trades union point of view, they are limited, because the questions submitted are purely for those workers employed in the Government service. The unions are not able to review it in a comprehensive way, as would have been done if the Government had consulted the unions—as they would do if they wanted to bring about peace and good understanding. I do not know that I can say any more on this question, but I want the Government to appreciate that they are going about this in the wrong way. It must be borne in mind that the unions did approach the Government. The unions almost unanimously requisitioned that the Government should meet them for the purpose of considering this factor before it was submitted to the Arbitration Court. I venture the opinion that if members were asked whether they would join a deputation so that we might get the industrial workers and members of Parliament and the Ministry together round a table and have a talk over the whole economic situation, they would agree. But of course the Government refused to meet the

workers, and they are now forcing them into the Arbitration Court in a manner which will prevent the workers from doing justice to their case. It is impossible for the workers to come out of this ordeal victorious, because of the limitation placed upon them. They cannot deal with the whole situation, but only with the matters submitted by the Government. The Government should submit the case in a more decent way and give the workers an opportunity to meet them and discuss the situation so as to arrive at a complete and satisfactory understanding. Again, in regard to this House, how can the Government expect representatives of the workers, elected by the workers, to sit idly by and allow this kind of thing to go on? This motion to-night is only the forerunner of many others that we shall be compelled to move. We shall have to hold up the House over and over again for the purpose of having the question reviewed in a comprehensive way. We do not want to do that, for we know what it means to the State. But the fact remains that you are preventing us from contributing towards a complete understanding. The Government say in effect, "We are going to do it in our own way, and in spite of the fact that there is His Majesty's Opposition we are going to ignore their presence and go straight ahead in doing this thing in a manner that is going to cause irritation and dissatisfaction." I would not mind so much if the Government had gone to the country a month or two ago and told the people they were going to do it. Then if they were elected I should have said they were elected on that issue and had a mandate behind them. But they did not do that. They did not consult the people, they did not indicate to the people that they were going to do this thing, and so surely it is reasonable that we should ask them to approach it in a different way. Parliament should have been consulted on the whole policy. A discussion of the economic reform of Western Australia from a comprehensive viewpoint should have taken place in this House before any section of the workers were called upon to contribute more than a reasonable amount to the economic needs of the country. If the Government want to get the co-operation of this party, it is available to them. We want to help them and to help Western Australia. But I agree with the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) that we will not consent to the Government attacking the

workers of this country while leaving other matters alone. If they will not tackle other questions, we will tackle them. There is no limitation as to what we can do, and we will constantly and continually do it. But this State is going to suffer in consequence. Of course, we know the Press will appeal to us. Leading articles will be written to intimidate us. We shall be told that it must not be done this way or that way, and that if we hold contrary opinions we are not worthy of representing the people of the State. But I know my responsibilities to the people that have elected me, and I would not be worthy of my position if I allowed the newspapers to intimidate me or direct me as to what course I should follow. I know what the people at Midland Junction and Guildford want; I know their viewpoint and I will faithfully represent that viewpoint, regardless of what may follow. The people of Guildford are prepared to endorse action that will co-operate with the Government, that will realise the present situation and try by the co-operation of all parties to bring about economic reform. If the Government want to get that, I ask them to reconsider this matter and even at this late hour meet the unions, get around a table and see if something cannot be done to arrive at an understanding. The men at the Government workshops have met in an endeavour to find some way out. Surely it is an indication that they have the spirit of sacrifice and desire to do their quota. But if you use that spirit, it is purely of a temporary character. If the Government want it in a permanent way, they will have to get the leaders of the trades union movement, and have the trades union voice made known in a constitutional way recognised by its rules and by the law. But the Government are doing it in the wrong way. There is a certain amount of responsibility manifest, and it is causing me grave concern. I have been proud of the trades union movement in this country for the way it has dealt with matters of public concern. It has never shown any very drastically hostile attitude towards appeals for reform.

Mr. Kenneally: In that respect its record stands alone.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It does. But are the Government fostering and encouraging that? Why do not they go again to the unions and have a conference and ask them to realise the situation and then see whether retrenchment cannot be avoided.

Imagine what the Government are doing to numbers of young men. I appeal to the Minister for Railways, who has made contracts with young men, undertaking that if they devoted their lives to the railway service there was promotion ahead of them, that they had permanent positions assured if they behaved themselves. They have behaved themselves. There are good lads in the service who have devoted to it many years of their lives and are now too old to go into any other calling. Yet they are being put out of work. It is wrong to break a contract, a bond of that description. It is right that we should negotiate on a contract of that kind, just as it is right that we should negotiate a contract about rent. All these things should be subject to negotiation. The Government are putting young men out of work and generally creating discontent and dissatisfaction through wholesale retrenchment. If they would but meet the unions and attempt to arrive at an understanding, if they would withdraw their conditions of limited consideration that might be obtained in the Arbitration Court and do it in a proper way around a table, they would arrive at such an understanding that we should have permanent industrial peace during the economic crisis. Given that, and given understandings between the Government and the Opposition in this House and the trades unions and other interests outside the House, Western Australia will be the first to recover. But our advantages are slipping from us because the Government are attacking this question in a way that is going to divide the House, divide the country, divide the work and divide the people, whereas what is wanted is unanimity if the Government desire to get permanent results.

MR. H. W. MANN (Perth—on amendment) [9.26]: I shall not take half the time the member for Guildford has taken. In his long speech he has put up no facts at all to show that the position of the district allowances should not be reviewed. The other night when the Minister for Works was speaking, the Premier interjected, "Well, this matter might be dealt with by way of review, and if it is not necessary to deal with it by way of the court, as the figures will show, there should certainly be some review of the position." The position as it exists at present is that allowances are drawn in districts where the cost of living

is considerably less than in other districts where no allowances are made. That shows that these allowances were brought into operation when the conditions were altogether different from what they are to-day. These district allowances came into operation when they were necessary, when the cost of living was high in those districts, when the local disabilities were great and when, in some instances, there was no railway communication. But to-day there is railway communication, the cost of living is down, and the disabilities that existed when those allowances were first brought into operation are no longer there. Let me give the House some of the conditions. Taking the index number at 1,000—I am quoting this from the "Statistical Return"—the position is that the cost in the metropolitan area is 1,805. The highest cost of all is at Youanmi. There are no railways there, and no Government employees.

Mr. Munsie: Is there no school there?

Mr. H. W. MANN: I cannot say.

Mr. Munsie: If there be a teacher there, he will come into it.

Mr. H. W. MANN: That makes the case still stronger. The figures given here show that Youanmi is the most expensive place in Western Australia at the present time. The figure for Youanmi is 2,719, and the next highest is Wiluna, 2,534. At Cue, where there is an allowance, the figure is 2,229; at Penberthon, where there is no allowance, 2,194; at Bridgetown, 2,125; and at Kalgoorlie, 2,126.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You do not want to abolish allowances because there are some anomalies.

Mr. Withers: You cannot compare the conditions at Bridgetown with those at Kalgoorlie.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I am giving the cost of living figures, and it is on the cost of living that the allowances are based.

Mr. Munsie: No.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Of course, it is.

Mr. McCallum: No one has mentioned the cost of living.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Members have said that the Government are attacking the standard of living.

Mr. McCallum: The cost of living and the standard are different things.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The one is wrapped up in the other. At Southern Cross, where

there is an allowance, the figure is 2,158. The member for Bunbury did not mention these points, but the figure for his town is 2,019, and there is no allowance for Bunbury.

Hon. P. Collier: The sea breeze is there.

Mr. Withers: I have lived in both places, and I would sooner live in Bunbury without an allowance than in Kalgoorlie with one.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Other figures are Jarnadup, 2,078, and Manjimup, 2,089. The statistician's figures go to show that there are many places where the cost of living is much greater than in places where a district allowance is being paid. I submit that district allowances were paid because of the cost of living and disabilities, and for no other reason.

Mr. Willecock: Give us the figures for the disabilities.

Mr. H. W. MANN: One disability would be the lack of railway communication, but there is railway communication with the places I have mentioned.

The Minister for Railways: Those disabilities apply to employees in and out of the service. One gets an allowance and the other does not.

Mr. McCallum: Are you going to abolish it because someone gets it and someone else does not?

Mr. H. W. MANN: Surely the position should be reviewed.

Hon. P. Collier: What is your interpretation of the word "reviewed"?

The Minister for Railways: Give notice of the question.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Surely the court should be asked to review the matter.

Hon. P. Collier: Let us agree upon terms. What is your interpretation of "reviewed"?

Mr. H. W. MANN: The position to-day is that district allowances are being paid in places where the cost of living is less than in places where no allowances are paid.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, but what is your interpretation of "reviewed"? Answer the question!

Mr. H. W. MANN: All the speakers who have supported the amendment have refrained from giving figures to show why the allowances should be retained as at present. If there are to be district allowances, let them be paid where the cost of living is highest.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is not a job for this House.

Mr. H. W. MANN: But it is a job for the Arbitration Court.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No, it is not.

Mr. Munsie: You are not appealing to the Arbitration Court for that.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Why do we go to the court, except to ask it to adjust anomalies?

Hon. P. Collier: Not at all. You are asking for abolition of allowances, not for an adjustment of anomalies.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Notwithstanding the interjection of the Leader of the Opposition, it is open to the Arbitration Court to say whether district allowances should be abolished or adjusted.

Hon. P. Collier: You are not asking for adjustments.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I am speaking of the functions of the court.

Mr. McCallum: What did you say on the hustings?

Hon. P. Collier: What does it matter what he said on the hustings?

Mr. H. W. MANN: What I said, I shall stand to.

Mr. McCallum: Well, you are sitting down to it now.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I am doing nothing of the kind.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will disregard interjections and address the Chair.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) put up a very good case in some respects, but he passed over points that did not suit his case. The hon. member might have stood up to his reputation for being fair and honest by stating that the Government Statistician reported that the cost of living in this State had been reduced by 9 per cent. in July. He did not say it because it would not have supported his case. The member for Guildford-Midland can see no virtue in the administration since the present Government took office.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: How can I?

Mr. H. W. MANN: I am not suggesting that the cost of living has come down as a result of the Government's administration, but on the other hand it is not fair for the hon. member to suggest that the Government should be blamed because other things have gone up.

Mr. Lamond: Tell us some good the present Government have done.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The member for Guildford-Midland sees no good in the present Government.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: How can I?

Mr. McCallum: We cannot see the invisible.

Hon. P. Collier: You have an adverse balance of trade against you.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) sought to justify the allowance at Geraldton because of the rents charge there. Rents at Geraldton are very little higher than in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Willcock: And the amount is very little higher.

Mr. H. W. MANN: There is no allowance in the metropolitan area.

Hon. P. Collier: And a very small allowance at Geraldton.

Mr. Willcock: There is a shilling in the metropolitan area.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The difference in rent is 2s. a week.

Mr. Willcock: The allowance in Geraldton is only 1s. 6d.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The hon. member did not quote those figures.

Mr. Willcock: I was not asked to do so.

Hon. P. Collier: Did you want him to supply the information for you?

Mr. H. W. MANN: The rent at Merredin is 5s. a week less than in the metropolitan area. Apart from that, the railway men at Merredin have comfortable homes to live in. I take no exception to that.

Mr. McCallum: But the private rents in Merredin are very high, according to a meeting of business people the other day.

The Minister for Railways: They do not get a district allowance.

Mr. McCallum: All the railway men have cottages.

The Minister for Railways: Private employees do not get a district allowance.

Mr. H. W. MANN: On the figures of the Government Statistician, there is no justification for the retention of the allowances. If wages were being attacked, it would be quite another thing.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is an attack on wages.

Mr. H. W. MANN: If an attack were being made on wages, figures could be sub-

mitted to show that wages were not too high in comparison with the cost of commodities. These allowances have nothing at all to do with wages.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Their abolition means reduced income.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Not at all. The hon. member is attempting to draw a red herring across the track.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You want to get busy and do something for the State.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must ask hon. members to observe the rules of the House. The member for Perth has the floor. I cannot listen to more than one member at a time.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The member for South Fremantle asked what I said on the hustings. The question of Government allowances was not then considered. I was asked a question about wages, to which I gave a certain answer. When we deal with wages I shall justify the answer I gave. This question has nothing to do with wages. It is a question of an allowance to certain Government employees under certain conditions. The allowance was granted to recompense certain people for the higher cost of living and for disabilities. The figures I have quoted show that in places where the allowance is being paid, the cost of living is less than in many places where there is no allowance. For that reason if for no other the Government are justified in asking the Arbitration Court to review the matter. If the district allowances are to be retained, there should be a reconsideration of the districts to which they should apply. The question is whether they are longer justified, seeing that the cost of living averages out fairly well throughout the State. The highest place is Youanmi with an index figure of 2,700 and the lowest is Katanning with 1,911. With such a small margin of difference, it is questionable whether the allowances should be retained. For this reason I shall oppose the amendment.

MR. MUNSIE (Hannans—on amendment) [9.42]: I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on the high and honourable position to which this House has appointed you, but I cannot join with some other members in congratulating the Government. I believe members opposite are sitting on that side of the House as a result of false pretences. They ought to be sitting on this side of the House.

The Minister for Railways: Well, give us a reason.

Mr. MUNSIE: One reason is that members would not have been sitting on that side of the House if they had not promised work for all, a promise which they are not attempting to carry out. That is the principal reason.

Mr. Sampson: But you were there on a minority vote.

Mr. MUNSIE: I say we were not.

The Minister for Railways: Are not you comfortable over there? You look all right.

Mr. MUNSIE: The member for Perth has advanced an extraordinary argument. He says in effect that if we take from individuals 1s. 6d. to 18s. per week, we shall not be interfering with their wages. It is the first time I have heard any argument of that kind, and I fail to see how the hon. member can justify it. During the election campaign, he distinctly stated that if the Nationalist Party were returned to power, he would not agree to any interference with wages or conditions as they existed in this State. If to take 18s. a week away from an individual does not interfere with his wages, does it interfere with his conditions? If not, I ask whether it interferes with the conditions or wages of a man to cause him to work 48 hours a week on the basic wage which he received for a 44-hour week.

The Minister for Lands: Are you not anticipating the decision of the Arbitration Court?

Mr. MUNSIE: I am not concerned about what the court does. Members opposite are endeavouring to take away 18s. from some of these employees, as well as the 44-hour week. If the member for Perth can induce the Government to support his suggestion with regard to district allowances, we will withdraw the motion. If the Government will make an application to the court for an adjustment of the conditions there will be no objection from this side of the House. In many cases where district allowances are paid, the recipients have no right to them, but in other places where they are not paid they should certainly be given. If an appeal were made to the court on that basis, no protest would be forthcoming from this side of the House. We would continue, however, to object to the endeavour to interfere with the hours of work.

The Minister for Railways: You suggested that yourself. You suggest we should take the allowance away from some of them.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Minister is trying to mislead the House.

The Minister for Railways: You said it.

Mr. MUNSIE: I said that allowances were paid in some districts where they were not justified.

The Minister for Lands: That is why we are applying to the court.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not want to be misrepresented. That is not what the Government are doing. They are trying to abolish district allowances whether they are justified or not. If there is a school at Youanmi, the teacher would ordinarily get a district allowance. The member for Perth says that in this spot the cost of living is higher than in any other part of the State, and yet the Government want to take away the district allowance.

Mr. Withers: And there is no railway communication.

Mr. MUNSIE: No.

Hon. P. Collier: But there is a railway at Wiluna.

Mr. MUNSIE: Where the cost of living is the second highest in the State. The present position has to a large extent been brought about by Press propaganda. Since I have been in public life, a matter of 19 years, I never remember Press propaganda as consistent or on the same lines as we have had during the last three or four weeks. One cannot take up the "West Australian" the "Daily News" or "The Sunday Times" without seeing figures that are detrimental to the men working in the Government service. Day by day we see articles showing the railway losses or some other harmful aspect of railway working. The Press do not care what they say. The statements published can, if compared with other figures, be proved in nine cases out of ten to be wrong. I was very pleased to see what appeared in this morning's paper. I know the Government are bitterly opposed to State trading concerns. The morning Press came out yesterday with big headlines dealing with the State Shipping Service, and declaring that they showed a loss of £1,480,333. This was a visible loss, and the inference was that the losses were actually much greater than was stated.

Hon. P. Collier: The paper was only a million and a quarter wrong.

The Minister for Railways: I never worry about my invisible losses.

Mr. MUNSIE: In this morning's paper appeared a statement from the Chief Secretary. These misrepresentations were too much for him. He could not stand them. He proved in this morning's paper that the statement was £1,248,264 on the wrong side.

Mr. Wilson: It was only a flea bite.

Mr. MUNSIE: He showed that the actual visible loss was £232,069 instead of £1,480,333.

Hon. P. Collier: I want the Minister in charge of State Sawmills to do the same thing, and show how wrong they were with regard to those figures.

Mr. MUNSIE: They were by comparison very much further out in that case, although the amount in question was not so big. There is a Press campaign going on now chiefly with the object of reducing wages. Above all, they say, there must be a reduction in the salaries of members of Parliament, to give a lead to the country in the direction of reducing wages generally.

Hon. P. Collier: It is only a gesture.

Mr. MUNSIE: When the time comes I shall have something to say about that.

The Minister for Lands: Do not talk of it now.

Hon. P. Collier: You will not make it retrospective, will you?

The Minister for Lands: That would be hopeless.

Mr. MUNSIE: If the Government want to relieve distress and help those who are hard hit, there are many other ways of doing so than by attacking wages. Alongside the statement made by the Chief Secretary in this morning's paper there is an article emanating from the Country Women's Association regarding the greater use of wool.

Hon. P. Collier: To pull over their eyes.

Mr. MUNSIE: A little digest is given to show how that could be done. In this direction the Government could do a great deal of good. Not much advantage can be gained by exhibits at the Royal Show. I defy anyone to visit the largest shop in Perth or the smallest retail establishment, and buy one pennyworth of ordinary woollen goods at less than 40 per cent. above mill price. In some cases, there is a difference of 89 per cent. Where does all this difference go? Those who are producing the wool do not get out of it anything like what they should. The Albany mills are one of the few in Australia that make up

their own raw material, and carry out the whole business of manufacturing into the completed article.

Hon. P. Collier: It is the only one here.

Mr. MUNSIE: And one of the very few in Australia. Most of the mills in the Eastern States buy the wool tops and manufacture their products from them. Others, however, make their own tops. In Albany the mills buy the raw material, manufacture it into tops, and produce the finished goods. The man who rears the sheep from which the wool is taken is paid, poorly enough it is true, and the man who shears the sheep is also paid for the work he does. Those who cart the wool to the railways, the men who handle it on the railways, and the railways themselves are paid before the wool reaches the mill. When the wool has been manufactured into cloth, the employees who produce the article are paid for their work. No effective work is done after the goods leave the mills.

Hon. P. Collier: There is only the handling left.

Mr. MUNSIE: Some of those people who get profits on the products of the mill never see the goods. In Albany itself, one cannot buy the products at less than 40 per cent. above mill cost.

The Minister for Agriculture: How long has that appertained?

Mr. MUNSIE: For the last eight months, and I believe for the last three or four years. The Government would be doing something in the interests of the wool grower as well as the people of the State if they found out why these goods are being sold at such a high price compared with the cost of the raw material, and the mill costs.

Mr. Angelo: The same thing applies to the Wyndham Meat Works. You cannot get their tinned meat here.

Mr. MUNSIE: That statement is not correct. There are three shops in Perth at which it is possible to buy Wyndham tinned meat at only 10 per cent. more than the cost at the works, plus freight.

Mr. Angelo: They do not advertise the fact.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have bought it myself at a shop in Murray-street on that basis.

Mr. Sampson: People cannot know it can be bought, if the fact is kept secret.

Hon. P. Collier: It is all very well for a newspaper proprietor to talk about advertising in that way.

Mr. MUNSIE: If the Government want to do something to effect economy and help the State to regain its prosperity, they should have an investigation into this matter of the Albany woollen goods.

The Minister for Railways: Can we look at the result of your investigations?

Mr. MUNSIE: If the Country Women's Association induced 1,000 people to buy these goods, each and all of them would be bled by someone or robbed by them. Someone is getting more than a fair percentage out of these products. I am told that the mills could produce at an even cheaper rate if it were possible for them to work full time. If they are to work full time, the public generally must buy the articles the mills manufacture. So that the people may be induced to use those articles, it is necessary that the articles should be obtainable at a reasonable price. And the Albany Woollen Mills are in fact supplying them at a reasonable price.

The Minister for Railways: Yes, and the articles are as good as any produced in Australia.

Mr. MUNSIE: Some of them are even better. I protest against the Government's attitude, and particularly against their endeavour to induce the public to believe that the Government are merely asking the Arbitration Court to review district allowances. The fact is quite otherwise. Representing a goldfields district in which allowances are paid, I would be lacking in my duty if I did not make it quite clear that the Government are asking, not for a review of the district allowances, but for their abolition. In my opinion the Government are doing a foolish thing. If their application was granted, the result would be to bring about the ears of Ministers such a hornets' nest as would make them regret their action for the remainder of their occupancy of the Treasury benches. From my district I receive numerous applications from public servants, teachers in particular, for transfers. I have written to the Chief Secretary on the subject this very week. One teacher writes to me saying, "I have been four years in the country district; is it not possible for me to get a position in the town?" How much stronger will that feeling become if district allowances are abolished altogether! I know of teachers

who have been stationed in the metropolitan area ever since I have been in Perth, a period of 19 years; and there are on the goldfields teachers who have remained there, to my knowledge, for 11 years. That condition of things will not continue if the district allowances are abolished. The teachers will not stand it. Those of them who are stationed in the country have as much right to the pleasures of the city as other teachers have. Should the allowances be abolished, country teachers will make trouble if they do not get their share of city pleasures. Indeed, the Government are simply courting trouble by their endeavour to abolish district allowances. It is not too late yet. I hope and trust that the Government will even at this eleventh hour, for their own sakes as well as for the sake of the public servants affected, reconsider their decision. Let them adopt the word of their own supporter, the member for Perth (Mr. H. W. Mann), and ask for revision instead of abolition of the district allowances. During the general election I remained in the metropolitan area except for one visit to Pinjarra, and I heard the election speeches of most of the metropolitan members on both sides. Only one candidate, not one elected member, said that if returned he would support a reversion from the 44-hour to the 48-hour week. All the other candidates said they would not stand for any such interference. Now I want to know from the member for Canning (Mr. Wells) where he stands in this division, if there should be a division.

Mr. Wells: I will tell you later.

Mr. MUNSIE: I heard that hon. member say distinctly that not only would he oppose an alteration of working conditions, but that he would favour a continuance of the 44-hour week. The motion does both.

Mr. Wells: The member for Canning said something in addition to that.

Mr. MUNSIE: The hon. member was asked a definite question, "If a Nationalist Government is returned to power, you being elected as a Nationalist, and if the Nationalist Government attempt to alter wages and conditions, what will be your attitude?" The hon. member's reply was, "I will not agree to an attack on either wages or hours. As a matter of fact, I agree with the 44 hours." Those are the hon. member's own words.

Mr. Wells: Tell us all he said.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have not a sufficiently good memory to repeat all the hon. member said that night. However, that was a most striking answer to a definite question. I am anxious to see how the hon. member votes on this motion. If he votes for the Government, I shall certainly take the opportunity to go to Como for the purpose of justifying a statement I made there two nights before the hon. member addressed the Como electors. There were only two candidates, and I told the Como people that if they returned a Nationalist their conditions would be altered. Two nights later the hon. member came along and he was asked that question. He replied point blank that he would not support any alteration. Therefore I claim the hon. member's vote. If I do not get it, I shall let his electors know how he voted.

MR. MILLINGTON (Mt. Hawthorn—on amendment) [10.6]: First may I be permitted to congratulate you, Sir, on being elevated to the position of Speaker. I have had previous experience of only one Speaker. Sitting under him so long, I came to view him as a model Speaker. Certainly he had the capacity, knowledge, and temperament that are so essential. I believe that you, Sir, possess those qualifications also. Although, of course, you can never be like your predecessor, I hope you will be as like him as you are able to be. With regard to the amendment, I do not require the assistance of the Arbitration Court in making up my mind as to how I shall vote. It is a question of policy, particularly as regards the district allowances. I do not regard those allowances as in the nature of a concession. They have been deemed by successive Governments to constitute an equalisation scheme. The present Government are departing from a policy which has operated ever since Western Australia had responsible government. All Governments have vied with each other in deploring the drift to the city and in devising ways and means of encouraging people to go into the country districts. For that reason these equalisation allowances were given. If I had any doubt as to that circumstance, my experience in administering a department has shown me that it is considered almost victimisation to take a public servant away from a position in the metropolitan area, where he has established a home, and send him

to some country district where, at great expense, he has to re-establish his household. I know of one such case in the electorate of the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker). The man has been sent 500 miles away. The department cannot build him a home. He occupies an important position, though he is not on a large salary. He and his wife have to board at an hotel. The member for Perth (Mr. H. W. Mann) cannot show me how that case is provided for in the figures of the Commonwealth Statistician. A previous Assembly has shown its readiness to assess the disabilities in various districts of Western Australia. That was in connection with a Redistribution of Seats Bill. This Chamber did not leave the question to a court or a Royal Commission, but assessed the relative values of votes in the metropolitan, farming, pastoral and mining districts, and in the North-West. This House itself decided the question, in conformity with Western Australia's policy that 6,000 electors in Perth should have only as much say in the government of the country as 4,000 electors in the agricultural areas and 2,000 in the goldfields and pastoral areas. So pronounced was the feeling that nobody troubled about how many electors there were in the northern seats. It has been the policy of Western Australia to recognise that these disabilities exist. The Government have been outspoken regarding their attitude. I am glad that the Minister for Works has been most outspoken, but I object to apologists like the member for Perth (Mr. H. W. Mann) who has claimed that this matter has been referred to the court definitely for determination. I can conceive of the member for Perth announcing that it had been referred to the court for review, and then, whatever the court's decision may be, he will claim that that is the court's responsibility. The Minister for Works has been quite definite, and he has told us that all the evidence he can secure will be placed before the court with a view to securing the abolition of the district allowances.

Hon. P. Collier: He said he hopes the court will give that decision.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I appreciate an opponent such as the Minister for Works, but I have the utmost contempt for others who seek to mislead the public by holding up the Commonwealth Statistician's figures. I

am not surprised at what has taken place. Some people are surprised, but during the election I took every possible opportunity of announcing that if the then Opposition were returned and formed a Government, an attack would be made on the standard of living of the workers. I said it was an immoral certainty that they would do it and what I predicted has come to pass. So long as they will accept the responsibility, then it resolves itself into a question as to which policy the people will accept.

Mr. J. H. Smith: What about the attack on Murray-Jones?

Mr. MILLINGTON: I was wondering, Mr. Speaker, if you would permit the discussion to continue in a general way? At the outset I determined to confine myself to the two points—district allowances and hours. As to the question mentioned by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith), if he chooses to raise it he will get all he wants.

The Minister for Lands: But not on the amendment.

Mr. MILLINGTON: No. After what I said about the new Speaker this evening, I would not dream of imposing on his good nature to the extent of digressing. There will be ample opportunities for dealing with other matters. On the question now before the House, I claim that although the Government are attacking the question of district allowances, those allowances have been part and parcel of the general policy of the State. The Minister for Works would not suggest that the rebates on railway freights for people in the country districts are not justified. If the Commissioner of Railways were given a free hand, I do not think for one moment that he would grant those rebates. As the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willecock) pointed out, the carriage of superphosphate at the present rate is not a business proposition. Although we say that the Commissioner of Railways has a free hand, everyone knows that Government policy for the time being influences the position, and that the Commissioner really does not have a free hand in all matters. On the question of roads, the people in the metropolitan area do not object to concessions made in respect of country roads. Even in the Education Department, certain concessions are granted

repeatedly with reference to country schools and country scholars. Those concessions do not apply to the metropolitan district and no exception is taken to them. When it is said that this is not a question in respect to which the Government should take full responsibility, I shall be satisfied so long as the Government are straightforward. I presume the Minister for Works, and not the member for Perth, is entitled to speak for the Government. We have had the position made clear by the Minister for Works without any quibbling, and if that is to be the attitude of the Government when this matter comes up for discussion in public, I shall be satisfied. As for helping the Government, they will get plenty of help from this side of the House. I am prepared to help them to a greater degree than they imagine, and in the right time and in the right place, I shall propound a scheme that will help the Government out of the difficult times we are confronted with at present.

The Minister for Railways: I have had ten thousand offers during the last fortnight.

Mr. MILLINGTON: But you have not had mine! I think the Minister for Railways realises the extent to which I am prepared to assist the Government. Instead of the Government rushing into this proposal and placing before the court an application for the abolition of district allowances, I suppose it will be claimed that the court will review the position.

The Minister for Works: The court will decide.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I regret the position because included in the Cabinet is the Chief Secretary, a gentleman who is considered an expert in stating the case for Western Australian disabilities. He presented a remarkably complete case, as a result of which Western Australia received a considerable cash consideration from the Federal Government. Even that Government was forced to recognise our disabilities, as the result of the case presented on our behalf. Had the Government referred this matter to the Attorney-General for support, he would have put up an answerable case in support of the disabilities suffered by people in outback places. I am astonished that a Cabinet embracing five members representing country consti-

tuencies—four Ministers from the Country Party and the Premier himself, who represents a country district—should be the first to depart from a policy of decentralisation, which is the declared policy of Western Australia. The present Government have declared for centralisation. They have said to Government employees in Perth, "You shall be paid at the same rate as those in the outback places." This decision will affect the Government service considerably. The Minister for Railways, who also administers the Police Department, has a most difficult task to perform. Every officer who is sent outside the metropolitan area will immediately decide that he has been victimised. That is so at the present time, even though district allowances are in force. If there is any doubt as to whether disabilities are suffered by those stationed in country districts, the Government can easily ascertain the feeling, for if they were to give every Government employee an opportunity to stay in Perth where no allowances are paid, or to go into the country, where district allowances apply, they would quickly find the whole of the Government employees located in the metropolis. There is no doubt about it, if it comes to individual choice. I do not know that the Commonwealth Statistician is as good a judge of it as the man himself. If it be left to the man himself, it will be found that the public servants do consider they are under a distinct disadvantage in being ordered to go to the country, even when it means a district allowance. Therefore, if the district allowance be abolished, the Government will find there will be suggestions of favouritism, and in every way the service will be disorganised and demoralised. I can just imagine the very fine work that will be put in by officials with influence, to the end that they might remain in Perth or in the vicinity of the metropolitan area. The difficulty will be to staff outback places at all. While in office I had to tell the police that they were not the metropolitan police, but the police force of Western Australia. That being so, and since the same principle applies to other departments, clearly the Government are making an error in departing from an established system to which public servants consider they are entitled, by requiring its abolition. Coming to the question of hours, I agree the Arbitration Court is in a better position to deal with that than it is

to deal with district allowances. For district allowances are not a matter of calculation; a hundred and one different considerations come into that question. The member for Perth suggested that because the statistician says there is very little disability in certain outback places, climate is the only disability. But that is too ridiculous for words. The allowances were not given entirely on that account. So, when it comes to the question of district allowances, I say it is a question of policy, and one the Government should have taken the responsibility of determining, rather than referring it to the Arbitration Court. The time is now rather late to go into the whole question of industrial conditions, and I shall not presume on your good nature, Mr. Speaker, but it does seem to me that it is not only here in Western Australia, but throughout the world that mankind is faced with a world-wide problem due to so large a percentage of the workers being out of employment. I suggest to the Government that they will not overcome the difficulty, but rather accentuate it, if the hours of those who are at work are increased. Surely that sort of thing will not help us out of the unemployment difficulty. I am not prepared to say just now what I consider the remedy may be, but I do know that nobody has yet discovered a remedy. I need not reiterate the position in respect to the fact that our productive capacity has so increased that the world can be supplied with all its needs while a big percentage of the population remains unemployed. I think the Government had not better depend on removing this modern problem by increasing the hours of those who are at work. I suggest, too, that the successful industries in this State are not those industries in which excessively long hours are worked. Take the farming industry. Some people have the idea that only those farmers who work excessively long hours have been successful. Actually, the modern trend is for fewer hours to be worked. As a matter of fact, if a man takes more than eight hours in which to do a decent day's work, he does not know how to put himself to work. I remember when I was speaking at Wickpin on one occasion an old gentleman seemed to have quite made up his mind that his hours of labour were going to be interfered with. I told him I knew there were some men who took an extraordinarily long time in doing a day's work, but that I had not the slightest idea of

interfering with his work. It is quite clear, Mr. Speaker, that what is of much more importance than working long hours is the ability, by the use of modern conditions, to work efficiently throughout a day of somewhat shorter hours. Until in Australia and in Western Australia we realise this, and there is more regard given to efficiency than to excessively long hours, we are still going to be a country or a State that is behind the times. Until we adopt modern conditions, limiting the number of hours worked in industry, we are not going to keep up our end in the keen competition to which we shall be subjected. I suggest that attention be given to efficiency rather than to thinking our salvation lies in working long hours. I know the Government and the Minister for Railways are in a real difficulty in respect of our railways. I commend to them the report of the Commissioner of Railways in to-day's "West Australian." A perusal of that report will show that there are other things than increasing hours and abolishing the district allowance which will be found necessary to put the railways on a proper footing. Points in the Commissioner's report giving consideration to ways and means are more likely to put the service on a better footing and re-organise it even to the extent of restoring it to a profitable basis. That is all I intend to say just now. I promised you, Sir, that I would confine myself to the two questions. They are questions on which I have definite views. I emphatically support the amendment moved by the member for East Perth, and I think it well the House should divide on this question, so that we may see where the promises are, and who are prepared to disclose their attitude on this question. During the election I heard some exceedingly generous comments by my opponent, who was quite devoted to the workers and passionately attached to the unemployed. But now is the time when we can declare ourselves on a question like this, and a division of the House will tell the people of the State, not what was promised on the eve of an election, but what is actually being done now. The Government have accepted their responsibilities, and their followers are responsible for backing that Government. I am pleased that the amendment has been moved, for we shall now get a definite pronouncement and people will no longer have any doubt as to our views on this question.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon—on amendment) [10.28]: A certain amount of attention has been directed to me to-night. When I heard the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) saying nice things about me, I was reminded of the classic proverb, "Beware of the Greeks when they come bearing gifts in their hands." I began to wonder where was the nigger in the wood pile. It appears it is all in reference to my attitude on this question. I want the House to understand that I stand here just as I did when in Merredin. In regard to this district allowance, I do not believe in its abolition, but I have yet to learn that the Government are abolishing the allowance. I should like to ask why the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie), who made the statement here just now, said that the Government with which he was associated for six years had paid where it was considered the money was not due, and yet did not pay in places where it certainly was due. He did not state why his Government did not do something in that respect in six years. I have never approved of an alteration of hours or conditions by the Government. What becomes of what we have been told is the finest Arbitration Act in the world if we do not abide by it?

Mr. Sleeman: I think the whip must have been cracked.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The hon. member will see directly. I stand to what I said at Merredin. When the present Government took office, they found the Treasury devoid of so much as a sprat to rattle on a tombstone. Consequently they have had to look around for measures to meet the existing position. A start has to be made somewhere.

Mr. Sleeman: Start with the workers.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Minister has made an application to the Arbitration Court. If the Arbitration Court is the body to fix wages and conditions, the Government have done the correct thing in approaching it.

Mr. McCallum: They could not do otherwise.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Then how is it the previous Government made alterations without going to the Arbitration Court?

Mr. McCallum: We could give, but you cannot take away. Is that news to you?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Government have done the right thing in approaching the court. I stated in Merredin that I joined

issue with workers on the question of the 44-hour week

Hon. P. Collier interjected.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The hon. member visited Merredin and was roasted.

Mr. Sleeman: And next time you will be.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: My vote grows larger and larger every time. I got half the votes in a place where one would naturally expect 75 per cent. to be against me. The Leader of the Opposition visited Merredin, but the opinion expressed after he left was that he had made a very poor showing.

Hon. P. Collier: They had heard of your wonderful genius!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The hon. member made special efforts to blow me to pieces, but failed. After listening to the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) I am satisfied that instead of talking about a reduction of salary, we should talk of an increase. The price of flour has come down, due to the Leader of the Opposition, and the rate of interest is being discussed on account of what the member for South Fremantle had to say. He was not the first to raise that question. The "Mirror" in its issue on the Saturday previous to the hon. member's speaking, gave almost the same figures, so I suppose John Simons had something to do with it.

Hon. P. Collier: I thought you said that blathering was a waste of time.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do not agree with the abolition of district allowances. I have yet to find that the Government can tell the Arbitration Court to abolish them.

Mr. McCallum: They are asking the court to do so.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We know this marvellous Mussolini from South Fremantle. The Government cannot dictate to the court.

Hon. P. Collier: Are you sure of that?

Mr. McCallum: You are a marvel.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I see no reason why the district allowances should not be rearranged. The member for Hannans has told us that there have been instances during the last six years in which district allowances were paid when they should not have been paid and vice versa. It is quite reasonable for the Government to make their application to the court. The court will consider all the factors bearing on the question, and I take it will give a fair and just decision.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: If the district allowance for Merredin is abolished, how will you get on?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I consider Merredin is a dear place to live in. Rents are not cheap, as has been stated here to-night. I do not take much notice of the statistician's figures, because I know that Merredin rents are dear. Some men are paying 32s. 6d. a week rent for privately owned houses. It is true that the Government cottages carry a more reasonable rent. I have said that sacrifices must be made, but some members opposite are afraid of them. There is talk of reducing salaries.

Hon. P. Collier: Get out!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I, perhaps least of all, can afford a reduction, and yet I am willing to submit to a reduction.

Hon. P. Collier: You are not worth two bob a week.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are not discussing that.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Had the Government done what previous Governments did, they would have taken the law into their own hands and altered the conditions without approaching the court.

Mr. McCallum: They could not. The law would not allow them to do it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Anyhow, they are adopting the lawful method, and therefore I support the amendment.

MR. PANTON (Leederville—on amendment) [10.37]: There are one or two phases of the question with which I should like to deal, not so much what has been said to-night as what was said by the Minister for Works on Thursday last. I think the Minister partially repeated to-night what he said on Thursday last, that the Labour Government had granted the 44-hour week before the expiration of an award, thus breaking the law. It is something new to me to hear that any employer, whether the Government or a private employer, is breaking the law by granting better conditions than those prescribed by the Arbitration Court. The Minister for Works must surely know that the Arbitration Court stipulates a maximum number of hours and a minimum rate of wage, and it is a common occurrence in all avocations for employers to pay more than the minimum wage and grant their employees shorter hours than those provided by the award. Other-

wise, every worker would be on the one level, the minimum rate. Among shop assistants, hundreds of men and women were paid more than the basic rate prescribed by the Arbitration Court and worked fewer hours than the court stipulated. The argument put up by the Minister for Works will certainly not hold water.

The Minister for Works: I did not expect it to.

Mr. PANTON: Surely the Minister expected it to carry some weight, or did he mention it simply to convince himself? The Minister also said that the Government proposed to alter the industrial conditions through the Arbitration Court, while the Labour Government had done it by political action. I would like to know whether the Minister has any objection to political action. Does not he honestly believe that the workers of this State are paying into funds year in and year out as an assurance that they will obtain better industrial conditions through political action? Surely he does not for a moment believe that the workers combine through their trades unions, their A.L.P. branches and otherwise, to return sufficient members to this House without expecting their representatives to do things by political action. That is what the Labour Party stands for, industrial and political action.

Mr. Withers: What does the other party stand for?

Mr. PANTON: It stands for political action so far as they themselves are concerned, and industrial action when it suits their convenience. The difference between the Labour Party and the party represented by our friends opposite is that whilst in office the latter can operate by political action, but when they want to operate industrially they need not go to the Arbitration Court because they know they can starve the workers into submission any time they like to do so.

Mr. Willcock: They can try.

Mr. PANTON: They have tried it pretty successfully at various times during the last 30 or 40 years. If the Labour Party or the workers, after electing members to this House with a majority, do not take some political action, they will be foolish to subscribe towards the policy of political action. That is where I object to the attitude of the present Government. In 1924 the most prominent feature in the fight

at the elections was the 44-hour week. For two years previously industrial disputes, and some of them pretty big ones, were constantly occurring. The employees of the metropolitan water supply as well as of the Coolgardie water scheme were on strike. It seemed possible that the Kalgoorlie water supply would be stopped unless the water was run through under the protection of a guard with fixed bayonets. Members on this side and others on the public platform pleaded with the men to do nothing so drastic. I and many others urged them to put their political action into operation, and at the ensuing elections to elect a Government of their own, who would give them the 44 hours without necessarily starving them first. As the member for Middle Swan has said, the engineers prior to that went out on strike for six months over the 44-hour week. In 1924 the political fight was waged mostly around the question of 44 hours.

The Minister for Works: Was not the Arbitration Court then in existence?

Mr. PANTON: Yes. The strike was against the award of the court. The Minister does not believe the workers always abide by the awards. It has been said before that it is our Arbitration Court. Why is it ours? Surely the President of the Arbitration Court does not favour us or anyone else. He is unbiassed and belongs to no party. Why is the court our court?

The Minister for Works: The ex-Minister for Works brought down the Industrial Arbitration Bill. That is why.

Mr. PANTON: The Minister brought down a dog Act. Is it his dog, and do all the dogs in the State belong to him? What a stupid answer to make! Because the ex-Minister for Works introduced the Industrial Arbitration Bill, it is our court! He may have had something to do with the matter, but this does not make it our court any more than an amendment to the Criminal Code causes the code to belong to the Chief Justice.

Mr. Wilson: The court has been there for years.

Mr. PANTON: In 1927 the general elections were fought to a large extent on long-service leave. At the 1930 election there was no question about 44 hours or district allowances. Over the last three weeks the cry was chiefly "Work for all." That was

the only question discussed then. Like the member for Hannans I heard candidates all over the metropolitan area pledging themselves and the party they were supporting that there would be no interference with industrial conditions. Mr. Taylor, who was Speaker for many years, and was one of my opponents in West Leederville, danced with rage when it was suggested to him that, if the Mitchell Government were returned, the industrial conditions would be altered. Although I defeated him very fortunately for himself, he has now got a better job. If he had been elected, he would be using the same arguments that have been used by members opposite to-night. If men can go on the platform and give a definite undertaking that if returned they will support the policy that is in operation, and was put into operation by a previous Government, they should be men enough to stand up to what they have said. We hear a lot of talk about a reduction in the salaries of members and cheap sneers at the expense of politicians. That is because three parts of the promises made on the hustings are not worth a flip of the fingers when it comes to a vote of the House. Until members are prepared to stand up to what they have said on the hustings they will not get much respect from the public. I say to members representing the metropolitan area that it is no good thinking they can play ducks and drakes with the public because they have been elected for three years. People have long memories, and whether the party opposite has been able to find work for all or not, if the industrial conditions are altered in the way that is now being attempted, those members are going to meet trouble in three years' time, and probably very much sooner. They can laugh about it and they can even get out the old gang from Blackboy, and start them on the rounds as they did on the occasion of the last elections.

Mr. Hegney: I have them all now.

Mr. PANTON: I met one the other night. He asked me when I was going to shake up the Mitchell Government to see that some work was made available. I replied that he had gone round supporting the other side during the elections and asked why he did not go to that side for work. He said that he had obtained three months

work from them but now had to find another job. If every member of the gang in the metropolitan area had three months' work, there must have been plenty of others who had to go without it. Recently I had a conversation with the former Leader of the Country Party, Mr. Thomson. He told me that had it not been for the Labour Party, he would be here yet.

Hon. P. Collier: That is one service Labour has rendered to Western Australia.

Mr. PANTON: I do not know whether that is so or not. I will say this for Mr. Thomson, that he was prepared to stand up here day after day, night after night, and pledge himself to abolish the 44-hour week, or district allowances, or anything else that was to the advantage of the workers. I feel every sympathy for Sir James Mitchell. I have said on the platform, and I say here to-night, that I held the belief that Sir James Mitchell personally would honour the obligations entered into by the Collier Government with the workers, but that if Sir James was unfortunate enough to have to allot half the portfolios in his Ministry to the Country Party, he would have to do as he was told. That, I believe, is what has happened. I am disappointed in the deputy Leader of the Government. I should not have expected so young a man to be so Conservative. I repeat. Sir James Mitchell has my sympathy in the unfortunate position in which he finds himself of having to submit to half the portfolios in his Cabinet being held by members of a party which at all times has had the desire to interfere with, and to crush, the industrial workers of the metropolitan area.

MR. RAPHAEL (Victoria Park—on amendment) [11.2]: To my mind, one or two points should be stressed before the amendment goes to a division. The first is as to certain remarks made by the former Leader of the Country Party upon his return from a world tour. He began by visiting India, and he told us that in India men worked 16 hours a day for very small remuneration indeed. But he said that conditions were still better in Africa—still longer hours and yet shorter pay. Let us bear in mind that similar conditions are being forced on the Australian workers by the party of which that man was the leader. Stress of

circumstances is forcing the present Government to take the proposed action against the workers. My opponent in the Victoria Park election used the same expressions as Sir James Mitchell—"Vote for me and I will find work for you all, and prosperity for you all." In Victoria Park there are now three times as many men walking the streets and begging for food for their children as there were before the change of Government. The sustenance given to them barely suffices to keep body and soul together. The soles of their feet are on the ground, and their children are crying for food. The Nationalists have to consider that we are representatives of the workers, and that we promised to stick up for the workers, just as many members on the other side of the House did. I appeal to those hon. members opposite to keep their word now, and not throw over the worker who has trusted them almost for the subsistence of his wife and children. I ask those hon. members to adhere to their word given to those poor people, and to vote in accordance with the promises that were made.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	21
Noes	..	..	..	25
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	4
				—

AYES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Troy
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Withers
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Millington	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Parker
Mr. Brown	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Davy	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Doney	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Thorn
Mr. H. W. Mann	Mr. Wells
Mr. J. I. Mann	Mr. North
Mr. McLarty	

(Teller.)

AVE.	PAIR.	NO.
Miss Holman	|	Mr. Teesdale

Amendment thus negatived.

On motion by Mr. Piesse, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.59 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 4th September, 1930.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, EMPLOYEES AND WAGES.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1. How many persons were employed by the Railway Department in the years 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, and 1930? 2. What was the amount paid in salaries and wages for each of those years?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1. The average number of staff employed was as follows:—1925, 7,949; 1926, 8,251; 1927, 8,827; 1928, 9,312; 1929, 9,613; 1930, 9,660. 2. Total salaries and wages paid (including allowances):—1925, £1,922,093; 1926, £2,086,872; 1927, £2,294,640; 1928, £2,442,997; 1929, £2,551,056; 1930, £2,587,456.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eighth Day.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.35]: I desire to assure the House at the outset that it is not my intention to make a marathon effort such as that indulged in by Mr. Nicholson yesterday, nor shall I put over the House

any Scotch jokes. I do not intend to deal individually with those who were referred to by previous speakers, either to express sympathy or to pay a compliment, but will content myself with stating I endorse what they said. I was pleased when I read some time ago in the Press that the embargo placed upon manures from the North West boats had been lifted, but on making investigations I regretted to find that, owing to the departmental inspectors having discovered the presence of Buffalo flies at Fremantle, the lifting of the embargo was merely temporary. At first I thought that their efforts to cope with that pest had been successful, and that would have been of great advantage to many settlers, particularly in the Spearwood district to whom the use of the cheap manure from the boats means, to put it plainly, the difference between carrying on and closing up. Until the last two years or so, the growers had the benefit of the use of the manures, but now, because of the Buffalo fly, they have not that advantage. Owing to the discovery of the Buffalo fly at Fremantle, the department has found it impossible to lift the embargo permanently. I trust, however, that investigations will be continued and that before the summer, some means of dealing with the pest will be discovered and then the growers will be able to have the benefit again of cheap manure from the North-West boats. Earlier in the session I asked the Leader of the House questions regarding sewerage work at East Fremantle. I did not ask those questions from mere idle curiosity, but because the East Fremantle district has been surveyed for at least 12 months. Many new premises have been erected there during the past two or three years, for East Fremantle has gone ahead by leaps and bounds. Those who contemplated building have been at their wit's end to ascertain whether the department intended to proceed with the sewerage of that particular area. Some of them proposed to instal septic tanks, but did not desire to go to that expense if there was a possibility of the department proceeding with the sewerage of the area. I am sorry that the answers furnished by the Leader of the House were rather vague, for the people concerned are now in the same position as they were before I asked the question. When the Minister replies to the debate, I hope he will at least give us some information as to when