

The Minister for Railways: With all his virtue, he charges twice as much here.

Mr. LINDSAY: What I have said previously on this subject I am prepared to repeat now. I was in the Eastern States with Mr. Sam McKay for two days going through his works. He questioned me about the possibilities of wheat production in Western Australia. I then told him, and I am prepared now to maintain, that the firm could sell more machines in Western Australia than in all the rest of Australia. Mr. McKay agreed with me, saying "I will go over to Western Australia, and if I can get the same conditions I will start the making"—not the assembling, it is to be noted—"of machines there." When he came over here to consult, a meeting of the metropolitan council of the A.L.P. told him, "You cannot have piecework." His reply was, "If I cannot have piecework here, I will not start at all." The Minister for Railways says Mr. McKay has piecework in the East. Of course he has. Had he been allowed to institute the piecework system in Western Australia, the farmers of Western Australia would have derived the advantages I have indicated. They would have been saved the cost of assembling in the Eastern States, the cost of freight from the East to Western Australia, and the cost of reassembling here. The machines would have cost them fully 10 per cent. less than they are costing to-day. Let me illustrate the difference by quoting figures. In Melbourne a reaper and harvester of 10 feet costs £170. In Perth the same machine costs £181. A 20-disc drill costs £80 in Melbourne, and in Perth costs £88 10s. A combined 16 x 33 in Melbourne costs £76, and in Perth £88 10s. Those prices indicate the saving which would result to Western Australian farmers if the implements were manufactured here. Under those conditions, moreover, there would be 300 or 400 citizens of this State receiving 30 per cent. more than the award of the Arbitration Court. I realise as well as anybody else that in the past there have been serious difficulties about piecework. However, I investigated the piecework system in Victoria. I consulted the men, and I even went so far as to ask how they arrived at prices. Their manner of doing so is remarkable. It appears that three men out of the shop consult with three foremen or officials in like positions. There has been no friction. There has never been a strike in the works. The wages sheets showed that the average person employed there received 30

per cent. more than the wages fixed by the Arbitration Court. However, more than 30 per cent. additional work is done. The overhead costs remain the same whether a man turns out only one ploughshare per day or a greater number. The same amount of supervision is required in either case. If the output of a man is doubled, overhead charges, so far as he is concerned, are reduced by 50 per cent. Consequently the manufacturer must be able to reduce the price of the article. I had not expected to be drawn into all these arguments to-night. If I had foreseen a few of the interjections, I would have collected more data to enable me to deal with the questions that have been raised. I hope that on some future date I shall have the opportunity of addressing myself to them again.

On motion by Mr. Brown, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.50 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 6th August, 1929.*

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

### QUESTION—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT, ABUSES.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Chief Secretary: In view of the abuses of the Workers' Compensation Act, as disclosed by the insurance companies, do the Government propose to amend that Act during the present session?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: It is not admitted that the information published by the insurance companies is correct. A statement dealing with the matter will be made shortly.

**QUESTION—DURATION OF LIFE.**

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What was the average duration of life in Australia in the year 1880? 2, What was the average duration of life in Australia during the year 1928?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1 and 2, As far as the Government Statistician is aware, the information is not available. He states that the average duration of life in Australia is ascertained by the Commonwealth Statistician after the taking of an Australian census. As the Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics was not in existence in 1880, it would appear that the average duration of life in Australia in that year was not ascertained. As no census of Australia has been taken since 1921, it follows that the average duration of life in Australia during the year 1928 has not been ascertained.

**QUESTION—SUPERPHOSPHATE.**

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Chief Secretary: When was superphosphate first used as a fertiliser in Western Australia?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: It is believed from inquiries made that superphosphate was first used as a fertiliser in Australia about 1880.

**QUESTION—SLEEPERS, SELLING PRICES.**

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Chief Secretary: What was the export selling price of sleepers per load during the years 1914, 1924, and 1928?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: During the year 1914, average about £5; during the year 1924, average about £7 15s.; during the year 1928, average about £6 2s 6d.

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.***Fifth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 1st August.

**HON. C. H. WITTENOOM** (South-East) [4.40]: I wish to refer to one or two matters, but I shall not detain the House very long. I am pleased that His Excellency was able to report in his Speech that the affairs of Western Australia were upon such

a satisfactory basis. I have just returned from a visit to the Eastern States, and I found that the conditions there were most deplorable. The depression was emphasised in Melbourne and Adelaide, and when I returned to Western Australia, it appeared to me that I had come from depression to a land where the prospects were bright and conditions seemed to be satisfactory. The drought in the East is most regrettable and we are sorry that it has occurred. At the same time it has brought to Western Australia one of the best advertisements we could have. Great attention is being paid to this State on the other side of the Bight. This cheery optimism, however, has been, in a sense, dampened by the rather heavy deficit that the Government announced at the end of the financial year. I do not think that anyone could claim that the year was a very bad one from various standpoints. It suggests to me that something is wrong regarding the way the finances have been administered. It certainly tends to make one reflect upon what the position would be if we happened to encounter an extremely bad season. It is but six weeks ago, when the price of wheat was down to 3s. 9d. per bushel, that matters looked black for Australia as a whole and for the wheat producers of Western Australia in particular. That price represents a figure a long way below that at which wheat can be grown, and it is satisfactory that that position has been relieved since then even if only temporarily. Reverting to the Governor's Speech, I cannot see that there is much in it at all. It is an extraordinarily empty utterance. It refers to a lot of which we already know, and to what has been done in the past. I think the Speech should have referred more particularly to what is to be placed before us during the few months of this session. We find also that it contains very little in regard to the future. Certain reference is made to the introduction of a Rural Bank Bill. I do not quite know what a rural bank is; I have asked a number of parliamentarians older in experience than I am, but they do not seem to know much about it.

Hon. H. Stewart: The Government mentioned the same subject in an earlier Speech, but we heard no more about it.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Was no explanation given to the House?

Hon. H. Stewart: No, none.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I think there is a rural bank in New South Wales.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: It may prove to be an off-shoot of the Agricultural Bank. If so, it will probably be of some assistance to the people on the land and the party to which I belong will doubtless give the measures their whole-hearted assistance. I believe the Bill will be supported by this Chamber as well as by the lower House. I regret that no reference was made in the Speech to the introduction of a Hospital Fund Bill. We have all looked forward to the introduction of that measure again and we expected to find some mention of it in the Governor's Speech, to give us an indication as to the intentions of the Government regarding the financing of hospitals.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The Government told you of their intentions last session.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The finances of the hospitals are in a deplorable condition. In fact, a Bill must be introduced, because the hospitals cannot continue without adequate provision being made to meet the financial position. I hope the Government will not oppose any further the sale of premium bonds or permission being extended for the conduct of a State lottery. It seems scandalous that so much money from this State should go to Queensland and Tasmania; it should be kept here for the alleviation of pain and distress rather than be sent to the other States for distribution there. We are all opposed to gambling, and there is no doubt that a State lottery represents straight-out gambling, whereas dealings in premium bonds are not regarded in exactly the same category. It does not mean that a man must lose anything at all. Anyhow I hope this question will be seriously considered by the Government.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You would have the wowsers up against you.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The churches are not against premium bonds.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Premium bonds are not a gamble. I wish now to refer to a subject on which I touched last year—the Albany harbour—and I suppose I shall have to refer to it every year so long as I remain a member of this House. Before I cease to be a member, however, I hope the Government will recognise the wonderful natural facilities of that harbour. The Government's refusal to grant Albany a harbour board was a great disappointment to the people interested in the port. A great deal of data was obtained and a great deal of

trouble was taken to show that a harbour board for Albany would be a feasible proposition. We hope the Government have not altogether given up the idea of granting the port a harbour board. It is beyond argument that if the harbour were placed under the control of a board of men particularly interested in its business, they could work it more economically and with better results than can a Government department such as the Railway Department, who are running it at present. The Railway Department may make many mistakes. During the last few months there has been in Albany a dredge whose work was to remove some bank or obstruction in what is known as the Banjo Anchorage. In two or three weeks she completed her work and then was tied up to the town jetty, where she remained for an appreciable time doing nothing at all. Yet there was any amount of work she might have done. Little silt collects around the jetties, but there was some accumulation because no dredging had been done for many years, and the dredge might usefully have been employed to clear up the accumulation. The swinging area is hardly large enough for the bigger ships now using the harbour. The dredge could well have been employed in enlarging that area and in making the jetty available for use by larger ships than those that tie up there at present. When the dredge was working, it was the custom to fill up her hoppers with the spoil and deposit it at sea. That was a most extraordinary procedure and the people of Albany asked why the spoil could not be used for the initial reclamation work for the future benefit of the harbour. We were given some reason or other by the Government, but I think some arrangement should have been made for the use of the spoil as I have indicated. We at Albany are handicapped in the shipping of wheat, fruit and wool owing to the lack of wharf facilities. Members will scarcely believe me when I tell them the conditions obtaining there. Wheat, wool and fruit have been shipped from Albany almost as long as anybody can remember.

Hon. H. Stewart: And with record expedition.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Yes. Yet we have not a single crane big enough to double-bank with the ships' gear in the loading of wheat. Last year Albany sent away nearly 400,000 bags of wheat and the harbour had not an efficient crane to assist in

the loading of it. We have one crane—a 5-ton crane, I think—which in its way is excellent for ships of about 700 or 800 tons like the "Kybra" or the old "Eucla," but it is not big enough to plumb the holds of the bigger ships. It is useless for working the oversea ships that now visit the harbour.

Hon. H. Stewart: Did you have bigger cranes there in the old days?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: No. There is another difficulty. If we had a bigger crane now, it would have to be run along the same metals as the trains use and so facilities other than cranes are also required. The time has also arrived when shed accommodation should be provided for the rapidly increasing fruit export trade. Mt Barker is one of the most important apple-growing districts in the State and probably one of the biggest in Australia, but we have no sheds at the Albany harbour in which to store the fruit. The fruit has to be conveyed from Mt. Barker or wherever it is grown straight to the ship's side because there are no sheds at the wharf to take it. The time has arrived when such sheds should be provided. There are other difficulties connected with the harbour that must be overcome. The jetties are not very wide and before sheds be erected on them, the jetties would have to be widened. Probably it would pay and would be better to construct new wharves. A comprehensive scheme should be drawn up, and improvements begun in a small way should form part of the comprehensive scheme. The facilities at present are very poor indeed. I watched a vessel coming alongside the jetty a couple of months ago. She had a line made fast to the jetty by which to haul alongside, and I was warned to keep away from the spot. The jetty is so old and rotten that it was absolutely dangerous to stand there. Finally she had to let go and the steamer was manoeuvred alongside without its aid. That is one of the many difficulties that keep occurring at Albany. Yet no money is spent on the harbour; nothing is done. I am supposed to be addressing my remarks to the Governor's Speech.

Hon. H. Stewart: Harbours are mentioned in the Speech.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The paragraph reads—

In accordance with the undertaking given to Parliament, the Government secured the services of an eminent engineer to examine

proposals for the extension of the Fremantle Harbour. It is expected that the report will be available in the near future. Work in connection with the new harbour scheme at Geraldton has been continued; and dredging, maintenance and improvements have been carried out at Fremantle, Bunbury and Esperance. The Swan River improvement scheme has also been continued.

Every place of importance is mentioned with the exception of Albany.

Hon. H. Stewart: Albany and Hopetoun are in the same category.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Hopetoun has not the same water facilities.

Hon. H. Stewart: I realise that.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Albany is in a very bad way owing to the lack of adequate harbour facilities. When the member for the district begins his election campaign, as he will have to do shortly, one of his audience will surely ask, "What have your Government done for Albany?"

Hon. E. H. Gray: Pre-arranged?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: If that question is put, I think the member for the district will have to keep pretty silent.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I think Mr. Wansbrough has done his part towards it.

Hon. H. Stewart: Keep on thinking.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: We do not know what his part consists of. Perhaps he has done his best.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Did not the previous member for Albany get anything done?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member should be allowed to proceed without interruption.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The question of new railways, I take it, will not be discussed very much pending the report of the Migration Commission on the 3,500 farms scheme. It has come as a very great surprise to me—and I think to other members of the House also—to read in the Press the remarks of the Premier regarding the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway and to find it is not included in the immediate programme. That line was promised years ago; the survey has been made and every indication was given that the railway would be built. The railway would serve magnificent country. It would tap useful timber land and open up large areas of pastoral country favoured by heavy rainfall. It is a railway that should be built without delay, yet so far as I can judge nothing at all is to be done. The line would serve country that has been settled for something like 40

years. Mr. Glasheen referred to the Karlgarin-Lake Grace railway. I must support his remarks. For a long time the settlers in that area have been promised a railway and they are now to get it. I think the survey is already in hand. As soon as the survey is completed I hope the construction of the line will be commenced. When the line is constructed or even before, I hope consideration will be given to a line south of Lake Grace running to Pingrup, Ongerup and on to Albany. That is the class of railway which ought to be built. The Government are talking of building lines to serve the 3,500 farms. Of that country we know nothing of the rainfall, the soil, or anything else.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Yes, we know that the soil is good.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The soil may be good but the rainfall is not good. The railways I have indicated should be built straight away because they would open up land on which Australian farmers could make a living almost at once. This indiscriminate migration should cease. We should for the present limit migration to domestic servants, nominated migrants and people possessed of means.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Hear, hear. But your party will fall out with you over that.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: No; many of them agree with me.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You want cheap labour.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: That is a parrot cry.

Hon. J. R. Brown: A parrot sometimes tells the truth.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: We have been waiting with considerable interest for the report of the Migration Commission on the 3,500 farms scheme, and the brief reference in the Speech rather points to there being rapid development. I hope the greatest caution will be exercised in proceeding with that scheme because the State cannot afford to incur further big expenditure like that on group settlement. We have just been saved from a disastrous blow in regard to wheat. The bad season in Canada has been our salvation. But for that we in Western Australia would be in a bad way. The price of wheat had fallen so low that producers would be unable to make wheat growing pay. We must not forget that the average yield of wheat in Western Australia is only 11 bushels and that while the price is 4s. to 4s. 3d. we need something like 13

or 14 bushels to the acre to make it pay. So far as I can judge, the wheat grown in the area to be served by the railways indicated has not reached that yield. In no part has it reached 11 or 12 bushels to the acre.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Did not Southern Cross top the list?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I am referring to country a long way from Southern Cross. We are told that the low yield is due to bad farming, but we simply cannot afford to keep several thousands of farmers going while the three years rotation of crops is being established. I wish to say a few words about group settlement. It is the biggest problem that this State or probably any other State has had to deal with. I congratulate the Minister for Lands on his efficient administration and the rectification of the mistakes that were made by his Government when they first came into office. The settlements are passing through an important stage just now and it is pleasing to see that Mr. Grogan and the members of his board are doing such excellent work. I would not have referred to the subject of the settlements but for the fact that just now Albany is receiving quite a number of people from the groups in that part of the State. Most of those people—and this may be their own fault—appear to be ill nourished and in general distress, while some of the women seem to be absolutely starving. Many of them have children and expectant mothers may be counted amongst the number. We in Albany cannot let them starve, but we have our own poor to look after and we cannot afford to maintain all those that are coming in from the groups.

Hon. H. Stewart: Are they coming in from the groups around Albany?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I have in mind the groups around Denmark; I do not know about the others.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I am inclined to think the Mayor of Albany is too good to them.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: Possibly, but I do know we cannot afford to look after all those people in addition to our own who are in poor circumstances. We have a benevolent society and its funds do not amount to much. Thus we cannot be expected to assist all those who come in from the surrounding country.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You want a White City down there.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The State accepted those people as settlers and it

should be the State's responsibility to look after them. It is my intention to make application to the Charities Department for assistance for those people. We simply cannot afford to keep them going. Perhaps the departmental authorities were acting properly in putting some of those people off the groups because I know that there are others that are making good. Thus the fault may not be that of the Government, but the people cannot be permitted to starve in Albany, and we are not in a position to maintain them. I wish also to refer to the Municipalities Act. Efforts have been made for the past 19 or 20 years to amend that statute, and I am surprised to find no reference to it in the Governor's Speech. What the municipalities in the country desire is the right to rate unimproved land values, just as it is given to road boards. Then again, the financial year of the municipalities ends in October, and the elections take place in November. Not sufficient time is given to prepare the work that requires to be done. The municipal year should end on the 30th June. That would give July for the audit and permit elections to take place in August. The only other matter to which I desire to refer is the disgraceful state of the Pingelly railway station. I travel a good deal on the Great Southern line and I pass the Mount Barker station on which £8,000 has been spent. The stations at Albany and Katanning are also modern, but that at Pingelly is a disgrace. I understand, however, that the Government have granted an amount for the erection of a new station and I hope that the work will be put in hand as soon as possible. I have pleasure in supporting the Address-in-reply.

**HON. H. STEWART** (South-East) [5.7]: I desire to express my appreciation of the Chief Secretary's courtesy in so promptly tabling a paper which was asked for by way of resolution in the previous session. I also desire to record the appreciation of the representatives of agricultural interests and also all interested in agriculture at the action of the "West Australian" in offering prizes of £1,500 towards stimulating the cultivating of lupins. I hope the outcome will be the utilisation of certain classes of land in Western Australia with resultant increased production. While on this subject, I wish to refer to our well administered Agricultural Department. This

department is staffed by officers who, year in and year out, display not only efficiency but great zeal in their work. By a note of caution, agriculturists are warned against importing unsuitable varieties of lupins, and they are warned also against the possible dangers that may arise from the growth therefrom. There are a number of subjects referred to in the Speech, but when it is analysed we find that there is a very little indeed contained in it. Twelve months ago we were led to expect that there would be an amendment to the Health Act and also an amendment to the Main Roads Act. We were also told that the Main Roads Act was to be revolutionised. Then there was a Rural Bank Bill forecasted and we heard nothing more of either. While the session was in progress at about this time last year, a select committee conducted an exhaustive inquiry into main roads matters, but it was unable to finalise its investigations. No suggestions, however, were put forward by witnesses for substantial amendments to the Main Roads Act although every encouragement was offered, and in spite of criticism there has been practically no result. In the light of experience and of the work that is being carried out, a full investigation by the various parties interested may lead to a simpler and an acceptable method of finance between the local bodies and the main roads authorities. I do not intend to cover much ground this afternoon, though one could cover a great deal of ground if he referred to the various matters dealt with in the Speech. It is my intention to confine my remarks to giving instances of lack of consistency

**Hon. J. R. Brown:** You are wrong.

**Hon. H. STEWART:** The time has arrived when it should be recognised in Australia, and particularly in this State, that it is no longer possible to ignore economic issues and for the leader of a party to say one thing, for his responsible Minister to say something else, and then to act in a manner that is diametrically opposed to the views expressed.

**Hon. J. R. Brown:** You are now reflecting on the Government.

**Hon. H. STEWART:** I wish to refer to the greatest of our spending departments, the railways, which in the last financial year showed a deficit of over £100,000. In 1924 when the present Government came into power the profit of that department

was £142,170. It increased in the next year to £190,565, but in the year following there was a deficit of £31,000. The year after that there a slight surplus amounting to £34,000, and in the financial year ended June, 1928 the profit was £26,000. Last year there was a deficiency of £179,000. In the annual report of the department under the heading of "working expenses" the Commissioner points out that in previous years a big demand was made on the revenue of the railways by the largely increased expenditure for wages and the number employed on the staff. There was also the reduction of working hours to 44 a week, and increased remuneration given without any reference to the Arbitration Court. Then there was long service leave given to the wage section. I do not wish to be misunderstood on these matters. I hold the opinion that adequate wages should be given to every section, and that it is the right of everyone to demand as much as will make the conditions of life comfortable. Reverting now to the figures of the Railway Department, we find that according to the report of the Commissioner there was an increased expenditure in 1926 of £93,000 on wages and salaries. During the year ended June, 1927, due to the award which granted the 44-hour week, the increased amount paid for wages over the previous year was £35,000. Then in the following year long service leave to the wages staff involved £42,903. Next there was the retrospective effect of the Arbitration award which is quite in a different category to the expenditure due to administrative Acts of the Government. In his 27th annual report, the Commissioner points out that long service leave, even in the old colonial government days, was given only to people permanently employed and paid a monthly salary, people who worked overtime without any extra remuneration. They had a certain type of work to perform, and when the demand was made on them they put in an extra effort, and so were entitled to further consideration later. It is not a question whether it is desirable that these things should be given to people, but whether it can possibly be done with any sense of fairness to the rest of the community. We cannot all be Government employees and get these benefits.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Long service leave represents 4d. per bushel on a 40 million bushel harvest.

Hon. H. STEWART: That little calculation puts the position in a concrete and useful form. When I deal with the Premier's attitude in saying that the cost of production is too high, and that the method of conducting Australian affairs it is not on an economic basis, I want to make my position quite clear in regard to such a matter as long service leave. What we want to do, is not to give to everybody something they do not earn. Just as in our educational system any boy with health and character and natural endowments can attain to any position obtainable in the British Empire, so I contend that in the Railways, as in most lines of work in this State—it is one of the things of which we as Australians should be proud—a young fellow can go into the service, and if he is possessed of character and industry, there is nothing to prevent him from becoming Commissioner of Railways. But because people have character and industry is not to say they are entitled to more than those people outside the Public Service who cannot obtain long service leave. I desire to refer to hospital finance in order that the Government may be forewarned and not again bring down to this House a measure, as they have been doing for a few years past, and under it seek to appropriate revenues never intended for the purpose. It is necessary to draw attention to this, because Mr. Willcock on the 2nd February of this year in a Press statement dealing with hospital finance, after touching upon several other matters and criticising some statements by Sir James Mitchell, went on to say this—

There seems to be a distinct and definite opposition, especially in the Council, to making any money available to the Government for any purpose, no matter how worthy. No more wanton and flagrant disregard of public interests could have been exhibited than the action of the Legislative Council in refusing to allow £5,000 of sandalwood royalties to go into revenue when there was a reserve fund of £7,127, and the average annual expenditure was only £3,221, particularly in view of the fact that the Conservator of Forests reported he could not use the money for the purpose for which it was set apart.

That statement about "could not use the money for the purpose for which it was set apart" was false, because there is in the Forests Act nothing which says that san-

dalwood royalties shall be used for the re-establishment of sandalwood; the purpose for which they were set apart was reforestation without any particular restriction. On that occasion I replied through the columns of the "West Australian" and said that Mr. Willcock was very ill advised when he wrote that paragraph. This is what I wrote in reply—

That paragraph represents the notion of the present Government in connection with the Forests Act. Since they came into power in 1924 they have been endeavouring to get into Consolidated Revenue money from royalties which Parliament in 1919 decreed by the Forests Act should be for reforestation. The Government's method of procedure has been wily, but the Council was not unready.

My reply also contained a warning which some of us here issued last session, and which I think the Government would be well advised to consider even now. The feeling last session was that the Government should have none of this amount from sandalwood royalties. Because it is well known by those who have watched the forestry position, not only in this State and in the Commonwealth, but throughout the world, instead of seeing how much can be taken from these royalties, with the reforestation that is taking place here as qualified men become available and the staff of the Forests Department is increased—the work of reforestation goes on progressively to such an extent that I am led to believe that within a very short time the funds available for reforestation as a whole will not be sufficient to cope with the amount of work it is desirable should be carried out. The Premier, after his conference in Canberra and while he was still there, voiced some very worthy sentiments regarding the high cost of production, and the necessity for trying to get it reduced. He urged the people of Australia to realise that they must consider the economic position and carry on in accordance with the principles of economics. The Premier set the pace for the other leaders. Only recently he has voiced the opinion that one thing about Australian production, which Australia may have to consider, is that whereas now production requires up-to-date machinery and the scrapping of pre-war methods—obsolete machinery is being cast out in other parts of the world—Australia will have to sit up and consider this. That would be all very well, and we would be with him if only he would take the neces-

sary action to back up his statements; if he could persuade his Cabinet and those whom politically he represents to act accordingly. We have also the National movement in the Eastern States saying the same thing, and going farther and saying candidly what we have been saying for years and what people will not realise, namely, they will not take the average of the primary producers or agriculturists throughout the Commonwealth. A proportion of our agriculturists have done well on the land and have become wealthy through different phases of agriculture. But the fact remains that it does not matter whether we take instances from the group settlement in this State or take the older settlements in the Eastern States where agriculture has been prosecuted for 50 years or more, the position of the people on the land must be made such that they may get a comfortable living and have some forms of enjoyment, but they must stay on the land for the second generation. In the older settled States, the trouble has been that the people, taking them by and large, have not stayed on the land. They have gone off the land and other people, newly imported, have gone on in their places, and faced with the difficulties of the life, they have drifted away, while yet another set of people have followed on and taken up the running. What, then, is the Premier's method of endeavouring to bring into operation the reducing of the cost of production and making the conditions of those developing the country such that others will follow them, instead of staying in the city and going into industries which, relatively, are of very little use in point of financing the Commonwealth? He shows his interest in that direction—in spite of his statement that he has taken no increased amount of tax from the agriculturists, and the cartoons at the last Assembly elections—by increasing the land tax. I say he has largely increased the land tax. He says he has not even doubled the land tax. He fails to recognise that after taking off the 15 per cent. super tax and then doubling the tax, other interests became operative because of the wiping out of the £250 exemption, which benefited the small man. Then, further, the former rebate that was in operation, that either the land tax or the income tax, whichever was the smaller, should be exempted—instead of that rebate being allowed, 50 per cent. of it was removed. When the whole effect of the amendment passed by the Government in



opposition to the attitude of this Chamber is taken into account, we see that in some cases a man, particularly a small man, is paying many times the amount of tax that he was paying before. That is one aspect of the question. Another is that, through following the political party he represents, the Premier, when he taxed on unimproved land values without exemption, introduced the vicious principle of putting the man who did not improve his land in a more favourable position than he occupied before the Government brought that legislation into operation. That is one way in which, in a back-handed manner, the Premier seeks to reduce the cost of production. This Chamber, in spite of the remarks of the Minister for Railways, does seek to protect the people who are engaged in developing the country. This was shown when the Government last session proposed to tax every water supply, small or large, that was established in the country, and had been in operation for some time. That was blocked by this House. All these things taken together tend to increase the cost of production. What sympathy was shown by the Government when we sought to obtain an exemption from the entertainment tax for small country shows? People in the country have to entertain themselves. Mr. Gray knows how worthy of consideration they are. He might well influence those he immediately represents by the vast knowledge he has gained in the country, and influence the Premier to act in accordance with the principles that are best suited to the State. The tremendous leeway made by the railways on account of administrative charges shows that the actions of the Government are at variance with the opinions being expressed by the Premier. I must refer to the inconsistency of the utterances of members of the Cabinet. The Premier puts forward as one of the excuses for the railway deficit and the adverse position of the finances generally that the season was not as good as had been hoped. Whereas the railways had to transport only 35,000,000 bushels, they anticipated getting 40,000,000 bushels. Almost at the same moment the Minister for Railways claims that the wheat traffic is carried at a loss, although he wants more of it. It is time the Minister for Railways stopped talking about it in that strain as if train loads of wheat were being carried hundred, of miles in a direct journey at a loss. That is a misleading statement. When the loss is counted up the railways take

the average freight rate on the whole of the traffic. Because they do not get that average for wheat, they say they are carrying it at a loss.

Hon. H. Seddon: What does it cost per mile?

Hon. H. STEWART: I do not propose to inform the hon. member. I have no desire to be side-tracked from my speech.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It would be worth while if we could get the information.

Hon. H. STEWART: These are instances of inconsistency on the part of Ministers of the Government. Their administrative actions connected with the railways are at variance with sound principles guiding the cost of production and the principles enunciated by the Premier. Of course the general elections are coming along and the Premier's remarks sound very well now. I want the people, however, to remember administrative action has not been in keeping with the suggestions that there should be a reduction in the cost of production. I also wish to refer to the Fremantle wheat handling charges. Not only have the Government a vermin tax, furnished by the pastoralists and agriculturists, but it sought by regulation to charge the Vermin Board with the administrative costs. Would it be too much to ask the Government, that says it wants to keep down the cost of production, to contribute something towards keeping down vermin on its own reserves? Very little is done in that way. Most of the vermin is bred on Crown land and reserves under the control of the Government. Here is another instance of the lack of sympathy of the Government towards the man who requires that the cost of production shall be kept down. They impose a charge of £3,000 demurrage on delayed wheat trucks at Fremantle. The wheat was held up because the lumpers were having a domestic strike. The men refused to handle the wheat, and no one else was allowed to do so. The farmers, therefore, had to pay half of what was demanded. This shows what sympathy is to be expected from members of the Government who preach this policy of keeping down the cost of production, and who at the same time add to the burdens already carried by the producers themselves.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It shows that the Premier is capable of speaking with two voices.

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes. Another aspect of the matter is causing me some con-

cern. It is one which has an important bearing on the community. We see the effect of it in the Federal arena. People have been accused of making unworkable the Arbitration Acts. I refer to the political leaders of industrial movements in the other States. What have they done to see that Federal arbitration awards and arbitration laws are carried out? They have brought into dispute the very laws that the National Government proposed to remove, and yet ask that they should be retained.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Who was responsible for the stoppage of work on the coal mines, the workers or the employers?

Hon. H. STEWART: The hon. member will be able to tell us later on. I wish to refer to one thing that I think will have a bad influence on the community. Governments are constantly asking Parliament to ratify certain acts done without statutory authority. If that sort of thing goes on, local governing bodies and private individuals will lose their respect for the law.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The law is an ass all the time.

Hon. H. STEWART: Perhaps the hon. member does not believe in observing the law.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Only when it suits, I suppose, the same as with you.

Hon. H. STEWART: It will be a poor look out for the community when there is no respect for the law. Let me take the actions of the Government. They brought into force the 44-hour week for Government employees without going to the Court. They granted long-service leave to the railway employees in the same way.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Your party supported and advocated it on the hustings.

Hon. H. STEWART: For two years they have been conducting a State Insurance Office without authority. I hope soon we shall learn something about that. Various validating Bills have been brought down, one last session in connection with Collie and another body. The sum of £30,000, from the Federal Government, as proved by the evidence submitted to the select committee on main roads, was lost to this State because the Minister for Works took no note of the agreement under which he was working with the Federal Government, and his officers, who were supposed to advise him, took no note either. Through the action of the Minister, who must have known the conditions of the agreement under

which he had been working for two years, the people of the State suffered. That was a large amount for the State to lose merely because the Minister failed to do the work he should have done and abide by the agreement he had signed.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What good did the select committee do? It was a waste of money.

Hon. H. STEWART: It did a great deal of good in this and other directions.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It merely chased up a lot of innuendoes.

Hon. H. STEWART: I am given to understand that although there is no basic rate for road work, and although according to the Premier it is necessary to keep down the cost of production, local authorities who tender for main road work are obliged to pay the basic wage, employ the men for 44 hours a week, and give 6s. a week extra for district allowances to men who are not resident in their own districts. Every member who knows country conditions will understand what a big factor this will be in increasing the cost of road making. Probably this will mean either that the local authorities will be unable to contract for road work, or else this will be a disturbing factor that will interfere with the employment of regular hands who were satisfied with the old conditions.

Hon. C. B. Williams: More money will be spent in the districts.

Hon. H. STEWART: That is a fallacy. It is not the results that are looked for, but the spending of money. There is a limit to the spending of money without return.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Which is the wealthiest country in the world?

Hon. H. STEWART: The country that produces the most.

Hon. C. B. Williams: And pays the highest wages.

Hon. H. STEWART: But the men are paid to produce, and they produce when they are paid.

Hon. C. B. Williams: In that case—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask the hon. member interjecting to restrain himself. He will have an opportunity later on of replying to Mr. Stewart's remarks.

Hon. H. STEWART: It was a welcome interjection, because it enables me to develop the point which the hon. member and his colleagues fail to realise, which the Premier has realised but does not act on, that the cost

of production in Australia is too high, and that it is through increased efficiency, increased production for a certain expenditure, that one gets results and improves the standard of comfort. That is why the country which pays the highest wages is the most prosperous. It gets a return for the wages.

Hon. C. B. Williams: They have piecework there.

Hon. H. STEWART: I wished to refer to the action of the people with whom the hon. member and the Premier are associated, action showing how they have failed in this very respect. Recently the Premier has been saying that Australia must take stock and consider with regard to efficiency in production. We had one of the most efficient works managers, I suppose, in Australia wanting to come here and start works at Fremantle. He wanted to pay high wages. He pays higher than award wages. But he wanted and wants results. He required a system of piecework. In the Eastern States people are agreeable to have piecework. H. V. McKay was prepared to institute that system here, and thus to reduce the cost of farming machinery to Western Australian agriculturists. But the people with whom the hon. member is associated would have nothing to do with piecework. In other words, they wanted wages without results. Otherwise they would not have been afraid of piecework.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Because of the conditions you wish to introduce into this State, poverty is greater in the Eastern States than it is here.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. H. STEWART: If the law is broken by the Government as in the instance of railway wage affairs, State insurance, the conducting year after year of "White City," the loss of £30,000 through the failure of the Minister for Works to apply to the Federal Main Roads Board, is it surprising that local governing authorities should be found in some instances doing things that are illegal? These local authorities do not know what the position is, and say, "It does not matter: the Government do this and get away with it." What is the use of having Municipalities and Road Districts Acts if such things are permitted? At this stage I would like to have the interest of Mr. Nicholson. A municipality and a road board in a certain part of this State agreed with the Government as to the provision of certain hospital extensions, and the Government

instructed the municipality and road board to sign a contract with a contractor for about £5,000 worth of work in respect of buildings on Government land. If the local authorities want to sue the contractor, what sort of a case have they? In the first instance, was it not utterly illegal, and is it not still utterly illegal, for local governing authorities on the 6th December, 1927, to have entered into a contract to pay a contractor £5,000 for the erection of buildings on Government land when the necessary amendment of the law was not brought about until the 23rd December, two and a half weeks later? That amendment enabled the local authorities to use up to 10 per cent. of their rates by way of interest and sinking fund in respect of a certain loan or capital expenditure.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Where was this?

Hon. H. STEWART: This is only one instance. There are plenty of such cases.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Who is it?

Hon. H. STEWART: When one is making a general case, I do not know that there is any specific reason why one should state the specific instance.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You may be drawing on your imagination.

Hon. H. STEWART: Members who have been in this House a few years know—and I hope Mr. Williams will also find it is so—that when I speak I do not draw on my imagination, and that my statements of fact will bear investigation. This is the question that arises in my mind. Why do the Government instruct a municipality and a road board, participating fifty-fifty, to enter into a contract for buildings to be erected on Government land?

Hon. J. Nicholson: Is it not an extraordinary thing?

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes. Why should the Government urge the local authorities to do such a thing?

Hon. C. B. Williams: Are you imagining this?

Hon. H. STEWART: I am referring to the Wagin Hospital.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Now we know.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. H. STEWART: Now the hon. member knows that I am speaking by the card. If the contractor failed to complete the contract and the local authorities had to sue him, would they have any legal standing, and would they be able to secure any redress?

Hon. C. B. Williams: As to that—

Hon. G. W. Miles: On a point of order. I complain of the interjections of the hon. member.

The PRESIDENT: Will Mr. Stewart resume his seat? I wish to remind the hon. member who is interjecting so continually that it is not he who is addressing the Chair, but Mr. Stewart.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I have to apologise, Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT: Very well. I hope that it is not a mere apology, but that the hon. member will not persist in interjecting, since he will have ample opportunity later of replying to the various statements to which he objects.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Very well, sir; but I thought I was assisting the hon. member. I am sorry if I was not.

Hon. H. STEWART: I regret it if the hon. member's interjections have led to confusion in the minds of those listening to me. For my part, I felt that the hon. member was rather helpful, although I know he was quite disorderly. The necessary amendment of the law was made on the 23rd December, 1927, and the contract in question was made on the 6th December, 1927. The amendment is in Section 28 of the Hospitals Act, which reads—

Any loan heretofore raised by the Municipality of Collie or the Katanning Road Board for any such object as aforesaid is hereby validated notwithstanding that such municipality or board may not have had any legal authority to raise such loan, or that any of the relative provisions of its local government Act were not complied with.

I quote that to illustrate that prior to the passing of the necessary amending legislation two local governing bodies had done this thing. Apparently while the amending legislation was before Parliament, the Government sent a contract to another municipality asking them to do an illegal act.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Why was not Wagin included in the Bill?

Hon. H. STEWART: Perhaps the Bill was down in the water beyond the Plimsoll mark.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Probably it will be necessary to introduce another amending Bill.

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes. I was illustrating the fact that the Government had done various illegal acts, apart from the illegal acts of individual Ministers, and had been getting the local governing auth-

orities to do illegal acts also. In further illustration of my point I quote the Wagin Water Board. I have received from the secretary, Mr. C. C. Keyser, a letter which I propose to read to the House. The fact of Wagin being in my constituency is one reason why I am indeed pleased that the town has obtained a water supply and additional hospital accommodation. I do not want there to be any misinterpretation on that score. Still, there is a proper way of doing things. I do not think the Government should do things in an illegal manner, or lead local authorities to do things in an illegal manner, because that gives rise to other illegal actions. The letter is as follows—

Dear Mr. Stewart, The Water Board have been advised to strike a supplemental rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound as from February 1st last. The following is a copy of letter received from the Acting Under Secretary for Works:—"With reference to the interview you had with me on the 19th June, 1929, the member for the district (Mr. S. Stubbs, M.L.A.) and Councillor Piesse being present, I have to inform you that the Government have decided that they will introduce a Bill next session of Parliament to enable the Wagin Water Board to strike a supplemental rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound as from the 1st February. When this Bill has been introduced, the Government expect the board to strike a supplemental rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound and collect it during this financial year, which ends in October next. I also promised that an officer of this department, if required by the board, would be sent to Wagin at the board's expense to assist in writing up the rate book and issuing the rate notices."

The letter does not state to whom the Government's communication was addressed; but I suppose it was directed to the mayor.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Who signed the letter?

Hon. H. STEWART: I read an extract from the letter from the Acting Under Secretary for Works and it is included in the letter I received from the secretary of the Wagin Water Board. The secretary's letter goes on to say—

I pointed out to the board that in my judgment it was practically impossible to give effect to the striking of the 2s. 6d. supplemental rate as from the 1st February. But my contention was apparently, from what the Under Secretary is reported to have said to the Mayor, "nonsense." Document, marked "A" attached, shows in detail why I considered it impracticable.

The following letter is now to hand, under date 27th July, from the Under Secretary for Water Supply:—"I have been in fur-

ther communication with the Solicitor General regarding the striking of a supplemental rate, and he has requested me to ask your board to immediately strike a supplemental rate of 1s. 10½d. in the pound for the year ending the 31st October next. I enclose herewith a draft notice which should be advertised in the "Government Gazette" early next month (August). The Hon. Minister will be introducing, immediately the Address-in-Reply is finished, a Bill to validate the striking of the above-mentioned rate by your board."

The 1s. 10½d. rate for the full year equals the 2s. 6d. rate for nine months as first mentioned in the letter from the Under Secretary for Works, dated 21st June last. The second letter, however, admits that my contention was correct, that it was, to all intents and purposes impracticable to give effect to it in the rate book, and then convey it on the rate notices to ratepayers.

Of course the secretary meant that it was legally impracticable for the board to do so. First of all they strike on a sixpenny rate; then the secretary of the Water Board is told to send out a supplementary rate for which there is no statutory authority.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The goods have been delivered to them!

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes, but the proposals suggested a course of action that was illegal.

Hon. E. H. Gray: But the Solicitor General advised that course.

Hon. H. STEWART: Relying on the action being validated subsequently! The difficulty could have been overcome in another way altogether, but they did not suggest that course. I want to show the House what the aftermath was. The secretary in his letter continues—

The Government failed to provide for the striking of a supplemental rate in the existing Water Board Act, they advised the board last January to strike a supplemental rate notwithstanding, and it would have been struck but I told the board it had no authority. And when I was sent to Perth to discuss the matter with the Assistant Under Secretary for Works, Mr. Low, he had to admit it, after consultation with the Solicitor General. The Minister is now asking the board to strike a supplemental rate without statutory authority and the introduction of a Bill to validate it has been promised. The board and I have been at loggerheads over this matter, but the stand I took up has been admitted to be correct in both instances, but not until a great wrong has been done me.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Had the secretary sidestepped the trouble, it would have been all right.

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes. I understand that there has been a pronouncement by a prominent magistrate that a town clerk cannot shelter himself behind the actions of a municipal council if that council take action against his advice. I merely refer to this incident in order to lend point to my argument. Here we have heads of the Government doing an illegal act and asking a local authority to do an illegal act too! I can give instances of mayors and others in responsible positions in connection with local governing authorities who have done illegal acts from time to time, and I and other members of Parliament have to endeavour to get those people out of their difficulties. Such acts indicate that people have lost respect for the observance of the requirements of the various Acts that are in operation. I do not suppose the point dealt with by the secretary of the Wagin Water Board would be regarded as one of vital importance, but still the fact remains that it involves a principle and the course adopted by the Government was wrong. It is not right that a man after having held this position for 18 years, whose integrity is beyond question, and who is universally respected, should be placed in such a position that after he has told his municipal council that they cannot do certain things, because there is no statutory authority for them, the Under Secretary of a Government department, acting with, I presume, the authority of his Minister, can say—

I promise that an officer of this department, if required by the Board, will be sent to Wagin at the board's expense to assist in writing up the rate book and issuing the rate notices.

Fancy such an action by a Government who claim to stand for all that is fair and for even-handed justice to all people, who claim to stand by those who are more in need of assistance than are others!

Hon. C. B. Williams: The Government adopted a kindly course!

Hon. H. STEWART: And showed their disrespect for the law.

Hon. C. B. Williams: But the amended law will be in operation before the end of October.

Hon. H. STEWART: Will it? We will see about that. I shall look to Mr. Nicholson for some advice as to the legality of the position I have drawn attention to.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I do not think there is any question as to the illegality of it.

Hon. H. STEWART: Here the Government have got the municipality to send a contractor to put up buildings on Government land! Perhaps it is a shrewd move on the part of the Minister who is responsible. Mr. Wittenoom has referred to harbour matters and I intend to deal with the position of the Albany Harbour. In "Hansard" for 26th October, 1926, we find that the Chief Secretary, when moving the second reading of the Albany Harbour Board Bill, quoted the Surveyor General, Mr. Camm, who is also a member of the Railway Advisory Board. He told us that Mr. Camm who, he remarked, was greatly interested in the Bill, had stated—

With the construction of the proposed Boyup Brook to Cranbrook railway, the Manjimup to Mt. Barker line, also recommended by the Railway Advisory Board, and the Pemberton to Denmark railway, which has been authorised, there seems no doubt that, when the country to be served by these lines is settled, a very large amount of produce indeed will eventually find its way to Albany for shipment to overseas ports. I consider that the Manjimup to Mt. Barker line especially will open up one of the most extensive and finest belts of country in the State for closer settlement, and the production of butter and allied products will be very large. Albany appears to me to be the natural port for this country. Also in conjunction with the development of the wheat areas east of Lake Grace and Nowdegate and out to the No. 1 Rabbit-proof Fence, it seems to me that a fine natural harbour like Princess Royal harbour will have to be made use of as a port for the export of wheat and that, in view of the very large amount of freight now going to Fremantle, and which must be very largely increased when the Eastern wheat districts are more fully developed, the State will be forced to divert a good deal of the traffic to such a port as Albany.

He also quoted Sir George Buchanan who said, in the course of a report—

It is certainly a matter for regret that such a fine natural harbour as Albany should not play a more important part, and be a great trade centre. On the face of it, it would appear to be reasonable to develop communications behind Albany, and make it an overseas port. Wheat is now being grown east of Albany as far as Israelite Bay, which is 100 miles beyond Esperance, where there is a proposal to establish an overseas port, but a railway east of Albany combined with a coastal service from Esperance to Albany might be preferable to the establishment of yet another overseas port.

Further on, Sir George comments—

Albany is one of the finest natural harbours in Australia. Its development is naturally dependent on Government policy.

That attitude was endorsed by Captain Frank W. Fletcher, master of the steamer "Allara," who wrote a letter to the "West Australian."

Hon. J. R. Brown: Did the "West Australian" publish it?

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes. I think that master mariner displayed temerity in writing to that paper.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There is something wrong somewhere if the "West Australian" could publish a letter like that.

Hon. H. STEWART: Captain Fletcher's letter was as follows:—

I have followed with some interest the discussion in your paper on the extension of Fremantle Harbour, and as a shipmaster with considerable experience on the Australian coast, and an exempt pilot for 24 Australian ports, I have been wondering why you want to extend Fremantle harbour at all.

As I see it Fremantle harbour as at present constituted, is fully capable of dealing with the normal trade requirements of Western Australia, and it is only in times of seasonal activity in the wheat shipping season, that the facilities at present provided prove inadequate.

To extend Fremantle harbour, as at present planned, is going to be a very costly job, and I submit for your consideration the idea that instead of spending some millions in extending the harbour, the expenditure of a fraction of this amount in providing suitable wheat shipping facilities at Albany, where one of the finest natural harbours in the Commonwealth is lying idle, would be a much better proposition financially and in every other way, for the State.

I know that this proposition will meet with opposition from various vested interests, but in a matter of this magnitude the purely parochial viewpoint should be ignored. I have seen a plan of the proposed extension of Fremantle Harbour, and with all due deference to the eminent author of the scheme, can only describe it as a shipmaster's nightmare. I would venture to point out to the engineer in charge of the plans, that the reputation of any port is in the hands of the pilots and exempt masters who work it, and despite a recent remark that such people should work it as they find it, it would be in the public interest if the opinion of these people, who in the final analysis make or mar the port's reputation, was obtained before any extensive scheme of alterations was carried out.

It is impossible that wheat would have to be railed a few miles farther, for shipment at Albany, but it seems to me that if only a small portion of the money which has been

expended on places such as Bunbury, Busselton, and Esperance, had been expended on Albany, Western Australia would be able to point with pride to one of the finest harbours in the world with facilities second to none.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I don't think that man can have been much overseas or he would not write like that.

Hon. J. R. Brown: He must have been in a rowing boat.

Hon. H. STEWART: With a harbour such as we can have constructed at Albany, the Railway Department should run the wheat from the natural zones to the nearest ports. If that were done, then the wheat would be drawn from natural zones instead of from railway zones. Under that system industry would be stimulated at our various ports. Under the present system I know that the Railway Department has to send five train loads from Wagin to Bunbury, whereas the traffic could be dealt with by three train loads if the produce were sent to Albany. That sort of thing is not calculated to reduce the cost of production.

On motion by Hon. G. W. Miles, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Tuesday, 6th August, 1929.*

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

### QUESTION—ABORIGINES AND POISON BAITS.

Mr. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Agriculture: Has permission been granted to any aboriginal in Kimberley to carry poison, or to lay poison baits; if so, how many, and by whom are the aborigines employed.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: If the question applies to the period since the amending Dog Act came into operation, it is impossible to reply without reference to the various local protectors, because it is those officers who are empowered to issue the permits referred to. The Chief Protector has no knowledge of any such permits having been issued.

### QUESTION—COLD STORAGE, SHIPSIDE.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: In view of the increasing volume and importance of fresh fruit export from Western Australia, is it the intention of the Government this year to provide shipside cold storage at Fremantle?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: As ample cold storage accommodation is available at the W.A. Meat Export Company's Works, Fremantle, the erection of a cold store on the Fremantle wharf is not warranted at the present time.

### QUESTION—UNEMPLOYMENT AT PEMBERTON.

Mr. J. H. SMITH asked the Minister for Works: 1. Is he aware that approximately 100 men are out of work at Pemberton? 2. If so, will he take steps to see that no more men are sent from the labour bureau until local men have been engaged? 3. As many unemployed men have been waiting at least ten weeks, and are practically starving, will it be possible for those men to receive assistance for living purposes through the local police until such time as railway construction is in operation?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, 2, and 3, It is known that a number of men are unemployed at Pemberton. The policy of the Government is to engage a percentage of local men and a small pick-up will take place at this centre on Friday next.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Fifth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 1st August.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [4.37]: It was not my intention to take part in the debate at this early stage, but to my surprise I find a reluctance amongst older members