

The HONORARY MINISTER: I shall content myself by saying that the desire to introduce the Bill in this Chamber was with a view to expediting the business of Parliament. Members of this Chamber will please themselves whether they will give the Government the right to introduce the Bill here. I hope members will again adopt the attitude they did with regard to other measures, leave to introduce which has already been granted.

Question put and passed.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

House adjourned at 6.6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 13th August, 1935.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence of one month granted to the Minister for Mines (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans), and of two weeks to Mr. Coverley (Kimberley), on the ground of urgent public business.

CONDOLENCE, LETTER IN REPLY.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following letter:—

To the Hon. the Speaker, Legislative Assembly,
Parliament House, Perth:

Dear Mr. Speaker,

On behalf of the members of my family I should like to thank you for your kindly thought and message of sympathy. Will you please convey to the members of the House our sincere thanks. Some of the happiest years of my father's life were those spent as a member of the Legislative Assembly, and he valued very much his associations with the members of Parliament. Yours sincerely, Edmund S. R. Piesse.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1) £2,200,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the 8th August.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [4.44]: In common with other members, I desire to extend congratulations to the member for Gascoyne (Hon. F. J. S. Wise) on his election to the Ministry. His election so early in his political career in this State is a high tribute to the esteem in which he is held by members of this party. I feel sure he will carry out his duties to the satisfaction of his party, of the primary producers and of the people generally. When the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was on his feet, he said the results of the two recent by-elections augured well for the success of his side of the House. I do not agree with him. When Mr. McCallum was first elected for South Fremantle he was elected by a very small majority. He held that seat for a number of years. At the general elections in 1933 compulsory voting obtained, for a referendum was being taken on the secession issue. Consequently, the voting was much heavier than it would otherwise have been. Mr. McCallum said at the time that his majority was a record in parliamentary elections in Western Australia. So the figures polled at the election cannot be taken as a criterion of any other election, except of course an election at which compulsory voting was again in operation. The number of votes polled on that occasion was 6,854, and Mr. McCallum's majority was 3,911. At the recent by-election the total number polled was 3,826, or a little more than half the number polled in 1933. My majority was 788. Regarding Mr. McCallum's majority, we have to take into consideration the position he held in the public life of the State. He was a Minister of the Crown with ministerial prestige, he had a lot of personal friends, he was known to nearly every elector in the electorate, and indeed to nearly every elector in Western Australia. At the by-election it was generally conceded by the Labour Party and Nationalists alike that the result was a foregone conclusion. Consequently very little interest was taken in that election. It was generally believed that the Labour candi-

date who won the selection ballot would be successful in winning the seat. At every election there is a certain number of Nationalist voters in South Fremantle who never fail to turn up at the poll, whereas many Labour electors stay away. In 1933 there were 1,473 votes cast for the Nationalist candidates, and in 1935 there were 1,544. So on that basis the Nationalists increased their votes by only about 85. On those figures I do not think the position looks as bright for members of the Opposition as the Deputy Leader of that body would have us believe. As a new member who has lived in an exclusively industrial district for the last 17 or 18 years, I should like to congratulate the Government on the improved conditions of the workers since the Government assumed office in 1933. It is pleasing to note that the number of men receiving sustenance has been reduced from nearly 5,000 in 1933 to about 700 in 1935; or, to give the exact figures, from 4,977 to 733. It has also meant the reduction in sustenance payments from £347,000 in 1933 to £73,000 in 1935. And it is also pleasing to see that the wages of men working on Government relief have increased from an average of £2 17s. 6d. to £3 1s. 8d. per week. Since I live in an industrial district, those figures were not needed to bring home to me the great difference in conditions of to-day as against those of 1933. I have a vivid recollection of the number of people who used to assemble at the Fremantle Trades Hall every morning demanding that something should be done to ameliorate the conditions under which people were suffering. I also remember that a custom grew up while the late Government were in office, under which the local authorities employed sustenance men to carry out the ordinary work of those bodies, which later were reimbursed by the Government. In this way in two years those local authorities received from the then Government £406,000, and to that amount they added only £44,000 themselves. They thus had work performed to the value of £450,000 for an outlay of only £44,000. Although a great improvement has been made in the condition of the people since 1933, a lot remains to be done, for some people are still in a very bad state. It is the duty of the Government to see that in this White Australia, where we have everything necessary to make the people happy, nobody shall be allowed to go short of essen-

tial supplies. We are living in a machine age, and machinery is so rapidly displacing men that it is time something was done to reduce the hours of labour in accordance with the time saved by machines. The hours of labour will have to be considerably shortened and the school leaving age raised, that is if we are going to give to the people the advantages of scientific invention in industry. For the last nine or ten years I have been secretary to a large industrial organisation, namely the Fremantle Waterside Workers. During that period it has given me a great deal of concern to see how labour has been displaced by machinery. The Fremantle wharf is one of the most up-to-date and efficient in Australia. In 1925, at the peak periods no fewer than 2,000 men found employment on the Fremantle wharves, handling cargo to and from ships. At the present time the membership of the union is only a little over 900, and it is rarely that the whole of those men find employment in one day. To give members an idea of the labour-saving machines that have been introduced during the last nine or ten years, I have only to quote the introduction of mobile cranes that can run to any part of the wharf or the sheds and do the work of a dozen men. Those cranes have done away with a great deal of very arduous labour, and I suppose we have to be thankful for that; but if men are to be done away with like that there should be some compensating advantage. Take the handling of phosphatic rock, something in which the farmers are vitally interested. I should like to know whether the farmers get any saving from the innovations in the handling of that necessary commodity at Fremantle. A shipment of rock usually gave employment to 70 or 80 men for a fortnight, whereas to-day it is unloaded with the use of grabs by 20 men in about five days. On a shipment the employers saved £600 or £700 in wages. I do not know whether that saving went to the farmers but I imagine it did not. A few years ago petrol came to Fremantle in cases. A shipment of oil would give employment to about 80 men for a fortnight, and to as many shop assistants for a similar period. Now a shipment can be pumped to containers at North Fremantle by two men in a little more than 24 hours. Gantries too have been installed. In other ports in Western Australia and over a great part of Australia generally bagged cargo is

shipped per medium of the ship's gear. Between nine and 11 bags are put into a sling and taken aboard. Some ten years ago gantries were installed at Fremantle, and these are capable of doing twice as much work as the ship's gear does. Now we have bulk handling of wheat. In 1931 over 10,000,000 bags of wheat were railed to Fremantle. Quite a lot of wheat was stacked on the wharf, and this provided much employment to members of the union. Last year only half that quantity of wheat was railed to Fremantle, and more than half the amount was in bulk. In 1931 when bulk handling was mooted, it was estimated that between 500 and 550 men engaged in waterside labour would be displaced. That number of men would have been thrown out of employment if a really efficient system had been introduced. The system, however, was not as up-to-date as was anticipated. Nevertheless many men have been thrown out of work by the installation of the existing system. The position has been seriously felt in Fremantle. The Deputy-Leader of the Country Party said the other night he was glad I was in the House because he wished to refer to some figures I had given to the Royal Commission on Bulk Handling. I hope everyone else who gave evidence was as accurate as I was. I went as close to the position as I could. The Commission told me that the figures I made up were more favourable to the farmers than other figures given by people in Fremantle. I took the quantity of goods handled by one ship, namely, 8,890 tons, representing bulk wheat sent away from Fremantle. I did not make any allowance for the number of bags that would be necessary to go with that cargo for the stability of the ship. If I had done so perhaps the saving would not have been so great. The Deputy Leader of the Country Party tried to make a point out of my estimated saving. I considered that bulk handling, as it affected the lumpers, would represent a saving of 3d. per bushel to the farmers in handling charges. Any other saving that would be made would have to be made as between the farmer and the Railways. Some of the farmer witnesses estimated a saving of 2½d. or a little more a bushel. On a harvest of 40,000,000 bushels the Deputy Leader of the Country Party said the farmers would save about £500,000, at 3d. per bushel. If that amount were cut up between all the farmers

in the State it would represent only £50 per farm. That saving would be effected at the expense of men now at work both in Fremantle and in the country. When a bulk handling Bill came before Parliament Mr. McCallum estimated that the number of men who would be displaced would be 3,687, and that was a very conservative estimate, too. It is proposed to effect a saving of £50 per farmer at the expense of revolution in the industrial life of the State. That will not help Western Australia much. I question whether the farmer will get any benefit from that £50. Most farmers say they work from 10 to 12 hours a day. On each farm at least two or three hands would be employed. If we brought the position down to an hourly rate and spread it over the whole year the estimated saving would not exceed 1d. per hour. If this is to be done in the interests of the farmer I suppose we shall have to put up with it. The farmers are very anxious to have every modern innovation brought into being for their own relief. There is another line they could take which perhaps would give them more relief than labour saving devices. I refer to monetary reform. I do not think farmers will be any better off while our present banking system is followed. If they would only join with members on this side of the House in the endeavour to induce the Federal Government to bring about monetary reform, the State Government would be in a position to give them many social services such as have been enumerated by previous speakers. This is the only way out of the depression. The lumpers have never opposed bulk handling on the ground that it was going to throw men out of work. Their objection to it is due to the fact that no provision has been made for the men who will be thrown out of employment. If men are to be displaced, something else should be done for them. I do not know what money the Government will set aside for that purpose to provide for those who are thrown out of employment. I suppose in the long run the producers will have to find the greater part of the money. Farmers are not the only producers in need of assistance. We have a Whole Milk Board which controls the marketing of milk. According to information given to me by producers the board does not appear to be functioning in their interests. I have been told that the price

fixed for milk is 1s. 1d. per gallon, but that some of the milk producers are selling their commodity for 9d. The merchant to whom one producer has been selling his milk said he would pay only 9d. If the producer held out for 1s. 1d., he might get that for a couple of nights, and then be told that no more milk was required for the rest of the week. The producers thus have to supply their milk at 9d., and I am told that they have to sign that they have received 1s. 1d. The man who made that statement to me is a very reliable person, and I have no reason to doubt his word.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson. He ought to have made that statement to the Chairman of the Board.

Mr. FOX: In that case the merchant might have said he did not want any milk, and the last position of the producer would have been worse than the first. I know the man well, and do not think he would tell me a lie. He would have no reason for making a mis-statement. What he told me was the truth. The only way to stop that is to have all the milk sent to the board. Let the board acquire the milk on behalf of the producers and dispose of it on their behalf. I have been told that some of the milk agents are given permission to buy milk to send to Kalgoorlie. They acquire it for that purpose at a cheaper rate, but there is nothing to prevent them from selling that milk in the metropolitan area. The same thing applies to milk required for butter fat purposes. The producer is being exploited all the time. I should like to see introduced a marketing Bill, because the situation affects many people in my electorate. The Bill should be on the same lines as the Queensland Act. Many egg producers and market gardeners are at present in a precarious position owing to the lack of stability in the price they receive. These people work long hours and are at the mercy of the buyers. Under the Queensland Marketing Act the Governor-in-Council may at the request of any number of producers in the industry declare any commodity such as fruit, butter, eggs, cheese, grain, or anything of that kind, a commodity under the Act, and appoint a board to acquire it as owners. The director of marketing is a member of the board that is appointed for that purpose. The board has power to fix the price, pay freights, and all costs incidental to mar-

keting. It can make advances and arrange a method by which dockages are taken off the price of the goods. It can make advances to the producers and make any arrangements for financial accommodation with any financial institution approved by the Minister. Eggs, for instance, pass through the board and are sold by that body for the benefit of the producers. Egg boards exist both in Queensland and New South Wales. They have operated in Queensland for many years. The last term for which a board was appointed in Queensland expired in 1934. It is provided under the Act that 10 per cent. of the growers may petition the Governor-in-Council to terminate the board. When the term expired in 1934 no such petition was received. Consequently, the board was re-appointed for another four years, which goes to show that it is giving every satisfaction in Queensland. A similar board is in operation in New South Wales. When speaking in the New South Wales Assembly the member for Illawarra said that the cost of marketing eggs for export in New South Wales was 8¾d. per dozen when the board did it in the previous year—the year before the member spoke. The cost of marketing had been reduced to 5½d. per dozen. That reduction, in a turnover of 7,000,000 dozen eggs, meant a saving of £95,000 to the producers. A deputation which recently waited on the Minister for Agriculture included a poultry farmer from New South Wales, who said that the corresponding board in New South Wales were giving every satisfaction, that eggs never fell below 1s. per dozen—which is a profitable price to the poultry farmer—and never went above 2s. per dozen, in New South Wales. In Western Australia, I believe, eggs often go as high in price as 2s. 6d. per dozen. The Western Australian poultry farmers stated that when there was a glut of eggs on the market, the agents got in and bought the surplus, put the eggs in cold storage, and later put them on the market as fresh eggs; and all this without any compensating advantage to the producer. I hold that some legislation in this direction is needed in order to give the poultry farmers who have endeavoured to make a success of the business an opportunity to stay on the land. At present, I understand, the poultry farming industry ranks amongst the first five or six most important industries of this State. Similar remarks

apply to market gardening. I have recently spoken with a number of market gardeners, and they told me that with the way buying goes on in the market, there is no stability and they never know what they are going to receive for their produce. In fact, they said that within one day it is quite a common thing to receive three or four different prices for the same product. No business can stand up to such exploitation. One market gardener told me that he put into the market 44 bundles of a certain commodity, that the first bundle fetched 8d., the next 1s. 1d., the third 11d., the fourth 10d., the fifth 9d., and the sixth 1s. If legislation were introduced creating a marketing board for the industry, subject to a provision that the consumer should not be exploited, it would be a great help to the market gardeners. Various countries have marketing legislation. It operates in most of the Australian States and in New Zealand. I am told there is a marketing board in England. There is one in Denmark, which sits every Friday to fix the price of produce for the coming week. If such a board existed in Western Australia and prices were fixed for a week ahead, producers would have some idea of where they were and what to put on the market. I congratulate the Government on their initiation of the prospecting scheme. Having lived on the goldfields for a number of years, I know a good deal about mining in all its branches. For 10 or 12 years I was engaged prospecting on the North Coolgardie field, and I know that in that locality large areas of low-grade lodes could be worked profitably if the Government assisted with co-operative batteries and the necessary mining equipment. I do not know that those shows are big enough to work on so large a scale as that operating at Wiluna, but I am sure that many of them would pay for any money advanced by the Government. During the time I was on the goldfields, 20 to 25 years ago, most of the low-grade shows were too low to pay for working. They would go about two or three pennyweights to the ton; and as the price of gold was then about £3 17s. 6d. per ounce, the working of such mines was impracticable. I feel sure that if during the period I refer to gold had been returning the same value as it is returning to-day, many of the small mining towns would never have been deserted. The Government have

already assisted some 3,000 prospectors, who have returned over £50,000 worth of gold. I should like to see the Government introduce a measure to prevent such a splendid asset as we have in our auriferous areas from being exploited by unscrupulous speculators. I refer to mining investors who float shows on the strength of extravagant reports, while perhaps there is little of actual value in the mine at all. Stricter supervision should be exercised over all flotations. The Government should appoint a competent mining engineer to report on every flotation, and his report should accompany any prospectus sent out. In Fiji, where there has been a mining revival lately, the Government pay particular attention to anything of this nature: all mining flotations are inquired into carefully, and if they will not stand up to what the promoters state the flotations are not allowed to proceed. With a great deal of labour being displaced, and more labour likely to be displaced in the near future, the Government should proceed with more public works in the metropolitan area. There is room for an extension of sewerage in Fremantle. I should also like to see the Government build a new bridge at Fremantle over the Swan River. The present structure is not a good advertisement, situated at the gateway of Australia. Numbers of oversea and interstate visitors to Perth have to cross that bridge on their way to the capital, and it must strike them as a poor advertisement for Western Australia. I understand that this bridge was condemned years ago. Although the Minister assured a large deputation which waited on him recently that the structure was perfectly safe, numerous Fremantle residents who are competent to judge aver that the bridge is not all that could be desired. I wish to call the attention of hon. members to what happened to the railway bridge in 1927. At that time no one anticipated that the bridge would collapse and be washed away. Yet it was only by the merest chance that a trainload of passengers was not precipitated into the river. A train had crossed the bridge very shortly before the collapse. A casual observer noticed a big crack in the bank, and before long the flood waters washed the bank away and the whole structure collapsed into the river. We do not want anything like that to happen in Western Australia again. There were very heavy rains at that time, and consequently flood waters

had banked up and the bank was washed away, with the result that a whole section of the railway fell into the river. Again, it is the daily custom for tugs to tow lighters up the river from Fremantle to Perth, and these lighters carry as much as a hundred tons of cargo. I shudder to think what would be the result if a tow line broke while the tide was running out strongly, as it does in Fremantle, and one of those lighters carrying a hundred tons of cargo ran into the bridge. I feel sure the structure would not stand up under it. As a means of absorbing some of the unemployed and carrying out a highly necessary work, the Government should get on with the new bridge as soon as they possibly can. Another matter to which I desire to call the Government's attention is the need for looking after the health of children attending our State schools, or in fact attending any of the schools in Western Australia. In Fremantle an attempt is being made to start a dental clinic. This is being commenced by the school teachers in the Fremantle district. Those teachers are in a better position than anyone else to judge of the need for greater attention being paid to the health of the children. They tell me that the visits of medical men to the schools are few and far between, and that in particular the teeth of the children are in a deplorable state. Accordingly the teachers organised themselves and endeavoured to start a dental clinic. That clinic will be opened in the first week of September, and it will look after the teeth of all the children attending the schools between Canning Bridge, Rockingham and Buckland Hill. A census taken by the teachers shows that of the 835 children attending the schools in the Fremantle district, no fewer than 472 require dental treatment. It means that over 56 per cent. of the children require such treatment. The parents of many of these children are on Government relief work, and consequently have no chance of getting their children's teeth attended to if they have to pay for it. I may add that all these children are between the ages of six and nine years. The new dental clinic in Fremantle proposes to give free treatment to all the children. I hope the Government will see their way clear to encourage that clinic and subsidise it to some extent, in order to pay the fees of the dentist who will visit it on two or three days per week. As regards the Workers' Compensation Act, I agree with

the member for Mt. Marshall (Mr. Warner) that some provision is necessary to cover men employed by farmers. Recently several cases have come under my notice where men have suffered serious injury at their work and have got nothing in the way of compensation. At present I have one case of an injured farm worker in hand. I do not know how the farmer is situated financially, but if he has nothing I suppose the man will have to go without any compensation. He is entitled to over £100. The party with the largest equity in the farm, presumably the Agricultural Bank, should make some provision for insuring workers, so that when a man is injured he will have something to tide him over the time that he is compelled to be off work, and to compensate him for the loss of a limb, or to compensate his relatives in the event of his being injured fatally. There are two or three amendments I would like to see made in the Workers' Compensation Act. Section 16 should be amended so as to provide that the method of computing a lump-sum settlement should be definitely set out in the Act. At present, should a worker meet with an accident as a result of which he is totally incapacitated, he is entitled to receive £750. After that payment is continued for six months, the employer, or worker, may take steps to secure the allocation of a lump sum. If no agreement is reached between the parties, they have recourse to a magistrate. If the worker is able to prove that he has suffered injuries from which he is totally and permanently incapacitated, that payments to him have continued for a period of six months, and that the employer is in a position to pay him compensation, the magistrate may award him the full compensation specified in the Act. Recently there was a case in Fremantle in which the worker proved that he was totally incapacitated and that payments to him had continued for a period of six months. He did not prove that the employer was in a position to pay the compensation, but the employer did not bring any evidence to show he was not in a position to do so; consequently, it had to be taken that he was in a position to pay. The usual custom agreed upon by employer and worker, and accepted by the court, is that when the three conditions I have indicated have been complied with, the amount of compensation is awarded, and provision made to reimburse

the employer to the extent of an amount that would cover the sum he would lose by paying a lump sum, which he could invest, instead of paying weekly amounts. The sum usually was about £50. In the Fremantle case to which I have referred, the point was raised that this was not the proper way to adjust the matter. The employer appealed to the Supreme Court, which upset the judgment of the magistrate on the ground that the amount had not been computed in the proper way. The judge said the magistrate had not taken into consideration the expectation of life of the man, the fact that the man might have died before the period would have elapsed in which the sum would have been exhausted had it been paid by weekly instalments, or the possibility of an employer's business going into liquidation. There is nothing in the Act to say that the magistrate must take those matters into consideration. For that reason, I consider the Act should be amended so as to set out specifically how such a computation should be made. It should be on the basis of, say, 4 per cent., and the amount the worker had received should be subtracted from the total amount of compensation. If the man had received £100, that would leave £650. The man could then be paid the present value of £650 at 4 per cent. on the basis of weekly payments of £3 10s. That would be a fair way by which the amount could be computed. That is the system that has been in operation for a number of years, and unless the matter is dealt with so that the method of computation is specifically set out in the Act, the existing situation suggests that more litigation may arise. Although the Workers' Compensation Act is the best we have ever had in this State and compares more than favourably with similar Acts in other parts of Australia, the worker, in practice, does not get much out of it. Our Act is perhaps not so favourable to the worker as the English Act which provides that weekly payments may continue for any length of time, or so long as the worker lives. It also provides that an annuity may be paid to the man, the amount of which is worked out on an actuarial basis. I would like to see the Act amended along the lines I have indicated so that the worker may have greater protection than he is accorded at present. In the case I have referred to, the worker lost £50 on the appeal to the Supreme

Court. Each side had to pay its own costs, and that meant the payment of another £30, representing £80 in all to that worker. Our legal adviser suggested we should take the case to the High Court because we had a reasonable chance of winning, but we thought the expense involved would be too great compared with the small amount we were likely to save. If the Act were amended as I suggest, it would prevent future litigation. Another amendment I should like to see provided is that the weekly payments should not be subtracted from the total amount under the Second Schedule, when payments were made of lump sum settlements. I have met several men who have been incapacitated for a long time, and when the assessments were made and the percentage disability allocated, very little was left for them. I contend that men in that position should be entitled to receive something substantial to enable them to adapt themselves to their altered physical conditions. Another great hardship to the worker is in connection with the amount allowed for medical expenses. When legislation was introduced by another Government to amend the Act in that respect, the amount allowable was cut down from £100 to £50. I should like to see the provision increased. In most instances the full £100 would not be absorbed; in the great majority of cases the medical expenses would not amount to half that figure. To cover the few instances in which the medical expenses would amount to more, I think the amount allowed should be considerably increased.

Mr. Sleeman: That particular effort was not successful.

Mr. FOX: No. I understand the Bill was thrown out. I know of several instances in which the medical expenses have amounted to upwards of £160. In order to meet such cases, I do not see that any harm would be done if the amount allowed for medical expenses were increased to £150. Another matter I desire to touch upon refers to the establishment of fair rents courts. The member for Kalgoorlie (Hon. J. Cunningham) said that such a court was necessary in his electorate to deal with instances he mentioned. He referred to a number of houses valued at about £400, the rental for which was 30s. weekly. I think the rental charged in those instances was altogether exorbitant and represented nearly 20 per cent. on the outlay. I can point to instances in my

electorate where 12s. 6d. or 15s. a week is charged for houses worth about £200 only. If fair rents courts were established, the landlord would be secured a fair return on the money invested, and the tenant would be asked to pay only what was a fair rental. Finally I desire to refer to a statement made by the member for Mt. Marshall (Mr. Warner), although I do not really think he meant what he said. In his speech he stated that the lumpers at Fremantle were the greatest squealers in connection with bulk handling. From the manner in which he made the statement, I do not think he really meant what he said. He knows that the lumpers do not squeal about bulk handling but that they object to men being put out of work because of the introduction of machinery. The farmer is in quite a different position from the worker in the metropolitan area. Notwithstanding all the tales we hear about the hardships of the farmers, it will be realised that they are in an infinitely better position than men living in the metropolitan area. If a man on the land is any sort of a farmer at all, he can grow his own vegetables for at least five months of the year; he should be able to produce his own meat, eggs and poultry; he has any quantity of wheat at his disposal, and it does not cost much to purchase a grister so that he may provide himself with wheaten meal; he has no firewood to buy, and no rent to pay. I do not know what the farmer is kicking up all the row about. On the other hand, take the worker in the metropolitan area: If he loses his job, he loses everything. Many of the workers in my electorate have been endeavouring to build up homes for themselves during the last 25 or 30 years and some have not paid for them yet. If they are thrown out of work, what can they do? The great majority of them are not fitted for any other avocation. Most of the members of my organisation are not young; they are over 30 years of age. We have not admitted any new members for the last seven or eight years. The lumpers have been following the one calling all their lives, and consequently are unfitted for any other occupation. The member for Mt. Marshall made one suggestion when he said that the lumpers could take up some of the abandoned farms. I am sure that if some of the lumpers did that, they would at least provide themselves with the vegetables they required for their own con-

sumption. A suggestion I would make would be that they be placed on small farms adjacent to Fremantle. There is a lot of land between Spearwood and Fremantle that is held as a reserve for University purposes. It would be a good idea if the Government were to give each lumper who required the assistance a few acres of that land, build a house and provide a cow or two and a few pigs. The lumpers would be able to grow their own vegetables there.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: If you were to do that, you would soon lose their votes.

Mr. FOX: I do not think so. I thank members for the courteous hearing they have given me. I hope that the work of the session will bear fruit and that provision will be made for the absorption of labour that is likely to be displaced in consequence of the introduction of further labour-saving devices.

MR. BROCKMAN (Sussex) [5.28]: I desire to extend my congratulations to the two newly elected members of this Chamber. I feel sure that they will prove to be useful members of the legislature. I was pleased to note in the Speech of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, the references to the improved financial position as a result of the operations for the twelve months ended the 30th June last. It was also gratifying to read the comments upon the improvement in industry in many directions. Those improvements were recorded in connection with gold, timber, fruit wool and dairying. Unfortunately, the commodity prices in the main are low and those engaged in the industries are, through no fault of their own, having a great struggle to meet their obligations to the Government. The timber industry has been an important factor in reducing unemployment in the southern portions of the State. That has been due to the improvement in world conditions and prices offering for timber and not wholly and solely to the policy of the Government. Though royalties and freights have been reduced slightly, more could be done in the way of providing shipping accommodation at Busselton. I do not intend to dwell at length on the Speech of the Lieut.-Governor because the Acting Leader of the Opposition has dealt fully with it. The member for Kalgoorlie certainly painted a glowing

picture of the benefits arising from the Government's activities. I only hope that the Government deserve all the credit he gave them. The wisdom of borrowing large sums of money is questionable. Undoubtedly the Government have need of borrowed money to relieve the unemployment problem, but every care should be exercised to ensure that such money is spent on reproductive works.

Mr. Sleeman: A lot of that drainage work is not reproductive.

Mr. BROCKMAN: Would the hon. member say that the rebuilding of the Fremantle bridges would be reproductive?

Mr. Sleeman: More so than the construction of some of those drains.

Mr. BROCKMAN: I believe that the drainage work undertaken at Harvey will prove reproductive. Credit for the undertaking of that work is due to the previous Government, not to the present Government, who merely carried out the policy of the Mitchell Government. I was pleased to be at Harvey yesterday when His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor declared open the river deviation. I do not wish to disparage the work of the present Government, but when the member for Fremantle interjects in such a strain, I must say a few words in reply. I have no intention of criticising the commissioners of the Agricultural Bank. They have undertaken an arduous task in re-organising the institution. It is not a job that can be done in a few days or a month. During the recess I visited almost every settler in my electorate, and my advice to the settlers was not to expect the announcement of a policy in a few days. The commissioners, in my opinion, are able men and I have a great regard for them, but I think they will need a considerable amount of time in which to frame their policy.

Mr. Sleeman: Do you call six months a reasonable time.

Mr. BROCKMAN: I would give them 12 months. By the expiration of that period I think some definite policy will have been laid down that will make for the advancement of the agricultural industry. It has been said that I went around my electorate advising settlers not to pay their interest. That statement is absurd. Such a thing was never said by me. Every man has obligations to his country and, if he owes interest to the Government, he should pay to the best of his ability. His first duty, however, is to provide a living for his wife and family.

Mr. Thorn: Who made the statement?

Mr. BROCKMAN: I understand that the Minister for Lands made it both to members of this Chamber and to members of another place. I am not concerned about the statement, because I have done nothing inside or outside the House other than to try to help the Government in every way possible. For the Minister to make such a statement was very unfair. He might at least have asked me whether I had given the settlers such advice before mentioning within the precincts of the House that I had done so. The statement was unfair and untrue.

The Minister for Lands: Did I make that statement to you?

Mr. BROCKMAN: No.

The Minister for Lands: Then why are you repeating it?

Mr. BROCKMAN: The Minister made the statement to other people. Why did he not make it to me?

The Minister for Lands: Were you present?

Mr. BROCKMAN: No, but I hear things, just as does the Minister. I should like to know what ground the Minister had for making the statement.

The Minister for Lands: You said you did not hear me make the statement.

The Premier: Kerbstone gossip.

The Minister for Lands: I deny it. You are a beauty!

Mr. BROCKMAN: I like a man to be straightforward and say anything he has to say to my face. I am prepared to take responsibility for my actions, and I will fight for the first wants of my people.

The Minister for Lands: One would expect you to speak the truth. That is your responsibility.

Mr. BROCKMAN: I do not think that is a fair interjection. I am stating the truth when I say I never advised the settlers as alleged.

The Minister for Lands: I say the statement is not correct.

Mr. BROCKMAN: I am pleased to hear that. I accept the Minister's explanation with pleasure. I regret that Sections 51 and 52 of the Agricultural Bank Act have been put into operation so suddenly. A moratorium should have been granted until the Bank's policy had been disclosed. The action taken by the commissioners has resulted in a considerable number of settlers in my electorate leaving their holdings, men who would have proved good farmers in the

near future. When the commissioners have carried out their work and placed the settlers on a satisfactory footing, those men will be required to return to the holdings;.

The Premier: Are they electors of your district?

Mr. BROCKMAN: They were electors of mine, but unfortunately they have left the district. Probably they are now electors of the Premier's district. A good many of them have gone to the goldfields and so he will require to be on his guard.

The Minister for Lands: Then they have changed their opinions and I do not blame them.

Mr. BROCKMAN: I do not know that that is so. I am sorry that those sections of the Act have been put into effect, because their enforcement has done a great deal of harm. I do not blame the commissioners; probably they are not wholly to blame. I understand that such matters are left entirely to district officers, and as I have frequently expressed my views of some of those officers, I am not surprised at what they do. Some of them have certainly been the cause of the exodus of settlers from my district.

Mr. Thorn: You do not approve of the commissioner's attitude to members of Parliament?

Mr. BROCKMAN: No, I consider that they should allow members to place the requests of their electors before the Bank. There would be no question of trying to influence the commissioners against their better judgment. Members of Parliament understand the needs of their districts, and I think they could be of great assistance to the commissioners in their efforts to re-establish the settlement scheme in the South-West. In my electorate a large number of houses have been sold off abandoned holdings. I regret this and can only hope that the houses have been removed only from such holdings as the authorities consider will never make farms. It seems to me that they have been sold at very low values. One man bought 28 houses for £45 each. Why could not those houses have been moved to other centres, say Busselton, and used as workmen's cottages? At Harvey yesterday many of the men left in charge of the drains were complaining of lack of housing accommodation. There is no reason why houses unwanted in the group areas should not be moved to such a centre as Harvey, where

they would be of greater value to the country. Stock is being sold on some of the holdings at disastrous prices. I attended a sale recently when some 300 head were disposed of at small sums ranging from 1s. 6d. to £2 10s. per head.

Mr. Warner: You would get more for a rabbit!

Mr. BROCKMAN: Yes.

Mr. Seward: What stock were they selling?

Mr. BROCKMAN: Cows and two-year old heifers and steers, and the average price paid was less than 10s. per head. I understand that the sale was due to the enforcement of those sections of the Act under which settlers are required to get rid of surplus stock or transfer it to the Bank. It is a great pity that settlers should be required to get rid of cows of better quality than those owned by the Bank. I visited a depot where 35 cows were being milked. Three men were employed on the work of milking at the huge remuneration of 15s. per week, excluding keep. Imagine a Labour Government approving of that! I believe in a fair and reasonable wage for all men. Those 35 cows were producing a total of five gallons of milk per milking. If any two cows could not do better than that, I would not have them in my herd. I believe that the commissioners will succeed in putting the industry on a sound basis.

The Premier: What do you suggest as a sound basis?

Mr. BROCKMAN: Something different from the Government's ideas. I want the farmer to look with confidence towards the future.

The Premier: That is no answer.

Miss Holman: Your party had three years of office in between the two Labour Governments.

The Premier: Give us some idea of what you mean by sound lines.

Mr. BROCKMAN: If the Premier will visit my farm I will show him.

The Premier: Give the public the benefit of your ideas of sound lines.

Mr. BROCKMAN: I think I have already given them.

The Premier: Given balderdash. Organised marketing and sound lines!

Mr. Thorn: Explain that while you are on your feet.

Mr. BROCKMAN: Yes, I intended to touch on marketing. I am pleased that the

marketing board is in existence, and I hope it will result in good for the farmers. There is only one objection to it and that is that the primary producers have not sufficient representation on it.

The Premier: On sound lines?

Mr. BROCKMAN: They should have greater control, and I hope the Government will give it to them. There are a few parochial matters I should like to refer to, the expenditure of money on which would result profitably to the Government. I was glad to read the announcement made by the Premier a little while ago that it was intended to rebuild Cave House.

Mr. Sleeman: What happened to the insurance money when the place was burnt down?

Mr. BROCKMAN: I do not know; I was not in Parliament at the time.

Mr. Lambert: Your Government took it into revenue.

Mr. BROCKMAN: Then I am glad that the present Government are taking it out again. I should also like to make reference to some of the roads in the group settlement areas, and to express the hope that they will be improved this year, particularly those in the Nannup district, because they have been badly cut about by sleeper carters. This would be the means of employing many men who are out of work in my district. The Busselton jetty is another matter to which some attention should be devoted. The lumpers who work there have to do so at night with the aid only of small lights provided by the ship that is tied up. Whatever lights are needed on the jetty have to be supplied by the lumpers themselves. I feel sure the Busselton authorities would supply current to the Government at reasonable cost. The Blackwood River during the last year or two has altered its course, and has run much farther up the beach. The result of this is that fishing boats are unable to shelter in the river because they cannot get over the bar. I trust the Government will be able to provide a little money for the work of deepening the bar so that those boats may be able to get in and out. A small bar of rock could be blasted away at very little cost. If an officer were sent down to investigate it he would find that the work could be carried out economically. The fishing industry could be established if boats were able to get into the river for shelter during the rough seasons. I wish to thank

the Government for what they have done in my electorate during the past two years, and I hope they will agree to the proposals that I have advanced for expenditure, all of which will be for the benefit of the electorate and the State.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [5.23]: I desire to express my sincere regret at the loss of two of our colleagues since last we met, I refer to the late Mr. Piesse and the late Mr. Griffiths. Mr. Piesse was the first man I knew in this State who was a member of this House. I met him about 24 years ago, and I formed the opinion then, and I have never had occasion to alter it, that he was one of nature's gentlemen. It was always a pleasure to have a chat with him, and I sincerely regret his passing. I read with considerable care the speech of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor and there is no doubt to a fair and unbiassed mind, a good deal of credit is due to the present Government for the change in the condition of affairs in the State. I listened very closely to the speech made by the Acting Leader of the Opposition, and it gave me the impression that it was the construction of a one track mind. There were some statements made by the hon. member which definitely were not true. If anybody took the trouble to analyse his figures they would also find that those figures were equally unreliable. In making reference to the strike in Kalgoorlie the hon. member said that the conditions of the Arbitration Court awards had not been interfered with at any time.

Mr. Sleeman: His party were always interfering with them.

Mr. CROSS: He said the possible exception was the financial emergency legislation introduced in 1928. During the last two periods when the National and Country Party Government were in office, they pursued a policy of wage reduction and increase in working hours. Possibly the hon. member was not au fait with what had been done on the first occasion when the National-Country Party Government were in power. Therefore I propose to refresh his memory. I have here a letter written by the Assistant Public Service Commissioner, Mr. Munt, on the 14th June, 1922.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: You were not born then.

Mr. CROSS: I was born all right. The letter reads—

By direction of the Government I have to advise you that it has been decided that for all Government work 48 hours will prevail on and after Thursday morning the 15th June, 1922, and that the basic rate of pay laid down in the recent Railway award, namely 12s. 10d. for eight hours for labourers will be applied in connection therewith. As you are aware the margin for skill in the case of carpenters is 4s. extra per day.

That letter was sent to the Carpenters' Union, and Mr. Munt informed that body that the new rate would be 16s. 10d. for eight hours' work based on a 48-hour week. He signed himself "I have the honour to be, Your obedient servant," I have all the required proof to show that on that occasion the Government of the day set themselves out deliberately to override and flout the provisions of the Arbitration Act. I have some Press cuttings which I propose to read to the House. I have the original newspaper file here, and if any hon. member doubts what I propose to read he may view the file for himself. The first extract is from "The West Australian" of the 15th June, 1922, and reads—

Industrial Surprise.

Important Cabinet Decisions.

Reduced Wages and Increased Hours.

Labour Congress Action.

Considerable surprise was manifested in industrial circles yesterday on the receipt of a message by industrial unions with members numbering some thousands who are employed by the Government. The notice stated that "the Government proposed to reduce wages and increase hours, and the reduced wages and increased hours would operate from to-day."

Last night Mr. A. McCallum, M.L.A., told a representative of the "West Australian" that the matter had been brought before the Labour Conference, and delegates had decided on a method of combating the wages reduction campaign. They had appointed a deputation to interview Mr. C. A. Munt, the Government Industrial Agent. "We saw Mr. Munt at 4 p.m.," said Mr. McCallum, "and he advised us that it was a Cabinet decision that the 48-hour week must be reverted to, and in all instances the minimum wage would be reduced from 13s. 4d. to 12s. 10d. a day. We explained that it was most unreasonable for the Government to give notice to-day that they were going to make a reduction to-morrow, and that if the unions had adopted such a high-handed action there would have been a public outcry."

Later on Mr. McCallum said:

It would be expected that the Government would adopt constitutional means if they desired any alteration in industrial conditions prevailing. At the same time we took the opportunity of lodging a strong protest against

the action of the Government in leading a campaign of lowering wages and increasing hours, and insisted that the Government should obey the law and follow constitutional methods.

This action by the Government created a sensation in labour circles. The notice was sent to all unions working in the Government service and there was a lot about it in the Press. Consequently, the next day, 16th June, 1922, we find the "West Australian" published the following:—

Government Workers.

Hours of Pay.

Cabinet Sudden Action.

Remarkable Position.

The announcement in yesterday's "West Australian" of the State Government's move to reduce the wages and increase the hours of thousands of unionists in its employ caused widespread discussion The notices were issued as a result apparently of the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday. No announcement was made that day by the Acting Premier (Hon. H. P. Colebatch) of any action to be taken. The meeting was attended by the Acting Premier, the Minister for Works (Mr. W. J. George), and the Minister for Railways (Mr. J. Scaddan). Except for a statement made by the last-named, little light was shed on the position by Ministers yesterday. Mr. George had nothing to say. Mr. Colebatch was almost equally reticent. All he would state last night was, "Cabinet decided that notice should be given to those unions who had agreements with the Government that we intended to establish a 48-hour week. That is all I know."

On the next day, 17th June, 1922, the "West Australian" reported a statement made by Mr. Colebatch, the Acting Premier, in explaining the position, as follows:—

Regarding the 44-hour week, in many cases it has proved exceedingly costly to the Government. Hence the notice to review this phase of the position.

That was his excuse. There was no mention whatever of going to the Arbitration Court. On the same day, indeed on the same page, the "West Australian" reported the following remarks by Mr. McCallum in reply to the Acting Premier's statement:—

That Mr. Colebatch had missed the main point in regard to the action of the Government to which the unions were taking the strongest exception, and that was in the cases where there were no registered agreements or awards covering the workers who received notice on Wednesday that wages would be reduced and hours increased as from Thursday. That is a direct breach of the Arbitration Act" "Neither side can alter the established conditions of labour without creating a strike or lock-out, and this is held to be the case by the courts on numerous occasions. The employer has no more right to force upon the employees alterations in working conditions to which the

union objects than the union has to enforce upon the employer industrial conditions to which the employer objects. The responsibility for approaching the Arbitration Court does not rest solely upon the unions, but it applies equally to the other side, and in this case it is the Government who have adopted the offensive, and it is for them to follow the procedure set out by the law of the land."

The thing went on, and the unions tried to combat it. They held several deputations and on the 19th June, 1922, the "West Australian" published the following statement by Mr. H. Millington, then general secretary of the A.L.P.:—

Speaking to a representative of the "West Australian" on Saturday morning the general secretary of the A.L.P. (Mr. H. Millington) stated that he had received a notification from Mr. C. A. Munt to the effect that the original notices had been withdrawn, but that new notices were being issued to the unions concerned stating that the reductions would take place as from 19th July. "In order to give each union concerned an opportunity of discussing the position which has arisen and decide upon a course of action," said Mr. Millington. "I have notified the unions that a meeting of representatives will be held at the Perth Trades Hall at 10 a.m. on Tuesday next."

And there followed a list of the unions notified. In the "West Australian" of the 20th June, 1922, a little more light was thrown on the negotiations. Here is an extract from a statement made by Mr. McCallum and published in the newspaper:—

Mr. Munt, however, fails to point out that the Government issued orders that the reduced wages and increased hours were to operate from Thursday last, and that it was owing to our interviewing him and pointing out the illegality of the notices that they were withdrawn. I still want to impress upon the Government that they are acting illegally, and are flouting the Arbitration Act. What would the position have been last Thursday morning if the unions had not taken up the Government's challenge, and had not interviewed Mr. Munt? The departments would have endeavoured to follow the instructions of Cabinet, and they would have forced the men to work for the lower wages and longer hours. The men, of course, would not have done this without consulting the unions, and as the notices were only issued on the Wednesday there was no time to hold meetings nor to negotiate. Inevitably a lock-out would have resulted. I have never known the unions to adopt a similar attitude. The last letter to the unions makes no reference to the holding of the conference nor to the opening of negotiations.

The unions held their conference and sent a deputation to the Acting Premier. The following reference to the conference was

published in the "West Australian" of the 21st June, 1922:—

A conference was held, and at its conclusion Mr. Millington made the following statement to a "West Australian" reporter:—"I pointed out to the Acting Premier," said Mr. Millington, "that whereas the original notices had been withdrawn, a further notice had been issued to the effect that the Government proposed to reduce arbitrarily wages on and after July 19, and also to increase the weekly hours from 44 to 48. Subsequent to the adjournment of the conference, the following letter confirming the assurance given by Mr. Colebatch was received, and a copy will be forwarded to all the unions affected":—

Regarding the deputation that waited on me this morning, I have to reply that I have discussed the matter with Mr. Munt. The position is that the Government has given to the unions concerned notice of its intention to retire from the different Arbitration Court awards and agreements covering wages and conditions of employment under the Government. In the course of a few days, Mr. Munt hopes to be in a position to submit to the respective unions a scale of wages and conditions which it is proposed shall operate after the expiration of the notices In the event of these wages or conditions not being acceptable to any of the unions concerned, it will be competent for such unions to negotiate with the Government through Mr. Munt, or to approach the Arbitration Court.

The then Government set out deliberately to reduce wages and increase hours, and this despite the provisions of the Arbitration Act. They did not cite a single union in the court. Only 24 hours' notice was given, and but for the resistance put up by the unions, they would have had their wages reduced next day.

Mr. Thorn: Was that an Arbitration Court award?

Mr. CROSS: The then Government flouted the Arbitration Court's award. Every class of Government employee subsequently suffered that reduction in wages and increase in hours. All the tramway men were reduced 3s. 6d. a week on the 21st January, 1923. The Commissioner of Railways wrote to Mr. Kenafiek, then secretary of the Railway Officers' Union, and they were forced to take lower wages and go back to a 48-hour week.

Mr. Thorn: Who gave them the 44-hour week?

Mr. CROSS: It had been given and ratified in the court.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: By the previous Government.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. CROSS: Besides the matters to which I referred before tea, the Nationalist Government produced another unenviable record, in fact the most unenviable in the history of the State. Just before tea, the member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn) interjected to the effect that the lower working week was instituted by the previous Government. I cannot recollect that, but I do know that a Nationalist Government had been in power for six years previous to 1922, that is, from the time Labour went out of office in 1916. Although conditions had been fairly prosperous and prices were high, a period of great stagnation set in as a result of the maladministration of the Nationalist Government. The year 1922 ranks as one of the worst in the history of Perth. There was more unemployment in the city at that time than at any other period, with the exception of 1931. Meetings of unemployed were being held every day. Men were sleeping on the Esplanade, and during the winter arrangements were made for men to sleep in the basement of His Majesty's Theatre. That was the year when the late Mr. Lovekin, when appealed to to provide food for the unemployed, gave £50 for the purchase of meals. On one occasion when unemployed went to the office of the then Acting Premier, Mr. Colebatch, he was so touched by the depressing sight that he called in his secretary and gave the men £20 with which to buy meals that night.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: How do you know that?

Mr. CROSS: It was reported in the "West Australian" of the 9th June, 1922. That was the result of six years of Government by the Nationalist Party, and they were turned out of office. When they returned to power, stagnation again set in, though not entirely due to them. World conditions had become difficult, and the lower prices obtaining for exportable products had made conditions bad. The result of the Government's maladministration, however, made things considerably worse. I am of opinion that the record of the last Nationalist Government will go down in history as one of the worst periods ever suffered by the people of this State. They interfered with arbitration awards, and by enforcing a reduction of 20 per cent. in wages and salaries, broke the sanctity of contracts. We have heard members of the Nationalist Party from time to time speak of the sanctity of contracts.

but they did not say one word of the contracts they forced people to break through inability to pay, and made no attempt to reduce the amounts of such contracts. Thus it was that as a result of financial emergency legislation thousands of people in this State lost their homes. There were large numbers in my electorate, and I know it applied to all electorates. I believe that act by the Nationalist Government will not be forgotten.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Your Government perpetuated that legislation.

Mr. CROSS: Another statement made by the Acting Leader of the Opposition was somewhat misleading. I tried to elicit the facts by way of interjection, but failed. The hon. member said that in April, 1933, when the present Government took office, there were 13,400 men on relief work or sustenance, and that in October, 1934, after 18 months of Labour Government, the number had been reduced to 10,197. What the Acting Leader of the Opposition did not tell us was how many of the 13,400 men were working and how many were on sustenance. We know that nine-tenths of the total were on bare sustenance, and we also know that after 18 months of Labour administration nearly all the 10,197 men—the exceptions being a few C class men—were engaged on relief work.

Mr. J. H. Smith: And it took six days a week to earn it.

Mr. CROSS: I will tell the hon. member what amounts were received under the two administrations. A man came to me a week ago and produced a couple of slips for taxation returns. During the regime of the Nationalist Government he was engaged on relief work at £1 per week over sustenance and was paid on the basis of a four-unit man. The return showed that he paid taxation in the last year of the Nationalist Government on earnings amounting to £126. The second return, lodged during the Labour administration, showed that a daughter had passed the stipulated age limit, thus reducing the taxpayer to a three-unit man, but his earnings had increased to £148. That is typical of the general experience. Under Labour administration, all the workers are getting a fair cut. The vexed problem of unemployment is not common to any country. It is world-wide. In this State it is high time that we took definite steps and adopted definite methods to

grapple with it. Members of the Opposition will agree that the State will never get back to normal conditions until all our men are put on to full-time work. In Europe and Great Britain years ago a definite method was adopted. We jog along in Australia and make no provision for men who get out of work. That probably is not due to any particular State Government. In 1908 Germany introduced a system of national insurance against sickness and unemployment. That was followed a few years later by Great Britain. In many families there are young lads and young grown men who under present conditions in every State of the Commonwealth have no chance of getting relief work. There are very few openings for them. In this State we have about 200 cases, known and classified as "C" class men. Those are people not fit for active work, but not bad enough for the invalid pension. They are really borderline cases, and for them the outlook is dark. The opposition could assist in dealing with that problem. I believe they are sincere and sympathetic in that respect. It is time the Federal Government brought down a comprehensive scheme for national insurance against sickness and unemployment. This would give those who gravitate to the unemployed class a feeling that they could always get enough to live on decently when out of work.

Mr. North: Do you mean it could be subsidised by the Federal Government?

Mr. CROSS: Yes. No scheme of insurance could satisfactorily be introduced by a State Government. If one were introduced in this State we would probably receive crowds of men from the other States. It can only be brought about by the Commonwealth Government, whose job it is to do it. The scheme would be maintained by contributions from the workers, from industry generally, and subsidised by the Government. If this could be brought about all our people would immediately be put back into full time employment. Possibly some men would take advantage of such a scheme, but I believe the majority would not do so. I intend later on to move a motion asking the Government to assist in pressing the Federal Government to stand up to their job, and make provision for people who are out of work. There are many persons who have come to Australia because their relatives are here. Even if they are as old as 55 when they arrive they are not entitled to an old-age

pension for another 20 years. Something similar appertains in the case of people who go from Australia to Great Britain. The Federal Government should have a reciprocal arrangement with the Imperial Government whereby those people are not left out in the cold. Through no fault of their own such people may become a charity on the State, and not on the Federal Government. The Deputy Leader of the Country Party had nothing constructive to offer in his speech on the Address-in-reply. His only cry was for the farmer. He inferred that Governments and Labour people generally had done nothing for the farmers. During the last year or two the people have done an enormous amount for farmers, and have done it without squealing. Concessions in railway freights and super have been given.

Mr. Patrick: Recently?

Mr. CROSS: That has been going on for a number of years. Farmers have also had the benefit of the 25 per cent. exchange. That exchange has been paid by the people, and the Labour Party have not complained.

Mr. Patrick: You do not understand that question.

Mr. CROSS: The exchange rate means a super tax of 25 per cent. on all imports. That is paid by the people without complaining, and is of considerable benefit to the producers. In that way too we are helping the industry. The time will arrive when this State will have to consider curtailing the production of wheat, and engaging in more profitable industry. We know how much assistance has been given to the wheat-growing industry, and what the position is to-day. In Manitoba the farmers get an average yield about twice the average for Australia, and they do this without using any fertiliser.

Mr. Patrick: You had better leave that point alone, too.

Mr. CROSS: One wonders whether we shall ever be able to compete with such countries. In Manitoba there is land which for 30 consecutive seasons has produced an average of 30 bushels of wheat to the acre.

Mr. Patrick: What about the last two seasons?

Mr. CROSS: Those were exceptions. The two most profitable industries in this State are wool and gold. It would pay us to assist those industries to the greatest extent possible. When the rehabilitation of industry takes place in connection with

wheat growing, the best way to assist farmers, especially in cases where there is no poison on the land, would be to give each one a few sheep. Sheep are more profitable than wheat. There is one way in which woolgrowers situated in arid portions of the State can be assisted. Take the land north of Leonora, where plentiful supplies of artesian water are obtainable at depths of from 16 to 20 feet.

Mr. Patrick: Artesian water at 16 to 20 feet?

Mr. Thorn: You do not know your subject; you are off the track.

Mr. CROSS: The hon. member need not worry about that. In that area until a week ago there had been scarcely any rain for a year. Though there is positively no ground feed, the stock and sheep there look remarkably well, subsisting on saltbush and mulga. In company with the Minister for Lands I paid a visit to a station north of Leonora within the last week or two. The condition of the sheep which had been fattened on the top feed was remarkably good. It is quite feasible for the Government to do something extremely beneficial for the industry there. Some years ago they introduced various subtropical plants into Western Australia. On Clovelly Downs station I saw a hedge of Queensland saltbush, which had been planted about a year ago. In spite of the fact that there had been no rain, the hedge had grown about 6 feet thick and about 5 feet high, and we were told that it had to be clipped every three weeks in order to keep it down. The Minister for Lands was with me, and saw the hedge. These statements are perfectly true. My opinion is that it might even pay the Government to send a man to the arid portions of South America to see whether any plants growing there would prove beneficial if introduced into Western Australia. If the result of such an investigation were to produce but one variety of plant capable of adding a few millions to the potential wealth of Western Australia, the expenditure would be well warranted. I have said that gold mining is probably our most profitable industry. My belief is that the price of gold will remain high for a considerable time. That is the opinion of experts, too. During my election campaign I said that it would be preferable to send men prospecting for gold rather than follow the

example of the previous Nationalist Government and set men chopping up grass in the streets. It pleases me extremely to know that the present Government have sent many men prospecting. In many mining centres there are mines containing ore of fairly low grade which have been worked and abandoned, but which with State batteries within reasonable proximity would again prove payable propositions. In the Mt. Malcolm district numbers of mines still have fair amounts of gold in them. There is no battery within 75 miles of Malcolm. I believe that if a State battery were provided close at hand, men could go to work on the old shows. Under present conditions the ore has to be handled four or five times and to pay freight to the nearest battery. Even with the present high price of gold, the extra cartage cost makes such propositions unpayable. My opinion is that many shows in that district would, under the conditions I have outlined, find work for men, putting them into profitable employment and producing real wealth for Western Australia. Let me quote a few of these mines and state the quantities of gold won from them. The Golden Crown mine treated 1,833 tons for 1,726 ounces. The Midas treated 1,187 tons for 1,324 ounces. The North Star 14,036 tons for 13,352 ounces. The Richmond Gem, roughly 12,500 tons for 11,500 ounces. Within a 10-mile radius of Malcolm 35 mines have produced 49,904 ounces from the treatment of 65,991 tons. In many of these mines, I repeat, gold is known to exist, but the cartage cost renders working them prohibitively dear. Take the case of the Nine of Hearts. Anyone who knows Malcolm knows that the Nine of Hearts carries a lode five or six feet wide going about 12 dwts. to the ton. Under existing conditions it does not pay to work the mine, because the ore has to be railed to the nearest battery, which is at Laverton. Leonora has for many years agitated for a State battery. The Mines Department have consistently reported against this proposal. I recognise that in the days when gold was £3 17s. 6d. per ounce, many of these mines would not have paid to work. Nevertheless, 58 mines within a 10-mile radius of Leonora have produced 1,839,455 ounces of gold. I should not omit to mention that the largest producer of that group is the Sons of Gwalia, which has produced $1\frac{3}{4}$ million ounces from nearly 4,000,000 tons of ore. In the Leonora district are numerous mines carrying four or five dwts. to the ton.

If a public battery were installed there, I believe work would be found for a considerable number of men.

Mr. Patrick: In whose electorate is that centre?

Mr. CROSS: I make no apology for thus referring to the gold mining industry, because it is State-wide and it is, or should be, our business to see that we extract from it the greatest possible benefit. In other countries where gold is produced, they are taking every advantage of the high price obtainable, and are doubling and trebling their production if it is at all possible. They recognise that gold is a commodity for which there is a good market. There are other districts where it would be an advantage if State batteries were erected. I suggest to the Government that they seriously consider erecting half a dozen public batteries in mining districts where there are a considerable number of old shows. Full inquiries should be made, and if that were done, I believe what I suggest would turn out to be a most payable proposition. In spite of the fact that the Mines Department refused to recommend the erection of a battery in the Leonora district, at least two companies have since that date been floated with fairly heavy capitalisations. They are both providing reasonably big treatment plants. Then again at the Tower Hill mine there is a tremendous lode of low-grade ore. A Melbourne company holds an option over the property at present and is awaiting the delivery of diamond drills. Such is the confidence of certain of the mining companies operating in the Leonora district that the Sons of Gwalia Company have had geological and geophysical examinations made of the district. At present a diamond drill is being operated on the grey lode. From discussions I had with prospectors in the district, I believe that if a battery were established there it would prove beneficial to the State. Prospectors in the Menzies district informed me that the charges levied by the private battery that is running there are so exorbitant as to make the getting of ore almost unprofitable. I believe some consideration should be given to the erection of a public battery at Menzies. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) could possibly tell us whether it would be wise to establish a battery in the Southern Cross area. There are a number of mines there

and the nearest public battery is about 100 miles away. It is too expensive to transport the ore to that battery for treatment. It would be in the interests of the State if the Government decided to spend £30,000 or so in providing from four to six public batteries in districts that were likely to provide adequate returns. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) mentioned another matter I desire to deal with, namely, the re-enactment of the Metropolitan Whole Milk Act. I believe that measure should be re-enacted, but some drastic alterations should be effected in order to preserve fair play and equity amongst the various sections of the trade. The member for South Fremantle drew attention to certain things that were being done. I have received numerous complaints from producers, and I look for support from members of the Country Party in my desire to see that the producers in my electorate receive a fair crack of the whip.

Mr. Patrick: Not only in your electorate.

Mr. CROSS: I have had complaints of malpractices indulged in by certain wholesalers. For instance, some producers have contracts with certain firms. First of all they were told to deliver milk twice daily, once at night and once in the morning. After a few weeks they were told to deliver once daily. They were told to place the night milk in one can and the day milk in another. When they delivered the milk, it was put into one vat and a week later they received statements from which it appeared that they received whole milk prices for the morning milk and butter fat prices for the night milk. When the Bill dealing with the whole milk position is before the House, I shall be able to give further particulars. I have the proof necessary to support these assertions, together with statements from the firms concerned. There is another practice that some people have been indulging in. To secure contracts, certain of the wholesale firms told the producers that if they wanted contracts they would have to do something outside the scope of the Act. Men, whose word nobody would doubt, have said to me, "We have been informed that we can get contracts for our milk if when the milk cheque comes to £14 a week, we go in on Tuesdays and get the cheque for £14 but give £2 back."

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: What sort of a dealer would that be?

Mr. CROSS: That is what is going on. I believe the only way to stop the malpractices is to place the whole of the milk in the greater metropolitan area under the control of the Whole Milk Board, allowing the producers to deliver their milk and submit a statement of their deliveries, for which they would be paid by the board. The board should be placed in full control of the business. Serious consideration must be given to this matter if fair play is to be extended to the producers. When the Act is under review, I hope provision will be made to give retailers representation on the board.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: After the way they have treated the producers.

Mr. CROSS: The complaints are against the wholesalers, not the retailers. I have received no evidence at all against the retailers. Regarding the transport facilities available in the greater metropolitan area, I continue to receive numerous complaints regarding the tramway services, not only in my electorate but in other electorates as well. The trams are said to be slow and inadequate. I am definitely of the opinion that there should be no new extensions of tramway services. Experts say that the petrol-driven bus represents an advance on the electric tram and that the Diesel engine running on crude oil is an advance on the petrol-driven vehicle. Experts also say that the trolley buses that can be run by means of power generated within the State are superior to both. Even at the present time it would be a paying proposition to take up a couple of the tram lines in order to duplicate some of the single lines, and put trolley buses in place of the lines removed.

Mr. J. H. Smith: As, for instance, the one to Claremont.

Mr. CROSS: Yes, Claremont is one, and Como another. It is ridiculous that it should take 45 minutes to go by tram from the Perth Town Hall to Como. The same thing applies to the Claremont line. It would pay to take up those lines, establish trolley buses in their stead, and duplicate the single tram lines, which can never be run either cheaply or satisfactorily. I hope this year the Government will put on a new ferry boat to South Perth, and that she will be a boat the passengers can walk on to instead of having to scramble into, as at present. I trust the Minister, when he considers the profits being made by the South Perth ferry service, will agree to put on a new boat. In recent years, consider-

able publicity has been given to the proposal that the Perth central railway station should be shifted north of its present position. I think when consideration is given to an extension of the Trans. line to Fremantle, the extension will go, not north of the river, but south of it. It will be the cost of resuming land in the metropolitan area that will force the line to the south side of the river. Consideration should be given to the resumption of land through the area south of the river, because every year the place is growing so fast that eventually it will cost the State an enormous amount of money to make the necessary resumptions for the railway. I have quite a fair idea of suitable sites, for I know where the survey has been taken. At present the land could be resumed very cheaply, and there would be very little resumption needed in one portion of Victoria Park where the line will have to go through, because it is the only position where the two lines could cross. I say consideration should be given to preparing for something which must eventuate sooner or later. During recent months I have been making a serious effort to get a new school for the Canning Bridge-Mt. Henry area. I believe it is the intention of the department to erect a school, for which an unanswerable case has been put up, but I want the Minister seriously to consider making certain that the school is not put in a ridiculous position. I say that with a knowledge of past mistakes made by the department. Only during the last few days I was informed on reliable authority that the Subiaco school was placed in so unsuitable a position that it will now cost nearly £5,000 to drain the land. The Queen's Park school, built years ago, is also in an unsuitable position from various points of view. At Wattle Grove, where they had a public hall, it has been agreed that within the next few months it will have to be moved to a more suitable place. The school at Applecross also is in an unsatisfactory position, for it is built away from the population and very few people are near it. I should like to see pursued by the department a policy that will take into consideration future development and the making of reserves for school sites. Also steps should be taken to reserve land for secondary schools in a couple of places, because at the rate development is going on south of the river a secondary school will be re-

quired there, and probably at Nedlands also, in a few more years. There are many requests relative to local schools, but on the Loan Estimates I shall have something to say about those. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition took strong exception to the Government's reclamation work on the river, and said it was a waste of money. I do not know whether it is. I carry my mind back to the reclamation work of the American Government in Miami a few years ago, when millions of pounds was spent in constructing a huge concrete wall in order to reclaim an alligator and mosquito swamp. There they put on ten large dredges and did the job in about 18 months. That area is now the playground of America. A large aerodrome has been built on the reclaimed land, together with an hotel that cost £100,000. Recently I read a magazine article in which it was stated that the return on the money expended has been 12½ per cent. So the money was not wasted there, and neither will it be wasted here. I can assure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition there will be a serious outcry if the reclamation work be stopped. The Government, while working on the scheme on the south bank of the river, should consider the filling in of Miller's Pool near Mill Point, South Perth, where there is 2¾ acres of water with an average depth of two feet. It constitutes one of the worst mosquito breeding grounds in the metropolitan area. The Government could quite easily dredge the channel at the Narrows and fill in that pool. There is another half-mile of swamp on the south side of the river that should be filled in before the dredge is moved away for work elsewhere. I refer to the area between Manning Point and Coode Street.

Mr. Thorn: Have you put that up to the Government?

Mr. Marshall: What has that to do with you?

Mr. CROSS: At Mt. Henry there is a 30-acre block of land on the point which is one of the finest blocks in the State. I believe it would make an excellent site for a sanatorium. I consider that that block of land should be resumed and held in perpetuity for the people of the State. It is a choice block that I believe could be bought cheaply, but in a few years it is likely to become extremely valuable. Many other requirements of the Canning

district could be mentioned, but I shall have an opportunity to press those requests when the Estimates are being considered. I thank members for the courteous hearing they have given me.

MR. WELSH (Pilbarra) [8.22]: I join with other members in welcoming the newly elected members for South Fremantle and Avon. I wish also to congratulate Mr. Wise on his elevation to Cabinet rank. I feel sure that by virtue of his training, he will make an excellent Minister. His appointment to Ministerial rank has given pleasure to the people of the North-West, inasmuch as it has given direct representation in the Cabinet through a man who has lived amongst the people of the North and who understands the needs of the North. The present Government have been very sympathetic in their treatment of the North-West, especially in the matter of building jetties, which are absolutely necessary, and in the matter of annual road grants. Many of the roads of the North-West are practically roads in name only, and owing to the torrential rains that occur, heavy expenditure is needed to maintain them. The annual grants given by the Government are very acceptable. I should like to mention that the recent visit to the North-West of Parliamentarians, made possible by the invitation of the Minister, has given great satisfaction to the people of that part of the State. Although it was a hurried visit, it gave members an opportunity to understand the conditions that prevail. It is regrettable that the itinerary was restricted to a tour of the coast, but I am hoping that this trip will be the forerunner of many other Parliamentary visits. Such visits will make members realise that the disabilities of which we speak are very real. The Speech of the Lieut.-Governor sounded a gratifying note regarding the mining industry. But for that industry, the State would be hard pressed to weather the depression. This seems to be about the only industry that has manifested any prosperity during the last three or four years. The prospecting scheme, initiated by the Minister for Mines, has proved a very good one. It has been the means of stimulating the industry to a large extent and has also resulted in the employment of a large number of men. I must enter a protest against the granting of reservations on some of the fields, which has resulted in the locking up of auriferous country. In my electorate there are several

reservations that have been held for some years without having had a pick put into them or any work done at all. I think I am right in saying that some of the reservations have not even had a peg put in the ground. One man put down a shaft in an attempt to cut a reef or lode, and after having sunk to a considerable depth, he found that he was working on a reservation and that his labour had been in vain. That is unfair to the prospectors, who have been battling under very grave difficulties.

Mr. Marshall: Where is all the money that Claude de Bernales was supposed to have raised for work on those reservations?

Mr. WELSH: Not much of it has been spent in my electorate.

Mr. Marshall: And none in mine, either.

Mr. WELSH: If syndicates were allowed to take up such reservations, working men could develop them without needing outside capital. When prospectors wish to go on to those shows, however, they are debarred owing to the country being locked up. I think it is a mistake for the Government to continue the policy of granting reservations. Certainly they should advertise particulars of the reservations and give prospectors a chance to know where they are located. Most of those shows are propositions that could be worked. Men working under a syndicate could develop them. I hope that when the reservations expire, the Government will not renew them. According to the Speech, the quantity of wool produced last year was 88,457,662 lbs., which was a record for the State. Unfortunately the price of wool last year was low. Pastoralists have experienced a very lean time during the last four or five years, and they have a lot of leeway to make up. Following on the heavy clip last year, a lighter return will be obtained this year, but still I think a fair clip is to be expected. There are prospects of the wool market showing an improvement this year, and I trust that the improvement will be realised. Regarding cattle, the stock in the far North has been granted facilities under the pleuro restrictions, but difficulty is being experienced in marketing the stock. The cattle have been tested with the Turner test, put through the dip for tick, and also treated for buffalo fly, but they are now held up between Nullagine and Meekatharra owing to the shortage of water. They have already passed through a 70-mile stage without water. I should like to ask the Government to take steps to provide a

water supply on that 70-mile stage. It is not fair to expect cattle to traverse such a distance without water, and a determined effort should be made to find water on the route. The people concerned would be grateful if the Government could make a grant for water facilities in this area. After the cattle had been dipped, they had to go through the 70-mile stage without water. By the time they had got to the end of that stage, they were in a bad way. The Government have been good enough to make provision for a flying doctor. This means giving the people outback medical assistance when they require it. The appointment is also useful in the case of other doctors living along the coast, who may have to perform operations and may require the services of an extra doctor. I wish the Government would appoint a warden or acting-warden for the Pilbara field. Dr. Davis of Hedland has been forced to attend to mining duties at Marble Bar, and the time has come when a special appointment in connection with those duties should be made. Now that mining is more active than it used to be, all kinds of troubles may occur on the field, and if it were possible to appoint a warden or resident magistrate and have him stationed at Marble Bar, it would be a great advantage to all concerned. The request is a reasonable one now that the industry is going ahead. The district is fully entitled to its own warden, and I hope such an appointment will not be long delayed.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [8.33]: I wish to offer my sincere congratulations to the two new members upon the splendid speeches they have delivered. The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) delivered a very fine utterance. This indicated that he had studied the subject well. The speech delivered by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) was also one that was worth listening to. These two members should prove a decided acquisition to the debating powers of the House. I read very carefully the speech delivered by the Deputy Leader of the Country Party. When I had done so I was at a loss to decide whether to offer him my congratulations or my condolences. After a little reflection I decided to offer him both. I congratulate him on the pains he took in the preparation of a very comprehensive speech. He left nothing untouched. I also compliment him upon the diligence he dis-

played in the compilation of his speech, and for the amount of labour he must have expended upon it. I condole with him because of his failure to complete the task he set himself. He set out to make a case against the Government, and to say that he failed miserably is to use a very mild expression.

Mr. Sampson: You are very hard to satisfy.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Not at all. I like a man who is in a responsible position to give us solid facts, and the absence of such facts was one of the main features of the hon. member's speech. He fell back on the well-worn gibe of Trades Hall influence. He repeated almost ad nauseam the statement that the Government have received more money than the Government of which he was a leading member.

Mr. Marshall: And more capable of handling it.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Throughout his speech there was no recognition of anything done by the Government that was good. The main burden of his speech was the alleged fact that the Premier received so much more money than the Premier under whom the hon. member had served.

Mr. Marshall: And spent it more wisely.

Mr. NEEDHAM: If that is so, it is proof that those who lent the money to the Government had a higher opinion of them than they had of the Government with which the hon. member was associated.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: The statement applied to every Government in Australia.

Mr. NEEDHAM: It proves that the credit of the present Government stands high. It also proves that the Premier was able to put up a good case to the Loan Council, so that he was able to get all the money necessary for his full financial requirements. That was a very good thing to do. The Loan Council is comprised of a majority of anti-Labour Governments. It is something to be proud of that the Premier was able to convince the majority of anti-Labour members of the Loan Council that the policy he was pursuing was a sound one. That is why he got more money. He also proved that the manner in which he was spending the money was a better one than the method adopted by his immediate predecessor in office. He showed that he was not spending money foolishly and merely for the sake of keeping men in some kind of work, but that he was spending it on

work of a reproductive nature. Instead of the Deputy Leader of the Country Party condemning the Premier because of his success, he should have congratulated him, but he failed to do so. Whilst the Premier was at the Loan Council meetings and was able to secure money for his full financial requirements, the representatives of the anti-Labour Governments were not so successful. This proves they were not spending the money they got in as economical a manner as it was being spent by the Premier of this State. The Leader of the Nationalist Party, both in this Chamber and outside it, has accused the present Government of extravagance in regard to loan expenditure. The hon. gentleman has often stated that the present Government were running Western Australia into debt by reckless spending of loan funds, and further has said that whilst running the State into debt the Government were showing no results whatever. A comparison between the activities of the Mitchell Government and those of the Collier Government show that the former increased the State indebtedness in three years, by way of loan works and deficits, to the extent of £9,200,000, whilst the present Government for the same purposes and also in three years increased that indebtedness by £9,340,000, a difference of only £140,000 in three years, or roughly £47,000 per annum. Those figures supply a complete refutation of the charge of extravagance so frequently hurled at this Administration by the Leader of the Nationalist Party. The Leader of the official Opposition has also made similar accusations; and the gentleman who is acting in his place has, I think, endorsed the statement of the Leader of the Nationalist Party that the present Government have been guilty of extravagance.

Mr. Moloney: He does not believe in any work being done in the metropolitan area.

Mr. NEEDHAM: One of the reasons why the Acting Leader of the Opposition failed miserably in his attack on the Government was that he had not a single solid fact to substantiate any of the charges he levelled against the Administration. May I point out to hon. members opposite that the important difference between the two phases of Government finance is not the difference of £140,000 which I have just mentioned, but the incontrovertible fact that our borrowing policy has provided men with work

of a reproductive nature, at the same time providing tangible assets for the State. The only thing produced by the financial policy of the previous Administration was deficits. Therein lies the difference between the loan expenditure of the present Government and that of the Mitchell Government. The Acting Leader of the Opposition complains about the present Treasurer having had more money to spend. Had the Acting Leader of the Opposition and his Leader been successful at the last general election, they would perhaps have had a little more money to spend than during their last term, but they would have had that additional money at the expense of the workers of this State. The choice in 1933 was a clean-cut choice between Latham and Labour. The people chose Labour. Had Latham been chosen, the workers of Western Australia would have suffered considerably in regard to the basic wage. No number of denials from our friends opposite will do away with the fact that the statement was made by the Leader of the Country Party that he would bring about a basic wage of a Federal standard, which meant something like £2 18s. per week instead of £3 10s. at that time. Too much emphasis cannot possibly be laid on that statement of the Leader of the Country Party at that date, its Leader, to-day, and the Leader of His Majesty's Opposition in this Chamber. In that regard the Country Party Leaders would have had money to burn, but at the expense, I repeat, of Western Australian workers. It may be worth while to refer to another feature of the previous Administration, although it has been mentioned by other speakers. As regards work done by sustenance men, the Mitchell Government had the advantage of a large amount of money and the further advantage of getting work done very cheaply indeed. It may be interesting to refer to what actually took place during the Mitchell regime in regard to work done by men on bare sustenance. Prior to the Labour Government taking over in 1933, a system had been built up by which local authorities employed sustenance men to the value of their sustenance, being recouped accordingly by the Government. At its inception the system met the need of the moment, but it afforded little opportunity for men to rise above the sustenance level. The extent to which the system had been adopted by the

previous Government is shown by the fact that in a period of two years the Government in question paid to local authorities in the metropolitan area no less a sum than £406,000 by way of sustenance, to which amount the local authorities in question added only £44,000, indicating that the local governing bodies had work performed to the value of no less than £450,000 for an expenditure on their part of only £44,000. It was plain to the present Government that while workers were thus deprived of their wages and their purchasing power, there could be little improvement in general employment conditions. Therefore it was considered necessary to take some 1,500 men away from that class of work. Whatever opposition was raised at that time—and the opposition was considerable—has of course disappeared. Right from the inception of the time when the present Government took over, that system has been stopped, and every man working for a local authority has had to get the proper rate of wages. Speakers preceding me on the Government side of the House have referred to the great improvement in the position regarding unemployment. No doubt there has been a great improvement. There are over 4,000 fewer men on either relief work or in receipt of sustenance to-day than there were when the Labour Government took charge in 1933. That is a big thing to accomplish in so short a period. Roughly, 4,500 men have been taken from relief work and absorbed in private employment. That means that the system adopted by the present Government proved effective from the start. It means also that a considerable reduction has taken place in the amount of money distributed by way of relief. That the position is not as satisfactory as the Government would like is undoubted, but I venture to say that even the most bitter opponents of the Labour Party and of the Labour Government cannot but admit the most marked improvement regarding employment during the past two years. That was the main issue on which the present Government were elected to office. They promised that they would handle the unemployment position better than their predecessors; they have fulfilled that promise to the letter. They promised a period of employment to the men that would give them an opportunity to get the clothing and

other necessities essential for their families; that promise also has been completely fulfilled. Prior to the advent of the Government, there were scarcely any skilled tradesmen employed on our public works. Here is another direction in which the Government have succeeded. They have employed skilled men in various callings—engineers, painters, skilled artisans, carpenters, etc. Every one of those men has been paid award rates of wages. Thus the Government have been able to provide more work and better wages than obtained prior to their advent to the Treasury bench. I need not stress the employment feature any further, because those who run may read. The position speaks for itself.

Mr. North: The increased loan indebtedness is the worst feature.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I regret that this work is being done as the result of the expenditure of borrowed money. I admit that is not a pleasant feature to contemplate, but I consider that under the present system there was no other way out. It was a case of either borrowing money and spending it on reproductive works in order to engage those men, or of revolt and rebellion. The limit of the patience of those men had been reached. I, for one, would not like to contemplate what would have occurred if the position had not been handled firmly. While it is regrettable that the work is being carried on as a result of expenditure of loan funds, it is infinitely preferable to what would have occurred if the army of unemployed had not been absorbed in occupations. That army of unemployed existed when Labour took over the responsibility of governing the State, and it was in a dangerous condition. Discontent was rampant and, whatever the cost, it had to be met. Considerable criticism has been levelled against the Government with regard to the appointment of a full-time Minister for Employment. It has been lightly said that the Minister, whom we all regret to know is lying on a sick bed—I know the sympathy of every member of this Chamber goes out to him and his family at such a time—had taken over other portfolios. I warn members of the Opposition to pause before going farther with that charge. That Minister took over other portfolios only when he had practically surmounted the difficulties that confronted him in the unemployment trouble that was apparent.

Every member will admit that Mr. Kenneally had a most difficult department to administer, and that he did give all his time to the work, which he carried out well.

Mr. Wansbrough: With credit to himself.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Yes, and, I am afraid, at the cost to himself of his health. He carried out the work to the benefit of the State. It is idle for members opposite to hurl the charge against him that, while carrying out the responsibilities of his office, he went to the Eastern States on one or two occasions on business in another sphere. It is a very cheap gibe. His department and the State generally did not suffer during those temporary absences. The Government deserve every credit for having created a portfolio to deal with employment matters. They were fortunate, as, too, was the State, in securing the services of a man of the calibre of Mr. Kenneally to fulfil that important and very onerous post. Even the Minister's greatest enemy—I do not know that he has one—will admit that he carried out most effective work in his department while his health lasted. I am one of those who think that the zeal, enthusiasm and close attention he gave to the work of his department have been the means of placing him in the hospital where he is to-day and from which we hope he will soon emerge, completely restored to health. There is a feature of the financial position of the State to-day that stands out cameo-like. I refer to the extraordinary improvement recorded last year in the deficit. It amounted to £167,000, an improvement on the estimated deficit of £477,000, and on the previous year's result of £622,000. We are not yet out of the economic blizzard but, in common with the rest of the world, we are still in the midst of the economic storm. Prosperity was talked about often and we were repeatedly told we had turned the corner, whereas, generally speaking, we are still at that corner. When I realise all these things I say the accomplishment of the Government in so reducing the estimated deficit is a feature worth marking, for it stands out prominently. It might be well briefly to refer to taxation. During the 2½ years the present Government have been in power they have not introduced taxation, if we except the tax of 1s. 4d. in the pound on the profits of

gold mining companies, which I think was justified, having regard to the position the industry is in. As a matter of fact I think the imposition of a tax of 1s. 4d. in the pound on the profits of gold mining companies was moderate, and that the Parliament treated the gold mining companies very generously in imposing so light a tax. However, that was the only new taxation brought in. Prior to the advent of this Administration there was a financial emergency or unemployment tax of 4½d. in the pound, a flat rate of 4½d. in the pound commencing at £2 weekly for a married man and £1 1s. weekly for a single man. During the last elections the members of this party condemned that tax as iniquitous and inequitable. And it was certainly iniquitous to impose a flat rate tax to help the unemployed at 4½d. in the pound, and commencing at £2 weekly for married people, and £1 1s. weekly for single people. For a man receiving £2 weekly and having a family to keep and rent to pay, to have to pay the same amount of tax as a man with £25 or more weekly, was most iniquitous. When this party took charge here, we hastened to amend that taxation. We abolished the flat rate and imposed a graduated tax increasing with the income to 9d. in the pound, but exempting those on the basic wage. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition laid stress on the recent industrial trouble in Kalgoorlie, and charged members on this side with non-observance of the law of the land, the law of arbitration. If the hon. member had exercised his memory he would have known that most breaches of awards in this State have been committed by employers. He might have remembered there was a time when the Arbitration Court delivered an award to the mining industry in consequence of which one of the mines closed down, the company saying they could not pay the award rate to the men. Was that an observance or a breach of the Arbitration Court's award? In that regard I might remind my friends opposite that they are living in a glass house and cannot afford to throw stones. They have forgotten altogether their own action when on this side of the House, when they put the Arbitration Court in shackles. They did not leave it as a free and independent tribunal as it should be. Oh no! In their dragnet when they attempted to balance the Budget in accordance with the dictum of the Premier's Plan, they brought in the State Arbitration Court

and practically told the court what it had to do. And the court did it. The then Government brought in private employment and gave a chance to the employer to go to the court and get a reduction of 20 per cent. on the wages that had to be paid. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition did not tell the House he was a member of the only Government in Australia that brought the Premier's Plan into operation in private employment. No other Government in Australia did that. All that the other Governments were concerned about was their own employees in their own Government departments. Their concern was to balance their own budgets, Commonwealth and State. It was not their concern to interfere with the wages of the men and women employed by private firms. So they left them severely alone, and left it to the Government of which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was a member to bring in this idea and to compel the court to reduce the wages of men and women employed in private enterprise. And that Government went further, for when the court gave a decision it became a common rule throughout the State. My friend conveniently forgot the case of an organisation here which had but one bricklayer working in its service. That organisation got an award from the court for a reduction in wages, and consequently every bricklayer in the State was made subject to the same reduction. As I have said, our friends when on the Government side placed the Arbitration Court in manacles, whereas the present Government took off the manacles and freed the court from that indignity. The Financial Emergency Act was amended to exempt all industrial awards and agreements from the provisions of that Act. I repeat that this State is the only State in the Commonwealth where private employment was included in the financial emergency legislation. Had the member for York, the Leader of the Opposition, been elected with a majority three years ago, the workers of this State would have suffered a reduction in their basic wage, and would still have been working 48 hours weekly; and, as the member for Middle Swan (Mr. Hegney) reminds me, would still be suffering the effects of the financial emergency legislation as applied to the Arbitration Court. The Government remedied that state of affairs and restored their wages. In addition, they reduced the hours of their own employees to 44 per week. The Labour

Party, when in office on a previous occasion, granted the 44-hour week to their employees, but as soon as a change of Government took place in 1930, those employees had to revert to the 48-hour week. The present Government took office in 1933 and again their employees are on the 44-hour week. I realise that that was brought about by administrative action; it was not brought about by legislation enactment. I am only sorry that the 44-hour week is confined to Government employees. I should like to see it extended to all occupations right through the State; in fact I would like to see the hours of labour reduced much below 44 per week. We can say what we like, do what we like and legislate as long as we like, but until the weekly hours are considerably reduced, we will never get anywhere near to a solution of the unemployment problem with regard to either adults or youths. We are making a drive at present in the interests of motherhood and youth. We realise the very complex, intricate problem of youth and unemployment. We realise that each year during the five years depression, in this State alone, 4,000 boys and girls left school for whom there was no employment. They are up against a stone wall. In order to do something to meet the situation, we are engaged in a drive for motherhood and youth. It may be said that this is simply a palliative. We are not touching the main problem, and hours of labour will have to be shortened. I have mentioned a few things that the Government have accomplished. I consider they have achieved wonderful results in face of the very severe handicap under which they have laboured, the handicap of the Legislative Council and the Loan Council. There are two leg irons. From the legislative point of view the Government have the leg iron of the Legislative Council; from the financial point of view they have the leg iron of the Loan Council. During the past two years the Government have been in constant conflict with the members of the Legislative Council, and every bit of legislation introduced into this House having for its object the amelioration of the conditions of the workers of this State has been fought consistently and persistently by members in another place. We even had to hold a special session in order to get certain legislation through. I say the Government have done wonders in view of the obstacle at the

other end of the corridor, the House that calls itself a House of review when it is entirely a House of obstruction, a House opposed to anything in the nature of progress. The Loan Council, as we know, is the master of the situation from a financial point of view. I feel amused when I hear members opposite boasting of the sovereignty of our State, or the sovereignty of any State. If we were a sovereign State, we would have a sovereign entity. Where is our sovereignty? Every year we have to go cap in hand to the Loan Council and say "Please give us a few pounds with which to carry on our work." I cannot see where the sovereignty of the State comes in. It is more beggarly than sovereign. The day the Financial Agreement was embodied in the Constitution of the Commonwealth, that day the States, all six of them, lost their sovereign rights. Nobody can tell me that a State is sovereign or supreme within its own ambit or geographical boundaries when it has lost the control of its own purse, when the control of the finances is centred in another body. It is idle to speak of sovereignty while we have to go cap in hand to the Loan Council every year.

Mr. North: It is some consolation that we are borrowing inside of Australia instead of abroad.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I admit that there is a benefit to be obtained from the Loan Council. The original idea was to prevent more than one State going on the loan market at a time. We had the experience of two or three States going on the loan market at the same time. That, of course, was disastrous. I quite supported that loose system under which the Loan Council functioned originally—I happened to be in the Commonwealth Parliament at the time it was instituted—but I decidedly objected and still do object to the inclusion of the Financial Agreement in the Constitution, which has bound us hand and foot to the Loan Council, to whom we have to go to obtain whatever money we require. We have heard something in this Chamber recently about the primary producers, and the present Government have been accused of not assisting them. The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) said that from the Country Party the farmers had never received anything: all they had received had been rendered by the Labour Government. The hon. member is reported to have made that

statement when he was president of the Wheatgrowers' Union. If the Country Party ever get the reins of Government in this State, which is very doubtful, and if the hon. gentleman is a supporter, possibly he might be able to impress upon his party the necessity for doing something for the primary producers. I am glad to know that the member for Avon made that statement, and I congratulate him on his frankness in having said that the party with which he is now allied had done nothing for the primary producers but that all help had come from the Labour Government. Last session a good deal of legislation of considerable benefit to the farming community was put through by the Government. In this was included the Agricultural Bank Act, which will be of particular assistance to farmers. It was keenly debated in both Houses. I think the Act will do a great amount of good for those on the land. We cannot do too much for the man on the land. During the five years of economic stress our agriculturists, particularly the new settlers, have suffered more than anyone else, and are still suffering. I am prepared to extend to the Government every assistance to help those people on the road to prosperity. The Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act was amended in a way to give clients of private banks, merchants and financial institutions, the opportunity to secure consideration of their liabilities as is the case with clients of the Agricultural Bank. Last session also the Land Act was consolidated. This was no mean accomplishment, for no fewer than 34 separate enactments were brought together in that Act. The Dairy Products Marketing Regulation Act provided for the control by a board of the dairying industry, giving power with regard to export and the storage of butter with a view to benefiting the producer. Truly it cannot be said that the producer has been neglected by the Government. Indeed, the Ministry has proved worthy of the confidence reposed in them. On one or two occasions since I have been a member of this Chamber I have had to refer to the Technical School. I am not speaking of it tonight because it happens to be in the Perth electorate, but because of its importance to the whole State. I have referred to the difficulties under which the school staff has been working. Recently I have been to the school on several occasions, and have seen

the students working at all hours. I hope the Minister for Education will be successful in persuading the Treasurer to do something to improve the conditions during the current year.

Mr. Lambert: What about the charge to students there in the face of our free university? That is of greater moment than the convenience of the teachers.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I am not concerned about that, but I am concerned about the work of the school, which has done so much for the State.

Mr. Lambert: But fees are charged at that school, and not at the University.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Two wrongs do not make a right. We are fortunate in having such fine officers in charge of the institution. Particularly do I refer to the principal, Mr. Lynch, and his assistant, Mr. Phillips. Those gentlemen cannot do the work they would like to do because of the conditions under which they have to work.

Mr. Lambert: I am not depreciating that, but am pointing out that fees are charged when none are charged at the University.

Mr. NEEDHAM: If I am interfering with the hon. member's speech I will sit down. I am referring to the want of accommodation. The present accommodation consists of the old boy's school building on the St. George's Terrace frontage. There we find one large classroom and one small classroom, a teachers' room and lavatories. There is no other classroom accommodation. This old building was erected in 1854. Then there is portion of the brick building that was erected in 1910. This has never been completed. It includes a large entrance hall, a stairway, and administrative offices. There is a basement and two floors, but, for the size of the building, little classroom accommodation is available. At the rear of these buildings are two brick structures housing the departments of chemistry, assaying, metallurgy, pharmacy, mechanical and electrical engineering, physics and mathematics. Those buildings were erected in 1910. Then there are the wood and iron classrooms and workshops. When the buildings were erected 25 years ago the number of individual students was 750. It is now 3,000. The staff is endeavouring to teach and train 3,000 students in accommodation that was originally provided for 750. Classrooms at the Perth Boys' School have to be used to accommo-

date the overflow on four nights a week. Nearly 400 students are there on one night and 350 on another. It is impossible to give adequate supervision to the classes, and the desk and seating accommodation is not suitable for adult students. For the past 20 years extra accommodation has been needed and requested, and during the last eight or nine years efficient work has been impossible because of the lack of that accommodation. Apart from its classroom disadvantages the school has never had facilities for the staff and the students such as are essential, and are to be found in every other large technical school. I refer to students' common rooms and study rooms, luncheon rooms, staff rooms, locker rooms, etc. What is required is the following:—12 additional classrooms, and seven others to replace the old wood and iron rooms, and students and staff rooms such as I have indicated. Two schemes have been mentioned from time to time, one being the disposal of the Terrace frontage to reimburse the Government for the erection of a new technical school, and the other the completion of the Terrace buildings which was commenced in 1910. As permanent accommodation is wanted at the earliest possible date, the school is favourable to any scheme that will provide it quickly.

Mr. Lambert: We want a free technical school, as we have a free university.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I commend the request to the Minister for Education and hope an amount will appear on the Estimates this year to provide the extra accommodation. I now wish to refer to the Child Welfare Department. In its annual report for the year ended 30th June, 1934, appears the following, under the heading of "Subnormal and backward girls":—

The problem of the subnormal and backward girls has yet to be dealt with. We have at Gosnells the Salvation Army authorities and the Education Department rendering a wonderful service at the Scaforth Homes in connection with subnormal and backward boys, but there is not anything being done to assist the subnormal and backward girls to meet their life's difficulties. It is realised that this is a very big problem which must eventually come within the scope of legislation for mental defectives. In the meantime, however, I consider something should be done as a commencement to help those young people. I do hope that in the year 1934-35 this will be attempted, possibly on somewhat similar lines to that in operation for boys. It is appreciated that this is only a half-way measure in dealing with this

class of child, but would it not be a step in the right direction and mark a further advance—and a big one—in child welfare work in this State?

I bring the matter forward because of some attention I have given it during recent months. A few weeks ago I had the honour to introduce to the Minister for Child Welfare (Hon. J. J. Kenneally) a deputation representative of many of the women's organisations in this State. The deputation put before the Minister a request for the establishment of what I may term a farm colony where delinquent girls could be looked after and supervised. The deputation made out a strong case in behalf of the delinquent girls, pointing out the danger these girls are not only to themselves but to the community at large. I have endeavoured to ascertain from the Child Welfare Department the number of abnormal or defective girls in Western Australia; but the exact figure is not available. The deputation asked the Minister to give to a responsible committee to be appointed one of the abandoned farms, not too far away from the metropolitan area, where these girls could be supervised until they reached the age of 21 years. If improvement had not taken place by then, of course they would still be retained under supervision. The Minister pointed out that there were considerable difficulties in handling these cases, firstly because there was the difficulty of getting the girls away from their parents, who naturally felt loth to part with children of that description. But of course where there was any actual danger to the community, he added, the department would act. The hon. gentleman also stated he had appointed a lady to assist the Child Welfare Department in visiting the homes of these unfortunate children: and he said that so far the system was doing some good. Finally he stated that if the number of subnormal children, particularly girls, increased he would favourably consider the deputation's request for the establishment of a farm home. I do not say there is any great number of these unfortunate girls in Western Australia. The number here is nothing in comparison with the numbers in other States, and in more thickly populated centres elsewhere; but that there are some is sufficient cause for us to think seriously of them. I consider it would be wise to establish a home on one of the

abandoned farms for the purpose of supervising such girls. In other parts of the world there are religious institutions which look after subnormal girls and subnormal boys. The children are found to work well under supervision, and in many cases become self-supporting and useful citizens. Unfortunately, many of their cases are incurable. In that event they remain in the homes, where their minds and their bodies are occupied and they are not a danger to the community. I trust that the Government will keep its eye on the situation, and that should the number of subnormal boys and girls increase steps will be taken, as suggested to the Minister, to establish colonies where they can properly be supervised and, if practicable, be made good and useful citizens. I thank the House for the courtesy extended to me while speaking. I hope the next time the Deputy Leader of the Opposition essays to castigate or catechise the Government of the day, he will be more fortified with facts. The present Government's record for the past 2½ years can easily stand in the light of day. With all confidence Ministers can say, "Something accomplished, something done, has earned for us a renewal of the people's confidence at the next general election."

On motion by Mr. Lambert, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.36 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 11th August, 1935.

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

PAPERS—TEMPORARY MINING RESERVE 593H.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.35]: I move—

That all papers relating to Temporary Mining Reserve 593H, Mount Monger, originally

held by Claude Albo De Bernales, but now held by the Pericles Gold Mines, Ltd., be laid on the table of the House.

Briefly, my object in moving for the papers arises from requests that have been made to me by several prominent residents of Boulder and of the Mount Monger district. They have given me to understand that this reservation has been in existence for over three years. They say that although first held in the name of Mr. Bernales, it is now held in the name of the Pericles Gold Mines, Ltd. As a result of personal visits to the locality, they also inform me that practically no work has been done on the reserve during the period it has been held. It is located about 30 miles from Kalgoorlie. Anyone who knows the Mount Monger goldfield area is aware that to date that particular locality has not revealed the existence of reefs of sufficient width to justify any large company operating there. If that were not so, the area would have been opened up years ago. It is distinctly understood that, from a small syndicate or prospecting point of view, it is one of the richest little spots in Western Australia, bearing in mind the leaders and other small contacts that are known to exist. If nothing has been done on a reservation, particularly in a locality such as that under discussion, where a considerable number of men could be kept employed for some time, a close scrutiny of the position is required. That is my sole object in moving the motion. If agreed to, the people vitally interested in the matter will be able to ascertain from the papers the existing position with regard to the reservation.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.38]: I have no objection to the papers being tabled.

Question put and passed.

BILL—BUNBURY RACECOURSE RAILWAY DISCONTINUANCE.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT ACT, 1899, AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.40]: The Bill seeks to amend sections of the Con-