

Mr. CORBOY: Of course it was not carried on a party vote, because the Labour Party were then sitting in Opposition. Quite a number who supported the then Government voted in favour of the motion. Apparently it must have been the death knell of some of them, because they are not now members of this Chamber.

Mr. George: There were some who are still here.

Mr. CORBOY: Yes. The Whip of the Opposition, the member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) was one who voted for the motion. The Government of the day should have taken notice of the decision of the House at the time, but that was not done. The House determined that the time was ripe for the establishment of a State insurance office and although nothing was done at that time, I am grateful that at long last the present Labour Government have seen fit to move in that direction. I would have preferred to have had the question dealt with at the original session of the present Parliament, but it is better late than never. I hope that, having turned their attention to this question, the Government will not confine the activities of the State insurance office to those at present covered by them, such as workers' compensation and so on, but will enlarge the scope of the proposal to enable the State insurance office to compete with other offices in all forms of insurance.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is a pity they did not wait until the Bill came before us.

Mr. Panton: And let miners die like sheep in the meantime!

Mr. CORBOY: It is easy to see that the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) does not represent a mining constituency. If he did so, he would know that insurance companies will not cover men who are sacrificing their lives in the mining industry. Nor yet would he be so callous as to suggest that the Government should wait. On the contrary, he would desire the Government to go ahead and cover the miners.

The Minister for Mines: It should have been done years ago.

Mr. CORBOY: I believe that not only the Government here, but every State Government as well have the sympathy of the people of Australia as a whole in the contest now being waged with the Federal Government on several points. These in-

clude the per capita payment, the petrol tax and so on. Certainly I am convinced that the people of Western Australia, with, perhaps, one exception, are behind the Government and will support them in the attitude they are adopting regarding the Federal Government. I have much pleasure in submitting the motion I have moved.

MR. PANTON (Menzies) [4.18]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by Mr. George, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 4.20 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 3rd August, 1926.

Address-in-reply PAGE 15

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from 29th July.

HON. J. EWING (South-West) [4.50]: Since we adjourned some seven months ago there have been some changes in the membership of this House. Of those who occupied seats in the Chamber, three have been defeated. The electors in their wisdom decided that those gentlemen should fall by the way, and they have done so. I cannot help expressing regret that such has been the case. I think the new members will understand the spirit in which this is said, and what these words are meant to imply. When they have become old members themselves, should they chance to fall by the

way, the same expressions of regret will be uttered concerning them by remaining members of the House. I congratulate those seven members who were returned to their seats, some after strenuous fighting, and others without opposition. We are all pleased to see them back again. To the three new members, Sir William Lathlain, Mr. Kempton and Mr. Mann, I extend, in common with other members, a hearty welcome, and congratulate them upon their success. I feel sure they will like the environment of this House, and enjoy their association with their fellow members. They will learn that outside the Chamber politics do not come into operation, and that inside the Chamber we are liberal in interpreting other members' views and are always ready to extend to them every kindness and courtesy that we can. I understand that all of them have been in public life already, other than in Parliamentary life, and no doubt they will be able to profit by the wisdom they have already acquired in that direction, and by their experience in municipal and other questions. I know that from you, Mr. President, they will receive all the assistance and kindness it is possible for one in your position to extend to them. I notice that the financial position occupies a prominent place in the Speech. It is a very long document, but it is instructive, and contains many matters of vast importance to the State. Whether a member speaks for a long or a short time, he usually endeavours to interpret the wishes of the Government, and, from the experience we have gained of different classes of Government, he endeavours to ascertain how the State is progressing. The most important thing for any country to consider is its finances. When we look at France and other parts of the Continent, as well as England, we find that the financial position is regarded as the most important of all. I shall endeavour to speak on this question without criticism, but to set out what appears to me to be the true position. I shall endeavour to show how we have progressed from year to year, and to compare the period covered during the life of the previous Government with that covered during the life of the existing Government. I need hardly stress the importance to the welfare of the State of wiping out the deficit, and of this being done in a manner that will appeal to us all. The Speech shows that the revenue for the year was £8,808,000 and

the expenditure £8,907,000, leaving a deficit of £99,000. It is anticipated by the Government that by the end of the present financial year the deficit will be wiped out. In my opinion the deficit should have been wiped out in the first year of office of the present Government. Sir James Mitchell, when Treasurer, pledged himself at the elections that if he were returned to power the deficit would be wiped out in his first year of office. Unfortunately he was not returned to power, for the people in their wisdom defeated his party. I did not anticipate that it would take three years to wipe out the deficit. Let me compare the two years subsequent to the advent of the present Government with the two years which concluded the administration of the Mitchell Government. Mr. Corboy, in another place, referred to the financial position and the deficit, and Mr. Gray in this Chamber did likewise. Each implied that the present Government had done far better work in the way of wiping out the deficit than did the previous Government. I do not wish to find fault with the Government. They are doing excellent work in many directions. I oppose them, however, on principle, but when they do good work I am prepared to support them as far as possible.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Even to voting for them.

Hon. J. EWING: I have not done that yet.

Hon. J. R. Brown: But you have supported them.

Hon. J. EWING: One can support them without necessarily voting for them. It is only right that every member should study the financial position, and arrive at his own conclusions concerning it. I have endeavoured to analyse the figures that appear in the ordinary pamphlets issued by the Government. In 1910-11 there was a small surplus of £13,000. That surplus has been discussed on many occasions, and it has even been denied that it ever existed. Since that time there has been a long succession of deficits. They occurred year after year, until 1921-22, when the peak was reached, namely a deficit of £735,000. At no time in the history of the State has there been so great a deficit as that, although in one year it was £732,000. In 1911-12 the deficit was £134,409, and subsequently it rose to the figure I have mentioned. Up to that point the war had been

on. We had a drought in 1914, and many difficulties confronted the Government. It was almost beyond the power of any Premier or Parliament to stem the tide during those years. Let me now explain what really saved the situation. In 1921, or a year or so before that, the position became very acute. The deficit was increasing every year. Sir James Mitchell was then in power. He wondered what ought to be done to save the country and bring it back to a solvent condition. Many people were advocating a mark-time policy, and a non-borrowing policy. They were suggesting a curtailment of the Public Service, and in other directions advocating retrenchment, so that the money saved could go towards wiping off the deficit. Sir James Mitchell thought that was a wrong policy. Through the medium of the Agricultural Bank he further helped the man on the land, in order to increase the rate of production. He succeeded in his object. In 1921-22 he commenced his group settlement scheme. Through these and other schemes an impetus was given to primary production and to the man on the land. In 1922-23 he reduced the deficit to £405,000. That was a reduction of £326,000 in one year. In the year 1923-24 the Mitchell Government was defeated, but it had been administering the affairs of the State for ten months, and was therefore responsible for the deficit for that year. The deficit, however, showed a further reduction to £229,000. During the two years preceding the defeat of the Mitchell Government, and the advent of the previous Government, Sir James Mitchell reduced the deficit by over £500,000. If we compare that position with what obtained during the first two years of the present administration we can see what the difference was.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Did he do the lot, or were good seasons responsible for it?

Hon. J. EWING: I will tell the hon. member in the course of my remarks what was done. When the present Government came into office the deficit was £229,000. That was reduced in the year 1924-5 by £176,000—a good effort indeed. In the year just closed the deficit stood at £99,000, which is £40,000 worse than in the previous year. In the two years that the present Administration have been in office the deficit has thus been reduced by £135,000, as compared with a reduction during a similar period of the existence of the Mitchell Administra-

tion, of no less a sum than over £500,000. There we have a difference of £367,000. We wonder why this has taken place and why it is not possible to overcome existing difficulties and to get rid of the deficit more speedily. In the Governor's Speech the Government express the hope that during this year the deficit will disappear altogether. If it does disappear, it will mean merely that in its last two years of existence the Mitchell Administration did better by no less a sum than £270,000 than the present Government will have done during its three years of office. Whilst we have every sympathy with the present Government, we must not fail to analyse the position, and give credit to those to whom it is due. The revenue position during the year just closed was satisfactory. Hon. members having the figures before them will see that the revenue received in the year 1923-24 was £7,865,000, whilst the revenue received last year was £8,808,000, an improvement of nearly £1,000,000, which came into the coffers of the State. I am surprised that the position is not really better than it is, but I trust that it will be possible for the Government this year to carry out their intention to wipe out the deficit. During 1925-26 taxation was increased by no less a sum than £244,000. Those figures cannot be controverted. There was an increase of receipts from timber to the extent of £113,000, and thus it will be seen that what might be called a clear revenue of £357,000 was obtained from those two sources. In that period the deficit was reduced by only £135,000. In the last year of the Mitchell Government's administration the sandalwood question came before us and it was stated that the revenue from this source would be between £30,000 and £60,000. This however, was not supposed to be revenue at all, but the Legislative Council passed a Bill that allowed the money to go into revenue. That was the proper thing to do. At the same time it must be pointed out that that sum must be credited to the present Government. Therefore, all things being considered, one can appreciate the position that the present Government have been in since they assumed office—a position that is far more advantageous than that occupied by the Mitchell Government in 1923-24. Why, then, has not the deficit been reduced to a greater extent?

Hon. J. R. Brown: Is this an electioneering speech?

Hon. J. EWING: I am making a speech that appeals to me to be a proper one. It is perfectly fair that I should make these comparisons to show the relative financial positions of the two Governments, and to urge upon the present Government to do their utmost to get the State completely out of debt. This year the Government stands in what I consider to be a unique position, in that it is going to get an enormous amount of revenue. If, therefore, they do not succeed in wiping out the deficit, the electors will want to know the reason why. But I am confident that they will not only wipe out the deficit, but will probably show a surplus at the end of the year. As the outcome of the recommendation of the Disabilities Commission, a sum of £350,000 has been granted to the State by the Federal Government. We know that that money is already in the bank, and that it will be taken into revenue account this year.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: A special grant cannot be treated as revenue.

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member does not know how it is going to be used. It was a grant made by the Federal Government to the Western Australian Government and it may be used to assist to wipe out our deficit.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Will it not be earmarked in some way or other?

Hon. J. EWING: I do not know, but it will be revenue. A substantial grant has also been made towards soldier settlement in this State, and a Bill will come before us shortly. This grant will mean a saving to the State of £50,000 in the way of interest. Is that not something? It will surely help the State to proceed with development in other directions. Then we have the migration agreement, under which we get money at 1 per cent. for the first five years, and about 1½ per cent. for the next five years. That, too, will mean a considerable annual saving to the State. We are to receive also from the Federal Government a special grant of £480,000 for road making. That is for specific work and it will result in the Government finding employment for our people and getting in revenue.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do not we have to pay pound for pound?

Hon. J. EWING: We have to find 15s. for every pound paid us by the Commonwealth. At any rate, it is money that is coming into the State and will be the means of providing employment and creating rev-

enue. With all these advantages before them, the Government, I feel sure, will not fail to wipe out the deficit which has been our bugbear for the last 15 years.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You seem to be sure that the present Government will be with us at the end of the next financial year.

Hon. J. EWING: In studying the position of Western Australia, one is alarmed to find the extent to which the balance of trade is against us. We find the manufacturers in the Eastern States turning out those articles that should be produced by us and supplying us with commodities that should be produced in Western Australia. It is our duty to proclaim these things to the people of the State and to quote the figures represented by the imports, so that the true position may be properly understood. The high protective duties that are in existence are largely responsible for the balance of trade being against us. I remember the time when New South Wales was almost a free-trade State under the regime of the Reid Administration. It has now gone over to Protection and it is as high Protection as one could expect to find anywhere. Under that policy, New South Wales has made great strides; it has overtaken Victoria by leaps and bounds. Now New South Wales has a great population and big industries. The balance of trade against Western Australia last year amounted to the huge sum of £6,000,000. This represents articles that are manufactured in the Eastern States and dumped into Western Australia. I admit that our population is increasing, but that increase is not what one would expect to find, and certainly nothing like the increase that is taking place in the neighbouring manufacturing States of New South Wales and Victoria, which are making us pay dearly for what we receive from them. I admit also that the remedy is difficult to find. In the year 1925-26 the imports totalled £8,566,000, and the exports merely £1,445,000, leaving a balance against the State of over £7,000,000. Hon. members will view these figures with some alarm. With the development of our land and consequent increased production, and also with some encouragement to secondary industries, we shall in time surmount the existing difficulties and reduce that balance of trade which is now so much against us. The position is certainly serious and the people should be made to realise to what extent we are importing from the other

States articles that we ourselves should be producing. We are to-day importing in enormous quantities butter, cheese, bacon and hams, jams, jellies, preserved milk, dried fruits, onions and potatoes of a value of £1,310,000, to say nothing of boots and shoes to the extent of £375,000. Our importations of bacon amount to £124,000 annually. Nobody can challenge the figures I have quoted. If I included in the list all the articles manufactured in the Eastern States and sent to Western Australia, it would show an enormous bill against us. The list I have quoted represents no less than £1,500,000 annually.

Hon. H. Stewart: Tell us how to make our people produce those commodities and so wipe out the imports.

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member is more experienced than I am in agriculture, and perhaps when he addresses the House, he will be able to tell us. When I entered Parliamentary life some 25 years ago, I based my first speech upon the question of our imports from the Eastern States. Since that time the population of Western Australia has increased enormously, but in respect of imports we have not improved our position to any appreciable extent.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Has there been any increase in production in your part of the State?

Hon. J. EWING: Yes. The South-West is a paradise, of which Mr. Mann and Mr. Rose, as well as I, can speak. If members would only visit it in a couple of months' time, after the excellent rains we have had, they too would feel proud of it. It should be a great incentive to people who are settling on the land in various parts of the State to know that so much of what they can produce is required for use within the State. How are we going to produce those commodities? I look to some of my agricultural friends to tell us. I think I know, but I shall defer till a later stage any remarks I may have to offer on that aspect.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Tell us now.

Hon. J. EWING: I desire to touch lightly upon as many paragraphs of the Speech as possible and, if other members do likewise, the Government will be in a position to judge how far this House is with them or against them in the policy laid down. I am entirely opposed to the abolition of the per capita payments by the Commonwealth Government. It would take a long time to explain the reasons for my

opposition, but the fact remains that the proposal is not satisfactory to Western Australia. Neither is it satisfactory to any State of the Commonwealth. At the Premiers' conference, the Nationalist Government of Victoria joined with the Labour Governments from the other States in opposing the proposal of the Federal Government, but in spite of this unanimous opposition, we have now to rely upon our representatives in the Senate to try to defeat the Bill. The Senate was created to preserve State rights; yet there is a danger of the smaller States agreeing to the measure. Personally I do not think it will be defeated. I regret that the Federal Government's proposal was not made the subject of a referendum. Had the question been submitted to the people, I feel sure it would have been rejected by three votes to one. Though I am a strong supporter of Mr. Bruce and his composite Government, I must raise my voice when they suggest something that is likely to be injurious to the State. On the question of the per capita payments, the Premier of Western Australia has adopted a very dignified attitude.

Hon. J. R. Brown: He was right in that, was he not?

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Collier has not indulged in heroics or in any hysterical outbursts; he has quoted facts and figures and laid the position clearly before the people, and I think a majority of our people are in agreement with him.

Hon. J. Cornell: His attitude might have been dignified, but there was a big discrepancy in the figures.

Hon. J. EWING: I think his figures were very telling. It has been argued by Mr. Bruce and Dr. Earle Page, whom we might term the joint Prime Ministers of Australia, that it was not intended that the States should share in the Customs and Excise duties. I have read very carefully the Commonwealth Constitution and though it is not clearly stated, it is certainly implied that the States should so share, and it was the intention of the Federal Conventions that the States for all time should receive a portion of the Customs and Excise revenue. I enter a protest against the encroachment of the Federal authorities upon the domains of the State. No matter what party might be in power, the Commonwealth is constantly encroaching upon the preserves of the States. The only outcome of such action is unification, and almost every member of this House

would strongly oppose any movement in that direction. If the State Parliaments were abolished, we would become little more than a series of glorified municipalities. We would certainly cease to be sovereign States.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You need not worry about that.

Hon. J. Cornell: Can you give us one instance of the Federal Government having gone beyond the Constitution?

Hon. J. EWING: The party with which Mr. Brown is associated is in favour of unification, but such a policy would be greatly to the disadvantage of all the States and particularly Western Australia.

Hon. J. Cornell: Can you give us any one instance of the Federal Government having abrogated the Constitution to encroach upon State rights?

Hon. J. EWING: No doubt I could, but I did not quite catch what the hon. member is after. If he puts his question in writing I may be able to answer it.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You did not miss much of it.

Hon. J. EWING: The migration agreement has been finalised. Mr. Angwin, who has charge of group settlement and migration, is an excellent man for the work, and has done his duty fearlessly and well, though perhaps not so vigorously as I should have liked. No doubt he has been hindered owing to the need for altering the agreement, and his Government have thought fit to delay somewhat the settlement of migrants on the land pending the finalising of the new agreement. Still we have the assurance that the Government are entirely in favour of migration and will go ahead as fast as possible. Consequently I hope to see greater progress in our group settlement work in the immediate future. It has been stated that the original agreement made with the Imperial authorities by Sir James Mitchell was not in the best interests of the State. It is easy to be wise after the event. The agreement secured by Sir James Mitchell was an excellent one. The policy therein enunciated was his and his alone. The British Government have been good enough to stand by that agreement. It was a fine provision that any more advantageous terms concluded in subsequent agreements should be made retrospective. Consequently the new agreement is made retrospective to 1922, which will be of enormous advantage not only to the State but to the settlers working under the agreement. The new agreement provides for

money at one per cent. interest during the first five years, and about 1½ per cent. during the second five years. Under it the Government will be able to repurchase estates: a power that I have always advocated should be theirs. When Sir James Mitchell was administering the group settlements, he could deal with only Crown lands. To-day the Government have power to repurchase land for this purpose, and this must prove very helpful in carrying out the policy. Do members ever consider what a wonderful thing it means to be able to borrow large sums of money at 1 per cent. interest? With money at such a rate, it should be possible to do anything. Has any other country such a golden opportunity? The new agreement provides for the development of the State apart from group settlement. Electrical works, railways, etc., may be constructed, and thus the broadening of its provisions must prove of wonderful advantage to the State.

Hon. H. Stewart: What if it becomes necessary to write things down to 25 per cent. of their value as the Agricultural Bank has had to do?

Hon. J. EWING: Under the new agreement money for which we previously had to pay 5 or 6 per cent. is being made available at 1 per cent. for the first five years, and the agreement is made retrospective to 1922. This is a great opportunity for a State like Western Australia that is only partially developed. I have often heard it said that our goldfields have as yet scarcely been scratched.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They will be scratched out if something is not done soon to assist them.

Hon. J. EWING: Western Australia calls for a tremendous amount of development work. Land in the north, east and south-west awaits settlement. Vast areas of wheat lands in the drier areas require to be opened up, and this money will be available for that purpose. I am pleased that the Labour Government have acted honestly and fairly by the people on the groups. Anything that Mr. Angwin has done has been done because he considered it right. I do not say that he is always right; I take exception to some of the things he has done, but I am satisfied that in whatever he has done he has acted, as he believed, for the best. After five years of group settlement operations, we have 135 groups with a population of almost 10,000. Two years

ago we had as many groups, either made or in process of formation, as we have to-day. This shows that there has been delay, and such a delay is to the detriment of Western Australia. In travelling through the Peel Estate, the Margaret River district, Jarnadup, Nornalup, and Northcliffe one sees happy and apparently prosperous people. Those people are not now living on the sustenance of 10s. per day, but by working under contract. Great difficulties seem to have arisen in connection with the contract system, and those difficulties have to be faced. Last week I had the pleasure of introducing, on behalf of Mr. J. H. Smith and Mr. Barnard, who were not in town, a deputation to the Minister for Lands in this connection. The members of the deputation represent, or at least claim to represent, an association of all the group settlers. In that capacity they certainly represent a highly important body of men. Mr. Angwin was not anxious to receive the deputation, because he said he had finished with all those questions. Eventually he was good enough to allow me to introduce the deputation to him, and he gave them three hours of his time. He also got the members of the Advisory Committee to meet the deputation, and the requirements of the settlers were gone into clause by clause and letter by letter. Certainly some advantages resulted from that deputation, but I wish to point out to the Honorary Minister the necessity for asking his colleague to assist in something he does not at present wish to do. He has extended the limitation of group settlers' earnings by £1, and has also cut out the dead cows, regarding which there was some misunderstanding under the agreement. However still more is wanted. The secretary of the association put up a proposal that group settlers should be allowed to earn up to £25 or £30 per month, and that any balance of earnings above the £19 10s. then allowed, but since increased to £20 10s., should be put to a special account on behalf of the settler, so that when he wanted money to go on with such work as, say, the building of a barn or a pig sty, funds would be available for it. The surplus, it was suggested, should not be used for any other purposes. The present limitation of earnings is a very serious matter, and should receive the consideration of all members. If a man works hard at improving his farm, and

in doing so earns £5 or £6 per week, and is willing that a proportion of those earnings should go into a special account such as I have described, he is showing his bona fides, for if he leaves the farm he loses that money, which will then go to benefit the man who comes after him. I am sure the Honorary Minister will put the matter before his colleague to see whether something cannot be done to assist settlers who do so much to assist themselves.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: The settler is not limited as to his earnings; he is limited as to loans.

Hon. J. EWING: As to loans, yes; but all these moneys are earnings. The distinction is one without a difference. I ask that the man be allowed to earn up to £25, and that any surplus above the present limitation should be paid to his credit to be used in assisting him to develop his holding. If he is not a good settler and goes away, that money will go to the man who follows in his place. I now want to combat a statement often made, one that I know to be wrong. Although a large number of people who have come here from the Old Country are not able to go on with the class of work which they took up on their arrival here, and consequently have gone into the towns, yet their places on the group settlements have been filled; and, speaking generally, the group settlers are first-class men. Most certainly the women on the groups are first-class women. We must recognise the sacrifices that the women on the group settlements have been making, especially in this winter of abnormal rains, which have proved most uncomfortable even to city residents. The settlers and their wives have gladly put up with those discomforts, and we should take off our hats to them, and in particular to the womenfolk on the groups. Group settlement is not in any way a party question. Sir James Mitchell started the scheme, and worked at it for years most excellently and with great advantage to the State; and during those years Mr. Collier, Mr. Angwin, and other members of their party helped Sir James along with the work. Therefore, we who are in opposition to the present Government are willing to extend the hand of friendship and assistance in our turn to them. Now I wish to refer to a scheme which is of great importance to the State as a whole. Hon. members will know what I mean. It is a scheme in connection with which states-

manship comes in. It is a scheme designed to help not only the residents of the South-West, but people all over Western Australia; and therefore it is a scheme which must commend itself to all members of the House. The Collie power scheme has been advocated for years in this Chamber by myself, by Mr. Rose, and Mr. Willmott. In another place it has been advocated over a long period by members representing the great South-West. "Hansard" is full of speeches made in favour, not of building the scheme, but of obtaining the necessary information to decide whether the scheme is feasible.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: So that it might be built by private enterprise.

Hon. J. EWING: A motion in that connection was twice defeated in this Chamber. It was left to the Mitchell Government to take the business in hand effectively. Eventually the subject appealed to members so strongly that a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the possibilities of the scheme. That body consisted of Mr. Taylor, Mr. Williamson, Mr. A. A. Wilson, Mr. Clark, and Mr. King. I am very proud of those men, and highly appreciate the result of their efforts, because they did not go to work in any selfish or parochial way. They investigated the subject fully, and entirely with a view to deciding whether the interests of Western Australia as a whole would be advanced by the construction of the scheme. Mr. Taylor visited the Old Country and there had many plans prepared in connection with the scheme. He has those plans in his office to-day, and they are a great credit to him. The Premier of this State went to the Old Country at a very opportune time, visiting the various districts of the United Kingdom, and also Germany and other European countries. The hon. gentleman has told me, and also stated in public, that he was greatly impressed with the wonderful work done by power schemes in the old world. He stated further, that the one thing Western Australia wanted, and wanted urgently, was the production of cheap power. The hon. gentleman treated the matter in a most statesman-like manner, and said to the advocates of the scheme, "If you will do so much, I will do so much." It has been arranged now that the Government will find pound for pound with the municipalities of Bunbury and Collie. After a survey had been made and the circulating water question settled, everything was clear for the making of a report to the Premier. Those who said in the old days that

water power could not be obtained in Collie did not know the magnitude of the Collie River and the vast stores of water available there. The doubts in question have been removed by the report of the Commission, and the Premier appreciates the value of that report. The scheme proposed is a small one, and will prove the nucleus of a large scheme, which will serve a great portion of Western Australia in years to come.

Hon. H. Stewart: Is this a fuel power scheme or a hydraulic power scheme you are advocating?

Hon. J. EWING: There is no need for me to answer the hon. member's question.

Hon. H. Stewart: A hydraulic power scheme would give much cheaper power in Western Australia.

Hon. J. EWING: The man in the street says that, but there are no mountains in this country.

Hon. H. Stewart: Mountains are not needed.

Hon. J. EWING: Where is the water to be conserved for a hydro-electric scheme?

Hon. H. Stewart: It is done on the Rhine, where there is little flow.

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member, being an engineer, knows that the generation of electricity from coal is cheaper than its generation from water.

Hon. H. Stewart: Generation from water is the cheapest of all.

Hon. J. EWING: It has been argued many times that the production of electricity from coal supplies is cheaper than its production from water.

Hon. H. Stewart: A farthing per unit is the cost from a hydro-electric scheme.

Hon. J. EWING: I wish to point out the position I have always assumed on this question. To me it is a great disappointment that such an enormous amount of money should have been spent on the provision of a power station in Perth. This matter should have been taken in hand five or ten years ago. Hon. members can calculate for themselves the loss involved in paying 13s. or 14s. per ton freight on coal to bring it up here instead of its being used at the pit's mouth. The generation of electricity at the source of supply is far more advantageous to the country than dragging the fuel 125 miles from the source of supply.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Is there not a serious loss in the transmission of power over such a distance?

Hon. J. EWING: No. If the hon. member interjecting will read works on electric power

and follow closely what is being done in the United States and Switzerland, he will find that there is no such loss.

Hon. E. Rose: We should also consider what is being done in Victoria.

Hon. J. EWING: Yes. I have always looked upon this as a huge scheme eventually to cost three or four millions sterling, and a scheme that will be of the greatest advantage to Western Australia. The present scheme is supposed to be for the South-West, for Collie and Bunbury and the group settlements; but it is only the nucleus of a great scheme which will furnish power to all the country within a radius of 150 miles of the centre of supply. We all know that during the war the electricity plants of the United Kingdom were widely scattered, and that for this reason concentration of power was not feasible. What is being done now should have been done many years ago, and Great Britain will be in a far better position, should she ever have to fight in the future, to avail herself of the facilities offering because of the electrical concentration. I will not deal with this matter further, except to say that I have been associated with the South-West for many years and with Collie for 29 years and I extend my congratulations and thanks to the Premier and his Government for their part in the initiation of the scheme.

Hon. J. Cornell: Then you will not try to put the Government out next March?

Hon. J. EWING: I will fight them to the last ditch, not that I object to the Premier or to any of his colleagues personally, but merely because I object to the great bulk of their policy.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You are giving the Premier a good testimonial!

Hon. J. EWING: Why should he not get it? As in past years, so I shall in the future, endeavour to give credit where it is due.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The Premier will take your testimonial about with him throughout the country.

Hon. J. EWING: Then I will explain the position to the people.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will the hon. member please address the Chair.

Hon. J. EWING: He is a poor man who cannot give credit where it is due. From questions that have been asked to-day, I realise there are members here who are more conversant with the gold mining industry than am I. While I know they will give attention to the requirements of the industry,

it appeals to me as astonishing that something definite has not been done regarding the gold bonus.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Are you referring to a State bonus?

Hon. J. EWING: I have not heard anything about a State gold bonus. Perhaps the hon. member will ask for the whole of the £350,000 from the Federal Government to be expended in connection with the gold mining industry?

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member cannot argue with individual members of the Chamber.

Hon. J. EWING: I read a statement recently urging that the money should be spent in the direction I have indicated.

Hon. H. Stewart: Albany requires only £25,000.

Hon. J. EWING: Low grade ores occur throughout the Eastern Goldfields and the Murchison mining districts and the problem confronting the State is how to work those low-grade ores profitably. In South Africa lower grade ores are worked to advantage compared with the experience at Kalgoorlie. How is the difficulty to be overcome? So far as I can ascertain, the Government are trying to do something by the provision of cheap power. I do not know whether that scheme will lead to success, but if the goldfields people consider that they can gain advantages from the Premier's proposals, no doubt they will participate. It has been suggested that concentration is necessary and this aspect, as well as all other problems involved, will have to be fully considered. It will be unpardonable if adequate steps are not taken in an endeavour to solve the difficulty. It has been said that the goldfields have merely been scratched just as vast areas in the South-West have been scratched. If that be so, many wonderful finds may be made throughout Western Australia in the future, and if the gold bonus of £1 per ounce is granted by the Federal Government, great developments may follow. One assertion regarding the bonus has been that it is not an economic proposition. What is an economic proposition? It will be an economic proposition if it will be of advantage to the State and to our gold mining industry. At any rate I hope that something tangible will be done. In perusing the Governor's Speech, I was astounded at the references to our harbours. I must admit that the Geraldton harbour is being looked after very well indeed. I do not say that in any spirit

of envy. Geraldton has a fine harbour and the Government are doing their duty in carrying out improvements there. The Government are also carrying out their duty in connection with the Fremantle harbour.

Hon. H. Stewart: You cannot say that respecting Albany. There is a fine harbour at Albany and nothing is being done there.

Hon. J. EWING: The Government are also spending money to improve the port at Esperance and I am sure that Mr. Kirwan is gratified because of the steps taken in that direction. The Bunbury harbour, however, is in much the same state as it was ten years ago, and no improvement is shown there at all. We are told that dredging is proceeding, but dredging has been proceeding for years. If the present condition of the harbour is to be the position after so many years of dredging, then may the Lord help those settlers in the South-West who require good harbour facilities at the port of Bunbury. I am aware that the announcement has been made that the new Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Stileman, is to prepare a report and plans and also that Sir George Buchanan reported on the harbour work. Perhaps from the joint reports something may be evolved which will be of permanent advantage to the Bunbury harbour.

Hon. H. Stewart: The Bunbury harbour work is a pretty difficult proposition.

Hon. J. EWING: I believe it is.

Hon. H. Stewart: Then it would be better to spend the money at Albany!

Hon. J. EWING: I do not say that the present Government have done less than other Governments, but I do contend that various Governments have failed in their duty to do what should have been done many years ago. I hope that some definite statement will be made shortly so that we may know what is to be done at Bunbury.

Hon. A. Burvill: There is plenty of room for improvement at Albany.

Hon. J. EWING: The harbour facilities at Busselton also require attention. Busselton has not had much attention in the past. The jetty requires lengthening and widening.

Hon. H. Stewart: Is it not the longest jetty now?

Hon. J. EWING: At present timber for export is being carried past Busselton to Bunbury. This incurs loss of time and increased freight charges, and imposes a hardship upon those concerned. Something should be done to provide better shipping

facilities at Busselton. We are now commencing a session that will be of importance to the State. Often the third sessions of Parliaments are referred to as "window-dressing" sessions. The elections follow the conclusion of this term and naturally every member who desires to be re-elected to his present position in the Legislative Assembly is anxious to place before his constituents particulars of the work he has been able to accomplish. Despite that, I hope that useful work will be done. The Bills mentioned in the Governor's Speech do not appeal to me apart from that relating to insurance and workers' compensation. I will not deal with that question now because we will have to go into the pros and cons and arrive at a decision as to what is right or wrong. I am opposed to State enterprise, and if this particular Bill does not appeal to me as being right, I shall oppose it. At the same time I shall give it every consideration because I know the obligation that is upon me, as it is upon every other member, to see that justice is meted out to those suffering from miners' phthisis. For that reason we must give very careful consideration to the Bill before taking any steps to reject it. Naturally the Bill will be passed in the Assembly, but when it reaches this Chamber we will be in a position to do what is best in the interests of the State. I regard this question as one of the most important that will come before us. The effect of it will be explained by gold-fields members in particular, but the fact remains that we must see that compensation is made available to the men concerned. At the moment I am not prepared to say how best that end can be achieved, and I will reserve my judgment until the Bill comes before us. It is a matter for congratulation that wonderful rains have fallen throughout the State. Some people consider that we have had too much rain. It is many years since I was with the Midland Railway Company, but in those days we were always working up to our knees in water. For many years the dams have been dried up and farming has been carried on with difficulty regarding water supplies. It is wonderful to contemplate that all the dams are filled to-day for it means much in assisting towards the general prosperity of Western Australia.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.56 p.m.