

purposes. I suggest to those who represent the wheatgrowers that they do not concentrate on such an obviously unfair method as the proposed flour tax by which to provide a decent standard of living for their people. It must be quite apparent to them that under that scheme, a basic wage worker with five or six children would have to pay at least four times the amount that would be paid by a man in receipt of £10 a week and without children to provide for. If the country representatives can evolve any decent system to attain the end they have in view, and provide their people with a decent standard of living, they will have my support, because, as I say, I know the drudgery, privations and difficulties confronting the men and women on the land. At the present time they are experiencing a particularly difficult period. I agree with country representatives that those people are just as much entitled to a standard of living at least equivalent to that made possible by the payment of the basic wage as are workers in other industries. That is all I propose to say. I shall have an opportunity later on to discuss other matters to which I wished to draw attention. I desired particularly to refer to the Westland express and other relative matters, but I can deal with them on the Railway Estimates.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 23rd August, 1938.

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

QUESTION—EDUCATION, PHYSICAL.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER asked the Chief Secretary: Will the Minister lay on the table of the House reports, now in the hands of the Education Department, by Miss K. Gordon, dated September, 1937, and by Mr. R. E. Halliday, dated August, 1938, on the physical education of girls and boys?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Physical training is at present the subject of investigation by the Director of Education. The reports mentioned have been submitted to the Director and represent but one phase of the inquiries that are being made. It is therefore considered inadvisable to publish reports of subordinate officers which form part of the Director's investigations.

QUESTION—HOSPITALS, GOVERNMENT.

Patients' Places of Residence

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: (a) What was the total number of patients treated at the Perth Hospital during the year ended the 30th June, 1938? (b) How many of these patients were admitted from outside the metropolitan area? 2, (a) What were the total numbers of patients treated at the Government Hospitals at Busselton, Albany, Katanning and Merredin? (b) How many of such patients were admitted from outside the respective districts?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) Inpatient admissions, 5,810. (b) 815, but possibly some country patients may have given metropolitan addresses. 2, (a) Busselton, 507; Albany, 670; Katanning, 723; Merredin, 711. (b) Busselton, 114; Albany, 255; Katanning, 282; Merredin, 209.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Angelo, leave of absence granted to Hon. G. W. Miles (North) for 12 consecutive sittings on the ground of private business.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the 18th August.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [4.38]: I desire to congratulate you, Sir, on being once more chosen for the presidency of this Chamber. I have made no secret of my opinion that the position is one that should not be held too long by the same person, and my opinion is shared by a fair minority of other members. We consider that the Chair should be a training school, and that members should move up to the presidency and then resume their seats on the floor of the House, so that members may have the advantage of the knowledge thus gained of the procedure of the House. I have no personal feeling in the matter. We all admit that you have carried out your duties well, and I am certain you will continue to do so. I have been in politics long enough always to bow to the decision of the majority, and I bow to that decision now and wish you success in your office. I desire to make reference to old and new members. I am sorry indeed that Mr. Elliott, who was a conscientious and able member, is no longer with us. The goldfields will miss his knowledge and assistance. I regret that Mr. Clydesdale is no longer a member of the Chamber; I did not always see eye to eye with him, but he had a personality and we liked one another. He has had to bow to the will of the electors. I hope the new members will do as well as their predecessors did; I have no doubt they will.

The Lieut-Governor's Speech, as I judge it, is notable for what it does not contain. We look to the Speech to learn what the Government proposes to do, and what we are expected to carry out. As a resume of what has happened, the facts have not been put too clearly or fairly before the House. The Speech tells us that although the anticipated deficit was, I think, £118,000, it was actually only £11,000. That looks all right on paper, but on analysing the figures we find that the Government had £634,000 more

revenue than it received during the previous year, and notwithstanding this, the deficit was £11,000. Apparently the Government has put before the public and this Chamber those figures which suit it and those which look all right in its own eyes. What we desire to have are the facts. In connection with this wonderful financial achievement, I propose to show that we are not less than approximately £2,000,000 behind in our instalments of sinking fund for money borrowed for deficit purposes. Under the Financial Agreement of 1927, the Commonwealth Government agreed to pay 2s. 6d. per cent. on existing debts, and the State was to pay 5s. per cent., making a total of 7s. 6d. per cent. It was then provided that for new loans, or money borrowed after that date, the sinking fund was to be 10s., made up of 5s. from the State and 5s. from the Commonwealth Government. Provision was also made that when money was borrowed for deficit purposes, there should be a sinking fund of, not 10s., but 4 per cent. Rightly it was claimed that there was no asset, and that 4 per cent. would liquidate the liability within a limited time.

According to my calculations, even for last year, we should have paid £220,000 out of revenue into that fund, and for the last 11 years we should have paid anything from £2,000,000 to £2,500,000 into that fund. This amount will have to be made a charge upon revenue sooner or later, as the States and the Commonwealth agreed that this should be done. I understand the difficulty has been overcome in this way: the Financial Agreement provides that the 4 per cent. interest shall be paid on money borrowed for deficit purposes, but the Government borrows not for deficit purposes, but for railway construction. We pass certain railway Bills.

Hon. A. Thomson: It is a long time since we passed a railway Bill in this House.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: We have passed railway Bills, but the railways have never been built; the money has been used for deficit purposes.

Hon. A. Thomson: I see what you mean; I apologise.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: This is an evasion of a responsibility, and can continue for only a certain time. We are told that finance is government and government is finance. It seems that our present administrators are a long way out when dealing with the

finances of the country. One function of government is to maintain the laws of the country, to ensure that they are obeyed. Has this Government seen to it that the laws are obeyed? I propose to show that the main object of the Government is apparently to evade the laws of the country. Another function of government is to safeguard the health of the community. I shall deal with that question later.

This House has been led to believe that the trump card of the Government has always been that the decisions of the Arbitration Court, which hears the evidence, shall be final. To use the words of the late Mr. McCallum, who was himself enamoured of the arbitration system, "Hands off the Arbitration Court." In the light of recent experience, can anyone say that hands have been kept off the Arbitration Court? When a union gets a decision that does not suit it, evidently it has only to make a row and, to use the words of the Chief Secretary in the course of a recent debate, "Peace must be the first consideration." How we are to maintain peace amongst the unions when they have only to make a row to get their own way is beyond my comprehension. The evasion of Acts of Parliament has, I believe, led to a good deal of lawlessness amongst the rising generation. The Government is pledged to see that the laws are carried out. If the Government seeks every opportunity to evade them it is setting a bad example to the young people, and inviting them, if they cannot get what they want, to take what they want. And unfortunately the country has to pay. There has been interference with the Arbitration Court. I understand that, according to an agreement between the Colliery mineowners and the railways, if the rates of pay are increased and the hours reduced, the price of coal to the Government automatically rises. The railways pay the increased amount. The men receive their cut, which the court refuses to give them; the mineowners secure an increased price for their coal; the railways, as the greatest users of the coal, pay that increased cost, and the whole cost falls chiefly upon the shoulders of the producers in the agricultural areas.

If this sort of thing continues, I shall expect a good many members soon to hold the opinion I have. Ever since the dispute in the gold mines, when the Government in effect set the Arbitration Court at defiance,

I have said that I would not take any part in arbitration legislation except with the object of repealing the Arbitration Act. If the Arbitration Court or any other court is to be interfered with, that action will have the effect of creating lawlessness and the people of the State are sure to get out of hand. I have previously expressed the opinion on the floor of the House that the courts of justice in the British Empire have done more to hold the Empire together than have the Navy and the Army. It is an acknowledged fact that we get justice from British courts, and the foreigner is prepared to be tried by a British court rather than by a court of his own country. But this feeling of confidence has been set aside. If the decision of the court does not suit, the idea seems to be to put up somebody else to give another decision and take the business out of the hands of the court. If I had my way, I would repeal or amend much of our legislation. As I visualise the position, the duty of the Government is to enforce all laws. If they are not considered to be satisfactory, they should be repealed or amended.

The next function of the Government is to safeguard the health of the people. Can anybody say that the Government has done a fair thing by the indigent sick of the State? The Perth Hospital is a public scandal; I can use no milder term. True, attempts are now being made to rectify matters there, but those matters should have been taken in hand long ago. The plea of scarcity of money has been set up. Money could be found for other undesirable or unnecessary works that I could mention, but no money has been made available for the indigent sick. What more deserving section of the community is there than that comprising the mentally afflicted? Nothing could be more heart-rending than having mentally afflicted people in our midst. Yet the department, seemingly, is in a state of chaos due to the fact that the executive officers evidently are not permitted to carry out their duties properly. First we had the Inspector-General of the Insane suspended and reinstated. I believe he was suspended by the Under Secretary and reinstated by a judge and a board. Of other officers attached to the mental institutions, one has been suspended, I believe, three times and reinstated. But reinstated by whom?

According to the Press, the reinstatement on the last occasion was made by the Public Service Commissioner. When the Premier was asked in another place about the transfer of a doctor from Heathcote to Claremont, the Premier said that those were matters for the Public Service Commissioner and the department concerned. Yet the exact opposite occurred with reference to a recent appointment to the Crown Law Department. If I have been correctly informed, the Public Service Commissioner, the Under Secretary for Law and the Solicitor General recommended a certain gentleman for appointment. That recommendation was turned down and an outsider was brought into the department. The only excuse offered as to why the outsider was brought in and put over an officer as Crown Solicitor is that given by Ministers, namely, that the Crown Prosecutor had not been long enough in the service to justify promotion. Yet an outsider lacking any service at all in the department has been placed in the senior position.

Hon. W. J. Mann: How can you account for that?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Ministers entrench themselves behind the Public Service Commissioner when it suits them so to do, but when it does not suit them, Cabinet takes the responsibility. All those appointments indicate that the Government desires Crown Law officers to give advice that suits it, not advice in accordance with the law. That is not conducive to good government.

Consider the Licensing Board. With Sir Hal Colebatch, I think I can claim to have had as much as anyone to do with the tightening up of the licensing laws of this State. However, I find that the licensees of some hotels may do just as they like. They may trade when they like and how they like. At the same time, other licensees dare not open their front doors lest a policeman be in waiting to come down upon them. That is not just. If the licensing laws are too harsh, let the Government introduce an amending Bill and repeal the unsuitable sections, but so long as the Act stands, it should be administered equally to all sections of the community, no matter what brand of politics the publican may embrace.

The matter of reforming our betting laws has been deferred from year to year. I have been told that some of the starting-price bookmakers are not prosecuted at all

and that others are continually being brought before the court. I with many other people feel annoyance when I hear bookmakers calling the odds over the air and tipsters advising the people hour after hour and day after day of the best horses on which to put their money. If control of broadcasting is outside the functions of the State Government, a protest should be made to the Commonwealth Government against permitting that sort of rubbish to be sent over the air. The broadcasting of such information is contrary to the betting laws of the State and those laws are being evaded at all hours of the day and night.

I desire now to deal with the Factories and Shops Act, and I am sorry that the Honorary Minister is not in his place. The select committee that inquired into the Act found that a certain class of trader sought to evade the provisions of the law. The closing time for various shops was fixed at midnight but no opening time was stipulated. Some traders took advantage of this loophole by closing at midnight and opening again at one minute past 12. That phase of the matter was considered and Parliament fixed the closing time for such shops at 11 p.m. and the opening time at 6 o'clock the next morning. Notwithstanding that provision, I saw an announcement in the Press that, by proclamation, the Government had usurped the functions of Parliament by deciding that those shops should close not at 11 p.m. but at 11.30 p.m. on week nights and 11.45 p.m. on Saturdays. The Government had no authority to do that. If the Government, during the recess, sets Parliament at defiance and overrides decisions that have been reached after investigation by a select committee and approved by the combined intelligence of the House, what is the use of select committees sitting at all, or of Parliament passing laws?

A section of the new Act provides that the closing time for confectionery, fruit, vegetable and milk shops shall be not later than 11 p.m. and that they shall be kept closed until 6 o'clock in the morning of the next following day, or such earlier hour in the morning as from time to time shall be fixed by proclamation. The Act makes quite clear that the closing time shall be 11 p.m. and the opening time 6 a.m. the next day, but a certain group of people in Perth,

who were adversely affected by this provision of the Act, waited as a deputation on one of the Ministers. I understand that he said to them, "Never mind about Parliament; we will fix that. We will make the closing time 11.30 p.m. on week nights and 11.45 p.m. on Saturdays." That, I contend, is setting the Parliament of the country at defiance, and it is time a protest was made. If the Government is able to alter the law relating to those shops, there is nothing to prevent its altering the licensing laws or any other laws so that there will be one set of regulations for one section of the community and a different set for another section.

The Bread Act is another piece of legislation of which I desire to speak. That was a measure rushed through Parliament in about 48 hours. It reached us on the 15th December, and was finalised on the 17th December. In another place it was not seen until the night of the 17th December or the morning of the 18th December, and was dealt with at once. It is an abominable piece of legislation. I said so at the time, and now the public knows it. Western Australia is the only place in the world in which a baker is not responsible for the weight of the loaf of bread he delivers. That legislation came from the Labour Government, and is not very commendable. Under the old Act a purchaser could demand to have his bread weighed. The baker was expected to carry scales with him and to weigh the bread when asked to do so. That provision has been eliminated. Nowadays the dough is weighed. All the manufacturers of bread bake at the same time, and how the inspectors are able to be in all the different bakeries at the same time in order to have the dough weighed is more than I can understand. Perhaps the Honorary Minister can explain how it is done. Those in the trade say it cannot be done. The Minister has been telling the public that the new method was the only way to ensure the baking of bread under hygienic conditions, and he drew a harrowing picture of inspectors under the old system, weighing the bread on a dirty bag at the side of the road. That is all flapdoodle, if I might use an un-Parliamentary expression.

My contention is that the purchaser has the right to see his bread weighed, but that right is denied him. The purchasers of

bread know that they are not now getting the 2-lb. loaf they expect. Another difficulty has arisen. Each of the municipalities has its own inspector. A baker may bake his bread on the border of two municipalities, and if an inspector visits him to weigh the dough, he is able to assert that he does not sell bread in that locality. A man's bakehouse may be in East Perth and his customers in South Perth, and the inspector from the South Perth district has no control over the operations of bakeries in the East Perth area. On a bottle of pickles or a bottle of sauce or a tin of jam is specified the weight of the commodity contained therein. But no such indication is given of the weight of bread. The new Bread Act, which was rigged up by interested parties and rushed through Parliament, is a disgrace. The penalty for selling liquor after nine o'clock at night is, I think, £2. For selling bread after 7 p.m. the minimum penalty is £10 and the maximum £50. I notice that the Honorary Minister, who has returned to his seat, stated that he had given an interpretation of the Act. The Act sets out clearly that no person shall sell or deliver any bread after 7 p.m. But in his Press controversy with me, the Honorary Minister said that that provision applied only to the bakery, the place where the bread was baked. "That is my interpretation," he said, "and that stands." Yet the Act states that it shall be unlawful for any person to sell or deliver bread after 7 p.m.

Hon. A. Thomson: Any person?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Yes, any person. Mr. Gray says, "My interpretation is that it has reference to bread sold from the bakeries. My interpretation stands and inspectors have been advised accordingly." So much for the over-riding of Parliament.

The Honorary Minister: You did not mean to prevent shops selling bread after 7 p.m.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I did not, but the Honorary Minister and his Government did.

The Honorary Minister: No, we did not.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Honorary Minister introduced the measure and I fought it and was called to order by the Chairman during the discussion in Committee. I wandered a little off the track, I remember, and the Chairman had to remind me that the Bread Bill was under discussion. The Honorary Minister, in defending himself, quoted

from the report of Sir Herbert Gepp, who was commissioned by the Federal Government to investigate the bread industry. He quoted Sir Herbert as having said that there was need for some authority to be vested with power, to the exclusion of any other authority, to enforce the law relating to the weight of bread. The Honorary Minister used those remarks in defence of this Act. But it must be noted that Sir Herbert Gepp dealt with bread and not dough, which is an entirely different proposition.

The Honorary Minister: He also recommended two methods.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not know what he recommended, but the Honorary Minister doubtless used the best argument available, and that was the argument he advanced; an argument that crucified his own case. There is no doubt that the departure from the Bread Act was made in defiance of Parliament with a view to suiting one political section of the community. The same complaint applies to the Factories and Shops Act. It was interesting to hear Mr. Clydesdale, as I heard him, declare that his doom was sealed by the Factories and Shops Act and the Bread Act. The writing is on the wall. If the Government of the day is to be allowed to continue defying Parliament, it would be better to have no Parliament at all. The point is that there is one policy for the Government of this country at present and that is the Trades Hall policy. The attitude of the Trades Hall is, "We will go to the Arbitration Court and get what we can. If we cannot get what we want from the Arbitration Court, we will have what we want, all the same." Governments say, "In order to have peace in the community, the only way is to give the men what they want." We shall see how far they go before they want the lot. I read on one occasion that politics is the art of obtaining money from the rich and votes from the poor, under the pretext of protecting one from the other. That, like everything, will last a while; but it cannot go on forever. In this country we have been living on gold, borrowed money, and rain—and the best part of the country is drought-stricken. The gold is there, and is rendering great service to Western Australia. If I can judge, from reading between the lines, we have just about reached the limit of our borrowing—indeed, I hope we have—and it won't rain,

and the outlook is appalling. So now we have to rely on gold and rain. Unfortunately, this country has had a series of bad seasons. Broadly speaking, there has been little if any rain except in the South-West. From, I should say, Moora northward the position is heart-breaking. I have been through that country and have seen thousands of acres of crop which have been put in by hard work and application; and unless we get a late season, the return there will be little if any. So, in my opinion, we are heading for a climax in this State. It is not often I agree with Mr. Curtin, but he is visualising the outlook of Australia as it should be visualised. This country cannot go on paying increased basic wages and reducing hours of work to civil servants and others—concessions granted on the eve of a general election. We cannot continue piling up debts and expecting the primary producer to meet his liabilities. I am not in favour of direct action, but I am not surprised—

Hon. A. Thomson: Mr. Curtin did not say those things.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But he meant to say them.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Primary producers are talking about what they will do if they cannot get enough to live upon. Should we be surprised at that? There is only a certain amount of money to go round, and if we keep on paying more to the higher-grade employees, we shall leave less for the sustenance men and shall be creating more sustenance men. Where will the thing end? It is time the Government called a halt and considered where this country is heading. From Northampton northward as far as Broome the pastoralists, who have been there for years and years battling with their own money and money of the private banks, are up against the worst conditions they have ever encountered, and with no sign of relief. Yet they do not come to Perth wanting this, that and the other. However, some of them will have to come presently, I am afraid, or else abandon their holdings. They are out of touch with what the Government is doing. They are not in touch with Government actions as primary producers in the South are.

I am not at all surprised when wheat-growers and others in conference, seeing a reduction to five days of work per week in the city and an increase of 5s. 3d. per

week in the basic wage while they are not getting more than enough to keep body and soul together, protest that there is not a fair division of the money that is available. Unless such a division is brought about, we shall have trouble in the community. Unless the distribution of the money available is rendered more equitable, there is no possibility of evading that trouble. I do not propose to say any more, except to support the motion.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [5.21]: I have not, in fact, prepared any notes for matter I contemplated dealing with in relation to the motion before the House; but rather than see the debate adjourned at this stage, I shall venture to offer a few remarks upon the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor. In the first place I desire to follow on the lines of previous speakers and extend to you, Sir, congratulations, as I have already had the opportunity of doing, on your re-election once more as President of the Chamber. Further, I think it is only right that reference should be made to that part of the Speech in which His Excellency alludes to the great loss that has been suffered by Parliament and the State through the death of the late Minister for Mines, Mr. S. W. Munsie. We can also endorse what is said by His Excellency regarding the loss suffered through the death of Mr. Brockman, M.L.A., and our late fellow-member, Mr. Elliott. At the same time I take the opportunity to do what is invariably done on an occasion such as this—to extend congratulations to those hon. members who have been elected to the House for the first time. Whilst one cannot but express that measure of regret which all of us feel when members who have been associated with us in the conduct of affairs here have failed to be returned, one of course means no discourtesy to those who have been elected in their places. The welcome extended to new members is none the less warm, and the confident hope is expressed by every member fortunate enough to have held a position here for a longer or shorter period that the hon. members newly elected will use their best endeavours to help forward the work of this House.

Most of the speakers so far have remarked that the present Speech of His Excellency is of somewhat inordinate length. References have also been made to the vari-

ous subjects with which the Speech deals, and the question has been raised whether it is necessary to deal with those subjects at the length which appears in the Speech before us. The Speech delivered on the opening of each session is of great value not only to members of the House but also as a matter of record. I think we may take it for granted that such records have an undoubted place in connection with the business transacted from year to year. The Speeches summarise, necessarily in a brief manner, various matters of importance—either Acts passed or activities engaged in, or more or less great happenings; and the greater the happening the more likely it is to find a place in the Speech. In recording such facts we are doing something of value to those who will follow us. The Speeches constitute a handy reference to subjects in later years, so that if one wants fuller details, after examining a Speech, one can ascertain when a certain event occurred and trace it back to its origin, thus discovering exactly what was meant by it. The value of the Speeches lies in that fact. Therefore, in my opinion, we should not discount or adversely criticise the value of such a Speech but rather look upon it as being something worth preserving as a record for the future.

The main item, invariably to be found in the early part of the Speech, is that dealing with the financial position. It is stated that the revenue for the year ended on the 30th June last amounted to the very substantial sum of £10,819,042, and the expenditure to £10,829,735, leaving a deficit of £10,693. I would like to call attention to the fact that, at the date of the delivery of the Speech, the 4th August, there had already appeared in the Press the result of Government transactions for the month of July. The Government, in the Speech, claimed that the financial result for the year was "very gratifying," and that "the State has now virtually regained financial equilibrium." I have no doubt that those responsible for preparing the Speech had expected that it would be delivered before the end of July, and that Parliament would resume its sittings during that month. As we know, Parliament did not meet till August, and accordingly we found that at the end of July there was a deficit for the month of £259,297. In view of that, I see no reason at all for claiming, as the Speech sets out,

gratification at the result achieved during the financial year.

The Chief Secretary: That is not an unusual occurrence.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is generally recognised that items are carried over from one month to another, so that an improved balance may be disclosed at the end of the financial year.

The Chief Secretary: Nothing like that happened in this instance.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am glad to hear the Minister make that statement. Nevertheless, it is certainly strange that such a deficit should result from the transactions in July, and I would like the Leader of the House to explain why, at the end of the first month after the close of the financial year, there was such a huge deficit as practically £260,000. I have merely glanced over the figures so far, but if we consider those published in the "Government Gazette" of the 9th August, we find that the revenue to the 30th June, 1937, amounted to £10,185,433, whereas, as I have already indicated, the revenue for the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1938, was £10,819,042, an excess, as Mr. Holmes pointed out, of nearly £634,000 in favour of the last financial year. The position calls for an explanation on the part of the Government as to why, having had the benefit of such a largely increased revenue for the last financial year, there should have been a deficit of £10,693. If this had been a private concern, surely more care would have been exercised with expenditure than previously in view of the large increase of revenue for the year. If the Government had exercised the care that is so essential in the management of its affairs then, instead of a deficit, we would have experienced a substantial surplus. In those circumstances, there would have been some reason for congratulating the Government upon the financial result. As it is, I do not offer the Government any congratulations; nor can I endorse the statement that there is reason for gratification at the result. The Speech alludes to a certain improvement in railway finance, to which reference has already been made by Mr. Hamersley. The paragraph in the Speech reads—

Railway finances last year showed an improvement of £200,000 over the previous year, mainly due to an increase of £177,285 in revenue, derived principally from wheat, timber and livestock, and the steady flow of traffic to the goldfields.

Hon. A. Thomson: Yet the Government always says that the carriage of wheat does not pay.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is quite correct; the statement has been made from time to time. It is somewhat comforting to know that that much maligned class of freight has here, to some extent, come into its own and had its value recognised as a factor in improving the position of the railways. That result has been attained not by the Government itself but by the efforts and services of private individuals—firms and companies engaged in various operations throughout the State. Whether it be the private individual working on the land, the firm or company carrying on business in Perth, in a township or on the goldfields, all have combined to improve the position, and it is due to them and their efforts that the improvement has been achieved. I think this emphasises the need for the Government to extend increased consideration to the requirements of those responsible for bringing about such a result.

Hon. A. Thomson: By taxing them a bit more.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I go further and say that the Government should avoid doing anything calculated to interfere with the success of the operations of those people. We are informed by the Speech that legislation is to be introduced to deal with various matters, and I hope, whatever the nature of the proposed legislation may be, it will not react detrimentally on those engaged in activities or operations helpful to the Government in improving the position of the railways and advancing the progress of the State.

The Speech informs us that the Government intends to seek Parliamentary authority for the establishment of a bureau of industry and economic research, and that legislation to that end is being prepared. The object of that, of course, is to advance the prosperity of the State, because it is recognised that prosperity is dependent upon the stimulation of industry. The success or failure of industry is determined very largely by the cost of production in this State, and if the Government in its wisdom brings forward legislation calculated to increase the cost of production, I am afraid the establishment of a bureau of industry and economic research will prove of little avail. The men engaged on the land, as well as those

associated with secondary industries, have to be considered in every possible way. If, for example, we increase the cost of production of certain articles because of actions taken by the Government and Parliament, then undoubtedly that added cost will be passed on to the consumers, and the men on the land will be affected in consequence. The farmers have to export their commodities and are dependent entirely, if I may repeat a phrase often used, on world market prices. If those prices are so low that the men on the land cannot possibly continue operating, then there must be adversity and failure throughout the State. Such a happening would be most deplorable, but the possibility of its occurring must be taken into account when considering legislation that is brought before us. Those engaged in secondary industries have to face competition not only from those engaged in similar classes of industry in the Eastern States, but from manufacturers in countries such as Japan, where the rates of wages are not at all comparable with those paid in Western Australia. Despite the imposition of high duties and other aids, the establishment of secondary industries is rendered more difficult, and we are bound to take all those phases into consideration. In the course of his remarks, Mr. Holmes referred to the increase in the basic wage, and I have sometimes wondered whether such an increase does not react detrimentally instead of favourably.

Hon. A. Thomson: Unfortunately it is already having a detrimental effect in some instances.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Probably it is, and I have heard some reports to that effect. I have no objection, nor do I believe has any other member of this House, to the highest possible wage being paid for services rendered. The question, however, arises whether industry can bear it, and whether we at the same time can continue to expand our industries so as to afford greater employment than is being provided at present. There is no doubt that if we could establish more industries here, we would be able to employ more people. But with the competition that exists, we are faced with a serious position, as Mr. Thomson has suggested. He has heard, and so have I, that the outcome of the recent increase in the basic wage has practically resulted in giving to manufacturers in the Eastern States and other places a premium to beat us on our

own field, and render it more difficult for us successfully to work and develop our industries and provide employment for our own people.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do you suggest that there should not be an increase in wages?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No, but what I do say is that a matter such as this should be more than seriously considered before it is actually determined. There is another related subject to which I might allude, and that is what is referred to in the Speech: the establishment of a five-day week in the Public Service. That, too, might have been more deeply considered before it was actually decided upon because it will be bound to have a reaction that at this stage we can scarcely contemplate. True, the action follows on the lines of what has been advanced and suggested at the Geneva conference and elsewhere—the shortening of the hours of labour to provide greater employment and to overcome difficulties that at times apparently present themselves.

Hon. A. Thomson: If it were universal it would be all right.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Precisely. Under similar conditions of labour and similar rates of pay applied in every country, the same would be working on a fair basis. But the introduction of these conditions is calculated to make more difficult for us the task of establishing industries here and securing that progress we are all so anxious to bring about. In to-day's Press, we read that France finds it necessary to modify her position in respect of the 40-hour week because of serious financial difficulties in connection with the franc.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: And German also.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Likewise in Germany, of which Mr. Macfarlane has reminded me, and which country has reverted to the 10-hour day. How can we possibly compete in the manufacture of goods against a country where a lower rate of pay prevails and where the hours of labour are longer? Can we hope successfully to compete against such countries and still make progress? We are liable to bring about a catastrophe in our industrial field if we continue on the lines that we are following. That is the danger and that is what we should consider. We in Western Australia are dependent ver-

largely on the man on the land, and that should be one's first consideration when introducing ameliorating conditions for the man in the town. We know very well—and I am only repeating what we have heard from time to time—that the man on the land, if he wants to make a success of his operations, must work from dawn to dark, and should he fail to do so, he cannot hope to establish himself satisfactorily. If a five-day week is made general in all industries here—and that seems to be gradually coming about—then there will be one inevitable result, a general exodus on the part of those who are engaged in employment on the land. Those people will find their way to the towns in the hope of sharing the privileges given to the people engaged in industrial life.

Hon. A. Thomson: Unfortunately that is what is happening to-day.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There is an increased difficulty in securing labour for farms, and that being so, I consider that these matters should be taken into account and the probable results carefully weighed before actually bringing the new order of things into operation.

I shall next refer to that very vexed question, the Collie settlement. The matter has been written about and discussed very fully and I would not have ventured to make any observations about it but for the fact that I consider it of surpassing importance. We all are aware of the facts, which need not be recapitulated. Whilst I believe that the Minister responsible for appointing the Commissioner—and he did appoint him under a supposed power, as I claim it was, under Section 169 of the Industrial Arbitration Act—was actuated by the best motives with a view to settling what he believed to be a dispute, I consider that he did something of a nature that was destructive of those sacred principles with which we have at all times surrounded our courts of law.

Hon. G. Fraser: Not as destructive as industrial unrest.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If a court be constituted, as this one was constituted, for the purpose of determining those matters which come within its purview, then I claim that the determination of the court must be observed by the parties affected by the award pronounced by the court. The award must be loyally observed not only by the employers, but also by the employees. It is

only making a farce of the court to say that when it pronounces an award, any Minister of the Crown or any authority may by the appointment of a commissioner override the judgment or award. That was never intended; the Act does not authorise any Minister of the Crown or anyone else to do such a thing. It is subversive of the authority of the court for anyone, whether in a ministerial position or not, to do what the Minister did. One would not wish to destroy the authority of the court, but that will be the inevitable result if a Minister has power to override an award of the court. Better remove the Act from the statute-book altogether.

The Chief Secretary: The Minister did not override an award of the Arbitration Court.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The award of the court has been over-ridden. That is plain. The Industrial Arbitration Act makes it clear that determinations and awards of the Arbitration Court are final. The Arbitration Court was established for the purpose of settling industrial disputes, and no right of appeal was given from the court's awards. The Minister has actually done more than a court of appeal could do. What would be the result if a Minister had power to override a judgment of any of our courts of law? We have several courts. For example, if a Minister or any other person in authority were to say to parties who had instituted proceedings in our Supreme Court, "I am not satisfied with the judgment of the court, or the parties have complained that the judgment is not satisfactory and I shall therefore appoint some other person to determine this question over the head of the Supreme Court." It would make our courts useless; there would be no need for them. I hope that what has happened will show the necessity for parties to an industrial dispute firmly abiding by an award of the Arbitration Court, whether the party be employer or employee. The court is the constituted authority and its awards should be respected and obeyed by all.

Another matter to which I desire to make reference was dealt with at some length by Mr. Thomson, who was inclined to criticise the Government's decision to proceed with the erection of a new Perth Hospital. I would like to ask the hon. member this one question: Would he like to see perpetuated the present state of affairs at the Perth

Hospital? I am sure no member of this House, not even Mr. Thomson, would like that state of affairs to continue. The present building is inconvenient and inadequate for use as a hospital, and there is every justification, I contend, for the Government's decision to proceed as early as possible with the erection of a new building. I hope the work will be put in hand at once and completed without delay. Reports that I have received from time to time show only too clearly the crying need for a new institution such as it is proposed shall be erected. I congratulate the Government upon its decision in this matter.

I notice that no reference is made in the Lient.-Governor's Speech to the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act. I thought that probably that Act would have been brought up for consideration during the present session.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It will have to be.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It will, of course, have to receive consideration in so far as its continuance is concerned. I urge that the Government should view this matter in the light of what has been suggested at various times by members of this House.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: A promise was made that the matter would be definitely dealt with this session.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Suggestions have been made from time to time that the Act should be repealed, but those suggestions were met by the contention that the repeal would cast a great hardship on many country people.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: A very sound claim, too.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There may be, as Mr. Baxter has indicated, some ground for that contention. If it is decided to continue the measure, then it should be continued in a changed form. I think Mr. Parker suggested last session that, in place of the mortgagee being compelled to make application to the court for relief, the position should be reversed, and the mortgagor required to be the applicant to the court to gain the desired relief.

Hon. G. Fraser: It would be necessary then to change the title of the Act.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There would be no need to do so.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: That is what happens in the Eastern States.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That fact might well be taken into account by the Government and I hope consideration will be given to it if the Act is to be continued.

One other matter to which I will refer has been mentioned by other members, and I quite endorse what they have said. There is need for introducing into this State what is known as third-party insurance. Such insurance has been compulsory in England for some two or three years. It is also compulsory in other countries, and would be a valued addition to our statute-book. I make this comment, however, that whilst I have great respect for and appreciation of the work that is being done by the traffic authorities, I would remind members that some little time ago a regulation was introduced requiring owners of motor cars to have a tail light that could not be controlled by the driver from his seat. In introducing this regulation, we followed the lead of New South Wales and some of the other States. The regulation became effective as from the 1st July. I am told that the New South Wales regulation has been in force for a considerable time, but that steps will be taken by the Parliament of that State this session to annul the regulation, because it has been found to be quite ineffective for the purpose for which it was intended. It entails much difficulty and might lead to accidents, instead of preventing them. I hope attention will be given to this matter, and that the regulation will be annulled.

Whilst I express sorrow at the serious position of world affairs to-day, may I voice the hope that it will be the means of drawing closer the bonds between the various dominions and the Mother Country? The unsettled state of international affairs should make us appreciate more thoroughly and more sincerely the heavy responsibilities cast upon the statesmen of the Mother Country. The only way in which we, as a Parliament, can give encouragement to the Mother Country is to show that we are firmly united and are determined to work together in harmony for the good of the Empire. In unity there is strength, and in our unity we shall achieve peace. I hope that peace will reign. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.