

surprised to hear that the average number of men injured while working there is 30 per month.

The Minister for Railways: Practically one every day!

Mr. ROWE: That is so. I can also state that that is a low estimate. In these circumstances I can assure the House that I shall be pleased to have the parent Act amended. I have not much more to say at the present juncture, but I hope in due course to be able to speak at greater length when dealing with matters of interest to the workers and to the State in general. I hope to be able to impress hon. members with a realisation of the fact that I intend to do my best for the electors of North-East Fremantle, and for the State as a whole. I realise that the country of which we are the occupants is indeed a most valuable State and it appears to me that there are a great many people in Western Australia who do not realise the value of the country we own. A little while ago I was in Melbourne and I was astonished at the ignorance of the people regarding Western Australia. I favour the suggestion made this evening that a publicity officer should be appointed and placed in control of work in the Eastern States so that he might place before the people there some idea of the possibilities of Western Australia. I will reserve further comment on matters of interest for a future occasion and will content myself with supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.58 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 18th August, 1927.*

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

### QUESTIONS (2)—WHEAT PRODUCTION.

#### *Branding of Bags.*

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Agriculture: Does he intend to bring before Parliament a Bill to provide that wheat bags shall be branded?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied: The advisability of introducing legislation this session is under consideration.

#### *Railways and Bulk Handling.*

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Agriculture: Seeing that we are rapidly approaching the 50,000,000 bushel mark for wheat production, is the building of railway wagons being carried on with a view to their future utilisation when bulk handling is forced upon this State?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied: The Railway Department advises that 255 all steel trucks of 14 tons capacity are being built at Midland Junction workshops, and that these will be suitable for the handling of bulk wheat.

### QUESTION—SWAN VALLEY, ABANDONED BLOCKS.

Mr. FERGUSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, How many blocks, previously held by soldiers in the Swan Valley, have been

abandoned? 2, Have any of those blocks been let by the Agricultural Bank? 3, If so, on what terms and conditions?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (for the Minister for Lands) replied: 1, Twenty-five. 2, Ten. 3, One at an annual rental of £50 with option of purchase. Others, lessees to prune, cultivate, manure, and generally maintain security, in return for crop. Two have option of purchase.

### QUESTION—CITRUS FRUITS, EXPERIMENTAL WORK.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, In view of the great success that followed the result of experiments carried out at the Government Cool Stores, Melbourne, by the expert in connection with the storage of Valencia oranges, including the securing of proof that Washington navel oranges could be kept for three months without difficulty, does he propose to carry out experimental work in regard to citrus fruits intended for export abroad? 2, Further, recognising the opportunity that exists in connection with various orchards throughout the State and the importance of the fruit-growing industry, will he give consideration to experimental work in various private orchards, thus providing opportunity for the acquirement of fuller knowledge in respect of fruit production, packing, and storing?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (for the Minister for Lands) replied: 1, The department has submitted to the Commonwealth Government a complete scheme for the carrying out of experiments, but a decision is held up pending receipt of a report from Dr. Kidd in this connection. 2, This is in accordance with the department's policy, and experimental work in private orchards has been carried out.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Tenth Day—Conclusion.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. CORBOY** (Yilgarn) [4.36]: May I at the outset offer to you, Mr. Speaker, my very sincere congratulations on the fact that you have again received the unanimous endorsement of members of this Chamber in the position you so ably occupy. May I add

to that the wish that the coming three years may be as pleasant for members under your guidance as Speaker as were the past three years. I would also like to take this opportunity, although perhaps still somewhat of a tyro in politics, of congratulating the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) on the very able manner in which he moved the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply at the inception of this debate. I have had the opportunity of hearing a number of maiden speeches and, without saying anything derogatory to the other gentlemen, I would say that the effort of the member for East Perth was at least as effective as that of any other member I had previously heard deliver his first speech. During the course of the debate one or two subjects have, to some extent, been featured by members of the Opposition. What amounted to an organised effort was made to show that the position of the State finances was not as sound as the Treasurer would have the House believe. While I do not wish to enter into the merits or demerits of the arguments advanced, the whole thing appeals to me much as a storm in a teacup. After all, what does it matter to a State like Western Australia whether we have a surplus or a deficit of £10,000 or £20,000? Does it matter greatly to us whatever may be the position in that respect. Of course it does not! In my view what does matter is that the Treasurer has been able to grant a material reduction in taxation in the interests of the people and yet at the same time get within £20,000 of balancing the ledger. After 14 or 15 years during which deficits have recurred annually, this is indeed refreshing. Some of those deficits were in the vicinity of three-quarters of a million pounds; some were not much below a quarter of a million, and most were well over the half-million mark. To find after such a long period of deficits of that description that we have at last reached a stage when the Treasurer can tell us that he has been able to balance the ledger is something really worth while. To start discussing the problem whether it is really a deficit or a surplus of £20,000 seems to me like striving to make political capital out of a very small point indeed. It is worth while to remember that while the Treasurer has been able to balance the ledger—let the balance be on whichever side hon. members may consider is right—he has also been able to allow the people a reduction of one-third in their income taxation. That is a

very material benefit to confer upon the taxpayers. Had the efforts of the Opposition been concentrated on pointing out that the State had turned the financial corner, because the Treasurer had been able to grant such a material reduction on income tax while still balancing the ledger, it would have been much more creditable to them than their self-imposed tax of endeavouring to prove that the surplus of £20,000 odd was really a deficit. Had they adopted that course it would have been more decent.

Mr. North: There was no organised attempt to do that. Only one or two members dealt with the subject.

Mr. CORBOY: The effort seemed to be fairly general. I do not know that the hon. member dealt with the question, because I was not fortunate enough to be present when he spoke.

Mr. Lindsay: I did not mention it.

Mr. CORBOY: Does not this prove what I have said? Instead of members being prepared to stand up to what they have said, we find various members claiming that they did not say it. That proves my contention. Here we have members who are rather proud that they did not raise the point!

Mr. Stubbs: That is the curse of party politics.

Mr. CORBOY: That may be so, but the hon. member knows as well as I do what little chance he would have if he were not on one side or the other during a political campaign.

Mr. Lindsay: We were merely refuting your assertion that there was an organised effort.

Mr. CORBOY: Then I will meet hon. members half way, because I believe members of the Opposition are incapable of an organised attack upon anything. Perhaps the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) will now permit me to proceed without interruption. Speaking seriously, this is something for which we should be grateful. The fact that one-third of the income tax has been removed is of very material benefit to the State as a whole. Travelling round the country as I do, I have noticed evidence on all sides that men in business, farmers and others, are able to put more money into the development of their businesses, farms and so on because they have not to shoulder such a heavy burden of taxation as form-

erly. I dare say the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) will agree with me—

Mr. Sampson: In thanking the Federal Government for it.

Mr. CORBOY: Perhaps the hon. member will agree with me when I say that the reduction in taxation has meant a big thing to persons engaged in business throughout the State.

Hon. G. Taylor: But the Federal Government deserve the credit.

Mr. CORBOY: As a matter of fact, had the constituents represented by the hon. member and some of the constituents in a portion of my own electorate, as well as those residing in several other electorates, been listened to, nothing would have been left out of the Federal grant for the business men and others throughout the State. Had it not been for the statesmanlike attitude of the Premier and his Ministers, the whole of the money from the Federal disabilities grant would have been absorbed by the gold mining industry. Had that been done, the member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) and other goldfields members, including myself, would have gained a lot of kudos, but had that course been adopted, it would not have been in the best interests of Western Australia.

Hon. G. Taylor: No one on this side has suggested that.

Mr. CORBOY: No, but it was strongly suggested in the hon. member's constituency and in mine, and indeed in all other goldfields constituencies; and but for the action of the Premier and his Ministers the money would not have been expended to the same advantage. That it has been used to give the greatest benefit to the State as a whole, redounds to the credit of the Premier. So, irrespective of whether the balance is a small surplus or a small deficit, the fact that we have approximately squared the ledger and at the same time relieved business men and farmers of a considerable portion of the burden of taxation, certainly reflects credit on the Government and will be of great benefit to the State. I do not wish to labour the question of finance, except to emphasise the points I have raised. The essential point is not the question whether there was a small surplus; rather is it that we are on the upgrade and that people are being relieved of taxation.

Mr. Mann: We have been on the upgrade for the past five years.

Mr. CORBOY: Granted. I would not take any credit from the Leader of the Opposition. I think I can claim that my criticism of members of the Opposition, and particularly of the Leader thereof, has always been fair, if not generous. What the Leader of the Opposition is entitled to, he shall have. But I say that whatever opportunities have been presented to the Government to do the right thing by Western Australia have been used to the utmost. It is alleged that the Government represent only a few unionists. It is nevertheless true that the only criticism worth listening to directed at the Government comes from the trade unionists, who hold that the Government should have done more than they have done.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is not every Labour Government treated in the same way by the workers?

Mr. CORBOY: Perhaps so, but no other Labour Government have had the opportunities that the present Government have had, to do so much, and I claim that the present Government have been fair to every section of the community, irrespective of whether or not that section belongs to the Trades Hall. Also in their legislation—my friends on the Opposition cross benches will agree with me—the Government have endeavoured to rectify grievances and bring on to a standard basis things that troubled us previously. The Government have attempted to deal with many matters that have been bugbears for the man on the land during many years past, although it cannot be contended that the Government have anything politically for which to thank the farmers.

Mr. Lindsay: The country has a lot to thank the farmers for.

Mr. CORBOY: Of course it has. May I say, not particularly of the farmer, but of all primary producers, that without them Western Australia could not carry on. There can be no doubt about that. At the same time the farmer must not forget that although he believes himself to be the backbone of the country, he owes a duty to the State. Can we think of any other place in the world where a man without a penny can secure a block of land from the Government, whereupon the Government tell him that now they have given him a block of land he has some security upon which they will give him credit up to £2,000, provided he

will work hard on his land. Favoured by these conditions, that man in five or ten years' time will be riding in his own motor car, free from debt and with an estate that he would not sell for £5,000.

Mr. Ferguson: How will the Government get on if they cease lending that assistance?

Mr. CORBOY: I am not saying that the policy is wrong, but I say the Government having done that for that man, he owes the country something in return. The State by its consolidated credit has backed him. He came, perhaps without a shilling, with nothing but his labour. The States says, "All right, we will back your labour, provided you put in your best work."

Mr. Lindsay: That has not always been the case in your own district.

Mr. CORBOY: I admit it. My district is in the experimental stage. But it is going to be another such experiment as Merredin was. We all remember when the Leader of the Opposition was pointed at as a murderer, because he put people on the land out beyond Merredin. To-day those people he put out there are blessing him for having done it. So, too, the people of Yilgarn will bless the member who sent them out there. But having got from the Government not only his block, but the credit on which to develop it, the farmer surely owes the State a duty. That duty is to go on by every means in his power producing the greatest amount of wealth he can per acre. That is the trouble in Western Australia—not more acres, but more bushels per acre. That is what we have to aim at. One has only to read the results of the cropping contests to know how futile are the efforts of some of our alleged farmers. If the backing of the Government and of the Agricultural Bank were to be withdrawn from some of them, they could not get a bob's worth of credit in their own districts; because the storekeepers and the private banks know how indifferent is their work upon their own blocks. I know of an instance: a member of this House produces something like 26 bushels per acre off a paddock, and immediately across the road on similar land with the same rainfall another farmer produces less than 10 bushels per acre. That is a definite economic loss to the farmer himself, and it is also a great loss to the State. Every farmer who has land on the terms upon which Western Australia sells it, land sold to him for 15s. per acre, but for which if it were in the Eastern States

he would have to pay £4 or £5 per acre—every such man who has had the backing of the Government owes a duty to the State, and that duty is that he shall produce the greatest amount of wealth he can by the best farming methods.

Mr. Latham: On how many hours per day?

Mr. CORBOY: If the hon. member is going to take me on that point, I will tell him of the farmers of my acquaintance who can always find an hour for a yarn, and who indeed can always indulge themselves in a few days' holiday. The foundry labourer and the bricklayer cannot afford to do that. So I advise the hon. member not to take up that point. There are in every year two peak periods, during which the farmer works night and day. He has to. But those two periods do not take up anything like six months in the year.

Mr. Latham: Get on to mining. You may know something about that.

Mr. Maley: He is telling too many truths.

Mr. CORBOY: That is so. There are two peak periods during which the farmer works very long hours.

Mr. Brown: You are not talking of your own experience, are you?

Mr. CORBOY: I do not know that my friend learned from practical experience very much about putting tyres on wheels, nor whether he gained much practical experience in riding those race horses he talked of some time ago.

Hon. G. Taylor: That was only recreation.

Mr. CORBOY: Undoubtedly the farmer has two peak periods of work. But there are two other periods during which the man who has got on his feet can enjoy a little leisure. During the first ten years of development, of course, he has to work very hard clearing his block and bringing it into production. Throughout that decade he has not any slack period. But after his property is established and he has got going, he does have in each year a slack period that to some extent makes up for the peak periods of work. Incidentally, it must be remembered that when the farmer has reached that stage of development where he is able to take a little leisure, he is able also to avail himself of the benefits of modern machinery, and to make proper use of the inventions we have had during the past couple of decades. That enables him to

carry on while working not more than reasonable hours. He is able to employ a man, and as the result of the introduction of tractors neither seeding nor harvesting need stop. For the farmer is able to use a tractor that does not tire, and employ a man to drive it. So when a farmer is really on his feet he is able to carry on with reasonable hours, and, during the period occupied in getting on to his feet, if he has the backing of the State, surely it is not a great deal to ask of him that he shall work an extra hour or two in order to carve out a competence for himself.

Mr. Marshall: And does he not at the same time carve out a valuable asset?

Mr. CORBOY: He does.

Mr. Lindsay: That State does not give him anything; he has to repay all advances.

Mr. CORBOY: Quite right. But there is no banking institution in Australia that will give him the opportunity afforded him by the State.

Mr. Latham: Where does the State get its wealth from?

Mr. CORBOY: From the people.

Mr. Latham: The bank does not supply it.

Mr. CORBOY: Does my friend really believe that the shareholders of the bank put in every penny used by the bank in its operations? Of course they do not. They do not put in as much as 5 per cent. of it. I am afraid my friend has not gone very deeply into the matter, for he is displaying a lack of knowledge that does not do him much credit.

Mr. Lindsay: Do not you know that private banks lend money on land?

Mr. CORBOY: Yes, but would the hon. member go to a private bank and ask for an advance on a virgin block of 1,000 acres?

Mr. Lindsay: I can take you to land in my district, other than forest country, on which the private banks will lend and the Agricultural Bank will not lend.

Mr. CORBOY: The same applies in my district, but that is not due to any particular generosity on the part of the private banks.

Mr. Lindsay: Certainly not.

Mr. CORBOY: It is entirely due to the backwardness of certain Government officials in dealing with the development of the State. I believe that the producers and the commercial people of the State have realised the value of certain of our assets very much quicker than have the officials employed by the Government, or shall I say that the officials of the Government are very much

more careful in the administration of the funds under their control than are outside people. That is an undoubted fact. Last week end I visited the Newdegate-Lake Grace district and one of the best crops I saw was on a block on which the Agricultural Bank had refused to grant any loan. The Lands Department sold the block to a man at a nominal figure. So low was the price that he was able to pay for it outright instead of availing himself of the usual 20 years' terms. Yet that block is carrying one of the best crops I saw in the district.

Mr. Griffiths: There is a considerable area of similar land in your electorate and mine.

Mr. CORBOY: That is so; running in a line north and south just east of Westonia there is a considerable area of somewhat similar country.

Mr. Lindsay: It is to be found all through the wheat belt.

Mr. CORBOY: Another question that has been raised frequently by speakers on the other side of the Chamber is that of a redistribution of seats. I was particularly struck with the remarks of the member for Menzies (Mr. Panton) regarding the possibility of great development in his electorate during the next few months. It reminds me of what happened when the Redistribution of Seats Bill, introduced by the present Leader of the Opposition, was before this House a few years ago. It was proposed under that Bill to wipe out the electorate of Yilgarn, and I pointed out that a very few months would prove such a course to be quite wrong. I told the House that the development then pending was such that in a few months' time the electorate would have not only its quota but more for the purposes of the Bill. Let me give the figures so that members may realise how difficult it is to forecast what may happen, or to legislate for a redistribution of seats and be fair to everyone. When the Bill was introduced there were 793 adults in the Yilgarn electorate and, because the number was small, the Commission recommended that Yilgarn be amalgamated with other districts, part of it with Coolgardie and part of it with Kanowna. I knew that considerable development was imminent, and I told the House there would be a much greater population in a short space of time. After a lapse of only four years, instead of that electorate having 793 adults there are no fewer than 1,475 electors on the roll. Thus, the voting

strength of the electorate has nearly doubled in four years.

Mr. Latham: Was that the total at the recent elections?

Mr. CORBOY: It is the latest total and was supplied to me by the Chief Electoral Officer.

Mr. Latham: Have those chaps been shifted off the roads yet?

Mr. CORBOY: If the hon. member is so curious about those chaps, I might inform him that they have been shifted off the road. Let me assure him that they did not make any material difference because they numbered only eleven.

Hon. G. Taylor: You had a cricketers' team, anyhow.

Mr. CORBOY: All this talk about roll-stuffing as regards my district is rather a joke. All sorts of mis-statements have been made. I am not blaming the Leader of the Opposition or anyone else for quoting the statements that were published in the Press, but those statements were incorrect. This matter has been raked over so many times that it might be as well to explain the position. The question whether the men who went to the Yilgarn district were entitled to be enrolled has never yet been settled.

Hon. G. Taylor: They voted, did they not?

Mr. CORBOY: No, they were prevented from voting. I told them I did not wish them to vote, because I was desirous that no question should be raised. Consequently they refrained from voting.

Mr. Latham: That is how it is we did not get our majority.

Mr. CORBOY: I do not think that 11 voters could have affected the issue.

Mr. Latham: There were more than 11.

Mr. CORBOY: No, there were only 11. Fifty-five men were sent to the district and all except 11 were disqualified for enrolment, either because they were under 21 years of age or were unnaturalised foreigners. If the Government, as has been said, had deliberately set out to indulge in roll-stuffing, surely they would have taken care that the 55 men sent to the district were eligible for enrolment.

Mr. Latham: Bad management.

Mr. CORBOY: Not at all. Forty-four of the number were hopelessly ineligible for the reasons I have mentioned.

Mr. E. B. Johnston interjected.

Mr. CORBOY: I think I have heard members opposite expressing disgust because the Government will not permit foreigners to be employed on the farms.

Mr. Lindsay: Who is preventing us? Not the Government.

Mr. CORBOY: No one is preventing the hon. member because he is independent of the Government, but some of his constituents are not.

Mr. Lindsay: Very few, I think.

Mr. CORBOY: Then the hon. member has a very happy electorate.

Mr. Latham: You know that an order was sent out.

The Minister for Mines: Only to clients of the Industries Assistance Board.

Mr. CORBOY: Members opposite kicked up a great row because farmers under the Industries Assistance Board could not employ foreigners. As a matter of fact, all the unnaturalised foreigners that were sent to the Yilgarn district at election time were men who had been put out of the mines of Kalgoorlie and Boulder by order of the doctors operating under the Miners' Phthisis Act. I am sure that no member of this House would object to such men obtaining work anywhere else in the State.

Hon. G. Taylor: The point is, what is the difference between earning money advanced by the Industries Assistance Board to a farmer and earning money given by the Federal Government for road construction?

Mr. Heron: It would not be "dusted" men that would get the jobs.

Mr. CORBOY: If my farmer friends will guarantee to employ none but "dusted" men, the Government will lift the ban to-morrow.

Hon. G. Taylor: Were the men sent to work on the roads in your district only "dusted" men?

Mr. CORBOY: Yes. All of them had been ordered out of the mines by the doctors, and all except two or three of the number had applied for blocks in the Esperance district and were only waiting to have blocks allotted them. Perhaps I should say that they were advised to leave the mines, not ordered out.

Mr. Pantou: They were not tuberculous.

Mr. CORBOY: No. It is essential that members should understand the facts. The member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) was good enough the other night to refer to a matter of which he knew nothing. He spoke of a road west from Bullfinch. The hon. member might have been generous enough to deal with the things he understood, few as

they are, inside his own electorate, and leave alone the things that concern another member's electorate.

Mr. Griffiths: Give us the explanation.

Mr. CORBOY: I am prepared to do so. Let me say at the outset that no blame at all is attachable to the Main Roads Board.

Mr. Griffiths: A duplicate road was constructed.

Mr. CORBOY: I admit that there are two roads leading from the same place to the same place.

Mr. Griffiths: Are there any fences across the road?

Mr. CORBOY: The hon. member shows that he knows only half the story, if that.

Mr. Latham: He knows something about it.

Mr. CORBOY: He knows very little about it.

Mr. Griffiths: I know only what I read in the Press.

Mr. CORBOY: Any blame for constructing the road where it was made in the first place is due to the surveyors who cut up the country and, in a minor degree, to the local authority. The surveyors surveyed the blocks with a road through them that for the last two or three miles approaching the Bullfinch townsite was the shape of an extended "W." The corners of the blocks ran into one another. When the Main Roads Board, as is the custom, asked the local road board what roads they desired built first of all, the local authority specified this particular road west from Bullfinch as its first choice.

Mr. Latham: It was shown on a plan?

Mr. CORBOY: Yes, and surveyed. The local authority said the settlers located 17 miles from Bullfinch must have a road. The Main Roads Board simply gave effect to the wishes of the local authority by building a road that was essential to the settlers in the district. When the road had been completed, the settlers themselves complained that at least two to three miles could be cut off the distance if the road were carried straight through instead of zigzagging. I personally had to act as a mediator, and after considerable difficulty we got the settlers to agree to swap one with the other the corners cut off the blocks. Then a road was surveyed direct to the townsite, and the Main Roads Board were generous enough—I say that advisedly—after having already provided a good road, to build the other road on the straight route. I think even the mem-

ber for Avon will agree that the Main Roads Board treated the district very well indeed.

Mr. Griffiths: That does not alter the fact that it was a waste of money.

Mr. CORBOY: The hon. member was squealing about the Main Roads Board without good cause.

Mr. Griffiths: I was talking about the Baandee south road.

Mr. CORBOY: I am dealing with the hon. member's remarks about the Bullfinch west road. The man who supplied the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) with the information, or rather half the information, was Mr. Bamber. He is the man who induced the Government and the Main Roads Board to put this straight road through in order that he himself might be benefited. After getting this done he wrote to the member for Avon, and told him that this was an opportunity for him to go for the Government over this waste of money.

Mr. Griffiths: That is a lie.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow these interchanges of personalities. If the speaker is not saying what is right as affecting any individual member, the individual member offended can appeal to the Chair; but it is high time that the House stopped taking its own course without any deference to the Chair. I ask the hon. member, if he has any points to raise, or any contradictions to make, to do so through the Chair.

Mr. Griffiths: I apologise. I must say, however, that the information I gave was not supplied to me by anyone. I obtained it through the Press.

Mr. CORBOY: I regret if I have offended. I have no desire to commit any breach of the Standing Orders or to be guilty of any disrespect to the Chair. When speaking, the hon. member distinctly stated that the information was supplied to him by Mr. Bamber, and that is what appears in "Hansard."

Mr. Lutey: Then it must be right.

Mr. Griffiths: I got it from the Press.

Mr. CORBOY: If the hon. member made a mis-statement, he can correct it. Even if the hon. member is correct in saying he obtained this information through the Press, which "Hansard" does not bear out, the man who benefited most, Mr. Bamber, wrote to the Press, and he got the information from the Press. This is the gentleman who benefited most by the road. He

requested the Government to have this work carried out, and now he is the very person who complains about it having been done.

Mr. Lindsay: Did not the road board ask for it?

Mr. CORBOY: Yes, as a result of Mr. Bamber's representation, and the Main Roads Board carried out the work. Right through the time during which the Main Roads Board is operating it is inevitable that there should be complaints. They must do things with which individual members will not agree. Other things happen. Individual members will not agree with the administration of the Government on the main road question, or in their policy of laying down roads over a period of 10 years. The effect of this policy, however, will be to provide the producers of the State over a period of 10 years with good roads. I say for my part that the Government are on perfectly sound lines in adopting such a policy. We hear a lot about public opinion. We hear that talked of in association with the redistribution of seats, and all sorts of things. I am sure that if we took public opinion throughout our rural districts on the question of the work that is being done by the Main Roads Board the Government would receive unanimous endorsement of their policy, as would also the Main Roads Board. Whilst we may receive individual complaints from small centres that have not yet been attended to, by and large, wherever one goes one finds a definite improvement in the main means of communication, this being due largely to the work of the board. When we think of what has happened during the last two or three years, and reckon up what can be done over the whole period of 10 years, which it is proposed to occupy, we can look forward to means of communication that will be most valuable throughout the country districts at the expiration of that period. During the time when the Leader of the Opposition, as Premier, placed his Redistribution of Seats Bill before the House, I said then I was sure that the Yulgarn electorate was on the eve of great development. Within four years the population has doubled itself. This is due to the agricultural development that has taken place. May I say, for the benefit of members on the cross benches, that at the last election



no fewer than 900 farmers and their wives were settled in the electorate.

Mr. Latham: That is 1,800.

Mr. CORBOY: It is 900 altogether. I shall be disappointed if at next election time the number is not 1,800.

Mr. Latham: So shall I.

Mr. CORBOY: I will say for the member for York that he was rather generous at the last election. No doubt the Leader of the Opposition did his utmost to have me defeated by seeing every farmer in the electorate. I think he interviewed 230 of them in the course of a couple of days. This did me no particular harm, however, because out of this number I secured the votes of 170. I am not concerned as to whether I am in or out of the House so long as that particular part of the State goes ahead. If the political exigencies decide that, because all the electors of Yilgarn become farmers, I have to go out, I shall not worry very much. It will mean that if everyone votes against me there will be at least 200 more farmers in the district by next election time. I want to see 200 more farmers there, irrespective of whether it means my political extinction or not. I want to see that particular part of the State developed, and the extinction of one politician will not then matter very much. I am pleased to know, after the talks I have had with the Surveyor General, that the classifications and surveys that have been carried out inside my boundaries during the last 12 or 15 months have warranted the assumption that during the next few months there will be a further settlement of some hundreds of farmers in the electorate. It is good to know that we still have large areas of country available and suitable for settlement. The Surveyor General assured me that there is a whole block of country surrounded by a triangle drawn from Southern Cross to a point through to Kalgarin, bounded by that line and the rabbit-proof fence and the eastern goldfields line. The whole of that block is suitable for settlement according to the classification and survey. In addition, the whole of the Lake King area, including 68,000 acres of first class heavy salmon and gimlet forest, and 170,000 to 200,000 acres of best grade second-class country, is also very suitable for settlement, and will, I hope, in the near future be served by a railway.

Mr. Latham: I am with you there.

Mr. CORBOY: That area will settle at least one man to every thousand acres of first-class country, or 65 settlers, and at least one man to every 2,000 acres of the good second-class country. We ought, therefore, ultimately to see nearly 200 new settlers in the Lake King area. Mr. Camm was not able to give an estimate of the total number of persons who could settle in the area I first mentioned, running South-West from Southern Cross. At Forrestonia there is another magnificent belt of country that has never been classified and surveyed. It is impossible to get an estimate of the number of settlers who can be established there, but I will give my own experience of it. I drove over a distance of 70 miles in a direct north and south line without getting out of heavy salmon and gimlet forest. I was assured by old prospectors who have been there for many years, that they have proceeded through it east and west for 30 miles or so on the average in various places. Approximately the Forrestonia belt, therefore, extends for 70 miles north and south, and for 30 miles east and west. This represents a huge province that is available for settlement inside the Yilgarn electorate. I hope the Government will push on as early as possible with a scheme of developmental railways in order to open up that huge territory in the south-eastern portion of the State. It is only awaiting the hand of man to bring it into productivity. It is capable of producing immense wealth. I know all these areas well. With the exception of Forrestonia, with which I am not so well acquainted, I have travelled extensively over them. I say without fear of contradiction that I would sooner take up land at Lake King than at Newdegate, and we all know how successful the Newdegate settlers have been. There is a vast territory lying south-east of the present settlement awaiting the hand of man to bring it into productivity. Roads and water supplies are being provided as rapidly as possible. I would urge upon the Government, so soon as the settlers have gone out there and have made use of their roads and their water supplies in order to bring their blocks into production, the desirability of providing railway facilities at the earliest possible moment to enable them to take their produce to market, as well as to convey their machines, their super, and the other requisites to their blocks. I understand the

Kalgoorlie railway will be authorised this session. We all know how difficult it is, even with the best of land, the hardest of work, and the most splendid results per acre, for any settler to carry on successfully unless he is provided with facilities to enable him to market his products.

*Personal explanation.*

Mr. Griffiths: I rise on a point of explanation in regard to a statement made by the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy). The hon. member made an incorrect statement, which I heatedly denied. For that I apologise. The matter arose out of the following passage in my speech—

Mr. Griffiths: I do not intend to dwell on the subject of roads at any greater length—

Mr. Marshall: Is the hon. member in order in quoting the "Hansard" report of a speech which has been delivered this session?

Mr. Speaker: It is in order for the hon. member to cite or quote to the House the actual words used about which he complains.

Mr. Griffiths: I will read the actual words.

Mr. Speaker: That is the only thing the hon. member may do.

Mr. Griffiths: I quote the following from "Hansard":—

Mr. Corboy: You are displaying an absolute ignorance of the whole of the facts.

Mr. Griffiths: I am guided by what Mr. Bamber said.

Mr. Corboy: If you rely on him, you will rely on anything.

Mr. Griffiths: I cannot speak as to that, but I know it was in the Press. The Main Roads Board admit that they got into a lot of trouble over that road.

*Debate resumed.*

**MR. RICHARDSON** (Subiaco) [5.32]: May I at the outset join with other members who have tendered you, Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your re-election as Speaker of the House. I feel you may take that re-election to yourself, Sir, as a high tribute, seeing that all parties were unanimous in their decision to have you re-elected. May I also offer my congratulations to those new members who came in at the last election. Whilst congratulating and also welcoming those hon. members, I have a deep feeling of regret that one of my closest companions and one of my greatest personal friends happened to be the only old member seeking re-election who was not returned. However, I feel sure that his

successor will at least try to emulate what the previous representative did, and I wish the hon. member every success during his term in Parliament. I have listened carefully to the debate on the Address-in-reply, and what appeals to me is that there are two outstanding features, two main essentials, of which we in Western Australia must not lose sight. I honestly believe that the present Government are using their utmost endeavours to provide for those two essentials. Speaking as a metropolitan member I say that the first essential, one to which we must give our closest attention, is primary production. For my part I readily and freely admit that if there were no primary producers, there would be no metropolitan area. But let me say at the outset that the primary producers would have no opportunity of carrying out their proportion of the business of Western Australia if there were no metropolitan area. Thus it becomes indispensable that the two interests should work together. It would indeed be unfortunate for the primary producers if they had no ready means of distribution such as the metropolitan area offers them. One may say it is for that purpose the metropolitan area has grown up. To the existence of the metropolitan area it is largely due that our farmers could attain the success they have attained to-day. In the first place the metropolitan area provides a certain market for the farmers, and in the second place it gives them an opportunity to carry on their occupation in the country with a great degree of ease. Therefore it may be claimed that the metropolitan area, while some may regard it as secondary, is just as necessary to the primary producer as the primary producer is to the metropolitan area. As a metropolitan member I am prepared to co-operate in every possible way towards anything needful for the rendering of reasonable assistance to the farmers. Notwithstanding the fact that last year was our record wheat year, we would indeed be foolish if we were to let up in any shape or form on extending the operations of the primary producers, seeing that we have so much unoccupied land in Western Australia. I listened eagerly to the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy), who in my opinion, spoke most ably on the subject of land settlement in Western Australia generally. It would be impossible for us to remain as we are if we

continued indefinitely to hold up all those great sections of land which are ready to be tickled by the plough. I have mentioned the first essential. The next essential is the preservation, at all costs, of industrial peace. Western Australia has been particularly fortunate in that respect; and to my way of thinking the fact is a great tribute to the representatives of the employers and also to those of the employees. Both sets of representatives have adopted a tolerant attitude on every occasion when a dispute has taken place, with the result that this State has not been faced with the industrial difficulties which have prevailed in most of the Eastern States. I have led up to that because I have recently read statements by men taking an active interest in public life, to the effect that industrial arbitration has failed. Not for one moment do I believe that arbitration has in fact failed. Arbitration has not done all that we could have wished; but perhaps that result is due not to any failure of arbitration, but to our application of what the Arbitration Court has done. While we have arbitration and can suggest nothing better in its place, we should seize every opportunity to declare that arbitration has not failed in Western Australia. It is contended that arbitration has failed here because wages are so high to-day. The first argument that is used by the opponents of arbitration is that we must reduce our wages if we are to carry on our industries. I do not subscribe to that view at all. I look into the matter more deeply, and I consider that the reason of the high wages of to-day is the present high cost of living. The high cost of living is not due to high wages; but the high wages, at all events in my opinion, are due to the high cost of living. The Arbitration Court must necessarily give higher awards because of the increasing cost of living. I suggest to the Government that they take stock of the situation, and if we are going to create industries in Western Australia let Ministers discover, if they possibly can, the reason or reasons for the high cost of living. We know that during the war prices both of raw materials and manufactured articles rose considerably. That rise was owing to the stress of war, and to certain considerations which apply during war periods. It seems to me that since the war, when there has been opportunity to reduce the prices of goods, we have found

ourselves faced with the difficulty created by the Federal Government's action in continually adding to the high Customs duties. That fact, in my opinion, is largely responsible for keeping the cost of goods high.

Mr. Sampson: Notwithstanding that, the only thing in the cost of which there is a reduction is the imported article.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I am not quite sure about that, and I am not going to subscribe to it. I know that imported articles are at a very high cost, much higher than that which prevailed during war time. There may be some explanation of that fact, but prices should not be as high as they are to-day. We have to remember that a high protective duty is passed on to the consumer, and not that duty alone, but a percentage added to it by the wholesaler first, and then another percentage added by the retailer. As a result, a 50 per cent. duty imposed on an article entering this State, or any other Australian State, has been increased by a further 25 per cent. or thereabouts by the time the article reaches the consumer. That is the reason why to-day we find that the prices of goods have risen so extensively. In my opinion, the higher the duty, the higher the cost of the article to the consumer.

Mr. J. H. Smith: What about sugar?

Mr. RICHARDSON: I am coming to that. It seems most remarkable that we in Western Australia should be called upon to pay £300,000 yearly more for our sugar than we would be paying if we imported it from outside Australia. The reason of that is simply the boosting up of an industry in Queensland. But the cost is too high: it amounts to almost £1 per head per annum on a single article in daily use here. Again, it is most remarkable that Australian butter, sent to this State by New South Wales and Victoria, costs 2s. per lb. here while it is being sold in London at 1s. 8d. "Something is rotten in the State of Denmark" when such things go on. I am not a freetrader: I realise that Australia must have a protective tariff: but I do not believe in super-protection.

Mr. Sampson: Under freetrade we would have cheaper sugar.

Mr. RICHARDSON: No doubt, but Australia must have a protective tariff. Still, if Australia has a protective tariff and the Victorian and New South Wales producers can sell an article in London at

ls. 8d. and make a reasonable profit, why cannot we get the article at that price here? Either the protective tariff is too high, or the bounties are too high.

Mr. Lindsay: There is no protective duty on butter.

Mr. RICHARDSON: But there is a bounty.

Mr. Lambert: Our own butter board were doing exactly the same thing as you describe.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I bring this matter before the Government because I regard it as one into which they should make inquiry, seeing that Western Australia is handicapped in regard to its industries. The Eastern States have got too far ahead of Western Australia. Immediately we begin secondary industries in Western Australia, there occurs what is known here as dumping. In point of fact, if a small company is formed here, eventually it is bought up by Eastern States investors, with the result that operations in Western Australia are ultimately discontinued. These are matters to which the Government must give some attention, in view of the necessity for creating and maintaining secondary industries in Western Australia. I think the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Rowe) said last night that we must do everything in our power to see that our boys upon leaving school are provided with work. That was the effect of the hon. member's statement, and I entirely agree with him. Metropolitan members are especially well aware of the fact that to-day the utmost difficulty is experienced by fathers and mothers in securing jobs of any description for the young generation that is growing up.

Mr. Heron: More so than fathers and mothers in the country?

Mr. RICHARDSON: Yes. The same difficulty would, however, be experienced in a minor degree, so far as numbers are concerned, in the country. In the metropolitan area thousands of youngsters leave school at the age of 14, and it is a most difficult task to find employment for them. The subject is one of urgent importance, to which the Government should apply themselves. I do trust that in the very near future steps will be taken effectively to create secondary industries in our midst. All of us are well aware that the unemployed difficulty is serious. It has been serious for several years past in the metro-

politan area. I have heard the Premier attribute the unemployed difficulty to the fact of so many southern Europeans entering Western Australia. I do not know whether that is so or not; but I do remember reading some two years ago, whilst our Premier was in Rome, a cable message, published I think in the "West Australian," according to which he had told the Italians that we were prepared to absorb 2,000 Italians yearly in Western Australia. Naturally such a declaration—

Mr. Lambert: Who was it said that?

Mr. RICHARDSON: The Premier. This was published in the Press.

Mr. Lambert: Whom did he tell that to --Mussolini?

Mr. RICHARDSON: I do not know to whom the Premier said it. Possibly he induced Mussolini to interpret for him.

Mr. Lambert: The Premier probably asked Italy to absorb 2,000 Italians a year.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The report said, Western Australia. The hon. gentleman spoke as Premier of Western Australia. I do not blame the Premier for his statement, because the Italian is a very good citizen indeed. My experience of Italians in Australia is that they turn out excellent citizens, that they make good settlers when they go on the land, and that in general they are first-class workers. However, what I was about to point out was that if the Premier now blames the southern Europeans for unemployment in Western Australia, he must direct some measure of blame to the speech he made in Rome. Naturally that would be broadcast and in a country like Italy with its teeming population, there would be many desiring to leave for other countries. They would combine together with Western Australia as their objective. Whether that is correct or not, I cannot say. I believe the Minister for Mines, however, attributed the explanation to a different cause. He said it was due to Mr. Harry Gregory, M.H.R.

The Minister for Mines: I said portion of the blame was due to Gregory, and I still assert that.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I do not agree with the Minister.

The Minister for Mines: I did not expect you to.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I understood from the Minister for Mines that Mr. Gregory had made certain complaints to the Federal Government regarding the expenditure of money in Western Australia by the Main

Roads Board, and that because of that the Federal Government had stopped the payment of £60,000.

The Minister for Mines: No, I was not referring to that point.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I was going to put the position in this form. Suppose a policeman saw a man doing something wrong and took him to court with the result that he was sentenced. We would not blame the policeman as the man who had done something wrong! That is how it appeals to me regarding Mr. Gregory.

The Minister for Mines: No, there is no analogy between the two cases.

Mr. RICHARDSON: There is, most decidedly.

The Minister for Mines: You are talking about one thing, and I spoke of another. You are referring to the £60,000. I complained that the statements he made led to the compulsory putting off of over 700 men by the State Government. That had nothing to do with the £60,000. That money had already been spent.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I understand the reason the Federal Government compelled the State Government to cause the stoppage was that the State Government were not carrying out their agreement with the Federal authorities.

The Minister for Mines: But that was in respect of the £60,000; it had nothing to do with the 700 men who were put off. At any rate, I hope we shall get that money yet.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I hope the Government do get the money, because I do not wish to see any loss to the State on that account. In dealing with the unemployment question, I hope to present to the Government another phase of the problem. The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) mentioned the slipper factory at East Perth, and he gave several reasons why the operations of the factory were not progressing and why in the near future there was a possibility of its being closed down. In my electorate there is a foundry at Subiaco. When working full time, three shifts are in operation with 120 men in each shift. That means that 360 men are employed there on pipe making. It may be said by some hon. members that steel pipes are cheaper than those made from cast iron. On the other hand experiments show that the life of a steel pipe is from 30 to 35 years, while the life of cast iron pipes is practically for ever. Some

cast iron pipes were recently taken up by the Perth City Gas Department, after they had been underground for over 60 years. The pipes were scraped and to-day they are as good as new. The point I want to make is that I believe the Government should on all occasions give all the work possible to Western Australian firms, if reasonable circumstances warrant it. Recently the Government called for tenders for pipes. Alternate tenders were asked for. The Subiaco foundry put in a tender and an agent representing a British firm of steel-pipe makers, also submitted a tender. After due consideration the tender was let to a firm in the Old Country. I have nothing to complain about that, except that as the result of the action on the part of the Government, work has been taken away from people in this State. There are other phases of the question that must be considered, and I trust the Government will give serious attention to them. For instance, the basic wage for pipe makers in England is 39s. per week, whereas the basic wage in Western Australia is £4 5s. per week. Despite that, the Labour Government of Western Australia were prepared to accept a much lower tender—I think the difference between them was 33 per cent.—from the English firm as against the local concern. I do not think the Government took into consideration the question of the basic wage in England, nor do I think the Government would wish to do anything to assist a firm in England where much lower wages are being paid than the workers in Western Australia are receiving. If it resolved itself into a question of tendering in England or tendering in Western Australia, it would be absolutely impossible for the Western Australian manufacturers to compete against the lower wages paid in Britain. Of course, the same thing would apply to a greater extent if the Government chose to go to Japan for their supplies. They could procure supplies in Japan at a much cheaper rate than is possible in England. I appeal to the Government to take those points into consideration in any future dealings of a similar character. In the Subiaco foundry, where the three shifts serve to employ 360 men, there has been nothing like an industrial dispute. I believe the longest strike there lasted for about half a day. There is no friction between the men and the employers, and the foundry has been in operation for years, although the work has been intermittent, preventing the foundry from

working at full swing. Between £40,000 and £50,000 worth of plant has been installed at the foundry, and yet the proprietors are seriously thinking of removing it from Subiaco and re-erecting the plant in Melbourne at an early date. I do not believe it is wise, just for the sake of a few pounds, to allow work of this description to go outside the State. The foundry means a considerable amount to the State, and to the workers. For instance, there are wood cutters in the country cutting supplies for the foundry. Coal is carried over the railways for use in the foundry, and so is the timber. There is income tax to be collected from the men who are at work because of the existence of the foundry. Thus the Government are reaping considerable benefits indirectly from the existence of the foundry, although, if they had accepted the tender for cast iron pipes, they would have had to pay more for their requirements. However, I ask the Government to take these matters into consideration seriously. To-day we are faced with unemployment. Last week 110 men were put off because there was not sufficient work for them at the foundry, where preference is given to married men. It would appeal to hon. members when I say that 90 per cent. of those who were sacked were married men with families. Those men are now walking around the streets looking for work. I believe a deputation is to wait upon one of the Ministers regarding the position, and I hope that in the near future the Government will give due consideration to the local industry.

Mr. Lambert: The Government give ten per cent. preference.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I am aware of that fact. The difference between the two tenders for pipes was not due altogether to the question of price. The trouble is that the Government agreed to use steel pipes for the work for which they were required, instead of cast iron pipes. I admit that is a difficulty. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) will readily understand, seeing that he knows something about such matters, that cast iron pipes cannot be made at the same price as steel pipes. In this instance, the difference was about 33 per cent. in favour of the steel pipes.

Mr. Mann: Does the use of steel pipes do away with the corrosion difficulty?

Mr. RICHARDSON: No. The Government policy is to have the steel pipes lined

with cement and that means that when the pipes are landed in this State, they will have to go through that process. There is another point to be taken into consideration. Notwithstanding that the pipes are to be cement lined, they will be good pipes only so long as the steel lasts. Immediately there is penetration, either by salts or acids in the soil, the cement will not last for any time within the pipes. If within 35 years the authorities are forced to lift all the pipes and reline them with cement because of the action of acids upon the steel, the cost to some future Government will be very considerable. On the other hand, if cast iron pipes were to be used, the Government could reckon upon a life of 100 years for them.

Mr. Lambert: It will not be long before rustless pipes will be in use.

Mr. RICHARDSON: It is not a question of rustless pipes that we have to consider to-day.

Mr. Lindsay: Is there no duty on imported pipes?

The Minister for Justice: Yes, the tenderer included duty in the price quoted.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I do not propose to discuss the State finances nor yet to deal with the much talked of surplus. Those questions were ably commented upon by the Leader of the Opposition, and the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy).

Mr. Panton: They disagree; you had better settle the argument.

Mr. RICHARDSON: They did not disagree, and certainly they arrived at the same conclusion. However, I hope that the present financial year will be productive of a larger surplus than that claimed by the Premier for last year. I wish to refer to one or two local matters, and more especially to the necessity for tramway extensions in Subiaco. For many years we have been advocating the extension of the tramway service to West Subiaco. The necessity for that should appeal to every hon. member, because the population in that part of my electorate is growing rapidly.

Mr. Mann: Why you have two railway stations within 200 yards of each other!

Mr. RICHARDSON: Certainly the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) could not require two railways within the limited area of his electorate. Statistics show that the population is growing considerably in the western portions of Subiaco, and for years past we have been partially promised, some-

times fully promised, the necessary extensions. I hope the Minister for Railways will give early consideration to this question. Another matter that I desire to bring under his notice affects materially the running of the trams, and represents a source of inconvenience and annoyance to people travelling to and from Subiaco. At the corner of Rokeby-road and Hay-street, there is at times throughout the day, a considerable blockage of traffic. This is brought about by the No. 4 trams having to be held up while other trams come down Rokeby-road and pass on to the terminus. The position could be rectified at comparatively little cost by the construction of a crossing immediately over Rokeby-road and down Hay-street for 100 yards with, of course, the provision of a loop. If that were done, No. 4 trams, instead of remaining in Hay-street before reaching Rokeby-road and thus blocking traffic, would run on to the crossing and leave the road clear for traffic to and from Perth. I appeal to the Minister for Railways to give early consideration to this, for it is becoming quite a nuisance, creating as it does a traffic block from time to time throughout the day. I do not know what the cost may be, but I hope the work will be carried out at an early date. Now I desire to draw the attention of the Minister to the state of the tramline. It is positively dangerous.

The Minister for Railways: Where?

Mr. RICHARDSON: Between King's Park gates and the Perth-Fremantle-road. I think it will be necessary to relay the whole of that section of the line.

The Minister for Railways: It is on the programme, and it may be done this year.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I am drawing attention to this because it is really a serious menace and there is every possibility of a calamitous accident there.

The Minister for Railways: Yes, it is in a bad state.

Mr. RICHARDSON: It is indeed. I do not desire to delay the House any longer. I trust that during the session many matters of benefit to the State will be brought before us. I can assure the Government that I will earnestly support them in the passage of any Bills that will be of advantage to the State as a whole.

**MR. CHESSON** (Cue) [6.2]: I am glad to notice that the attention of the people of the Eastern States is everywhere being drawn to the great progress apparent in our primary production. In the early days of Western Australia the outbreak of gold attracted people from the East to this State, and now, after all these years, their attention is again being drawn to us by reason of our records in land put under cultivation, in wheat, in fruit, in timber, in wool, and in the number of our sheep. Those people over East are regarding the possibilities of Western Australia, and even sending their young men over here to carve out homes for themselves. Many of the men who rushed across here in our golden era are now settled on our wheat lands. Everywhere they are to be found, both in our agricultural areas and in our pastoral districts, and their presence is reflected in the magnificent work done by them in the early days. Amongst ourselves we have been whispering that the time is not far distant when Western Australia will become the premier wheat State of the Commonwealth. And while we have been whispering those things amongst ourselves, the Prime Minister has been over here. On his return to the Eastern States he broadcast to the people over there an intimation of the great development taking place in Western Australia. Many of the newspapers in the East are commenting on the bigger inducements offered in Western Australia to young men to strike out and establish homes for themselves. Then our primary production also is serving to call the attention of the people of the Eastern States to the possibilities of the great State in the West. The records of our land development are in themselves a great advertisement for Western Australia and serve to bring her into the limelight in the Eastern States, where people are beginning to realise the vast potentialities of this country. In the Speech certain legislation is forecast. We are to have the State Insurance Bill, a comprehensive measure. I think the State can well undertake insurance in the interests of the people. I am a warm supporter of both State insurance and State banking. Then we are to have an amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act. The object of that measure, I take it, is to rectify anomalies in the existing Act. The Closer Settlement Bill—it has been passed in this Chamber on two occasions—is to be brought down again. When we see so much land lying idle alongside our rail-

ways, we realise how necessary it is that we should have the Closer Settlement Bill and pass it into law. While we are pushing on with new railways, it is of great importance that we should settle the idle lands alongside existing railways. Under that Bill there will be no such thing as confiscation; every landholder will be fairly treated. The measure, I take it, will be similar to that introduced by Sir James Mitchell when Premier, and practically the same as that introduced by the present Government. So the promised Bill should have a very easy passage through this House, and should be assured of a majority in the Council. If our railways are to be rendered profitable, we must bring under cultivation all the cultivable land adjacent to our lines. Then we are to have the Electoral Act Amendment Bill. I hope that Bill when it comes down will be found to make provision for absentee voting in the place of postal voting. It should be possible for every voter on a roll to record his vote on polling day irrespective of where he may be in Western Australia.

Mr. Sampson: Is this a glorification of the "nomadic" idea?

Mr. CHESSON: The system of postal voting has not been altogether satisfactory. Under the present Act any person who has occasion to think he will be five miles distant from a polling booth on election day can vote by post. In some electorates quite a big percentage of postal votes are cast.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Well, so long as those who cast them are entitled to vote, it is all right.

Mr. CHESSON: Yes, of course, but it is popularly held that the postal vote system is open to irregularities. Moreover, in many places no postal vote officers are provided. The absentee vote system would give greater opportunities to the electors to record their votes. So far as I know, there is no valid objection to the system.

Hon. G. Taylor: How will an absentee record his vote if there be no special officer to take it?

The Minister for Mines: He can vote at any polling booth, whether in his own electorate or not.

Mr. CHESSON: Under the law a postal vote can be taken only by a postal vote officer at his residence. But there have been instances of postal vote officers going around taking such votes.

Hon. G. Taylor: I would leave that subject alone if I were you.

Mr. CHESSON: I have no occasion to leave it alone. I don't think any such abuse has occurred in my electorate.

Hon. G. Taylor: No, not in your electorate perhaps.

Mr. CHESSON: If the thing is open to abuse, I do not stand for it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I hope there are a few more like you on that side.

Mr. CHESSON: I do not wish to mention names, but there have come under my notice instances of the postal vote system being abused. I think the absentee vote system would be altogether more satisfactory. It would prevent an unscrupulous man from taking advantage of the facilities offered.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, it would not. John Brown, from Albany, could vote in your electorate, although he might not be on the Albany roll.

Mr. CHESSON: He would have to sign an affidavit, and his vote would not be counted until it reached the proper booth.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Anyhow, under that system one person could vote for two or three candidates.

The Minister for Mines: Is that done in the Federal arena?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, you know that.

The Minister for Mines: I do not know it.

Mr. CHESSON: There has been a good deal of controversy over the vermin taxation. Last year the pastoralists and agriculturists asked for a Bill covering the position. The Bill was brought down and passed. In my electorate I have heard but very few complaints of the measure. In the first instance there were some complaints about the dual collection of the tax.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. CHESSON: I was dealing with the Vermin Bill passed last session. I have recently made a tour of the pastoral areas in my district and have found that the pastoralists have very little complaint against the operation of the measure. There were some complaints in the first place regarding the dual tax, but when the matter was explained and the pastoralists were assured that those who had paid the dual tax would receive credit for it this year, they were quite satisfied. A paragraph that appeared in the "Murchison



"Times" expresses clearly the opinion of the pastoralists. It reads:—

A decision of importance to pastoralists and agriculturists was announced by Mr. H. Milington (Honorary Minister) on the 14th July. In accordance with the provisions of the amended Act, funds were being collected for the purpose of paying a bonus for the destruction of wild dogs, foxes, and eaglehawks, pastoralists being taxed at the rate of 1d. in the pound on the unimproved capital value, and agriculturists at the rate of ½d. in the pound. A bonus of £2 for dogs and foxes and 5s. for eaglehawks was to be paid from this fund as from the beginning of the current financial year, but in order that the money might be available the Commissioner of Taxation was instructed to collect during last year. As local boards had already issued their usual assessments, this course entailed some hardship on settlers, and the Government have therefore decided that vermin boards which had paid bonuses during the year 1926-27 should obtain a refund from the central fund on application, the condition being that the money must either be credited to the settlers' accounts or be refunded to them on a pro rata basis.

The communication from the Honorary Minister was quite satisfactory to the pastoralists. Another matter affecting the destruction of scalps locally was also cleared up. Those who have had experience of poison know that when dogs have been destroyed by those means and the scalps have been taken to the road board office, they are not in a fit state to be kept for any length of time. The difficulty has been overcome by appointing certain persons in the district, sometimes the chairman of the road board or the local constable, to certify the number of dogs, eagle hawks or foxes represented, after which he is at liberty to destroy the scalps.

Hon. G. Taylor: When was that decision arrived at?

Mr. CHESSON: Quite recently.

Hon. G. Taylor: It was not the practice six or seven weeks ago.

Mr. CHESSON: No, but it is now. A person duly authorised to certify the scalps can then permit them to be destroyed.

Hon. G. Taylor: The local governing body pay for the scalps?

Mr. CHESSON: There has been a little dissension on that point. When the scalps have been certified and destroyed it should be possible to arrange for the trappers to be paid locally without there being any need to draw upon the funds of the local authority. Often the road board make the payment and are recouped by the central

board, but a good deal of time often elapses before the money is available. It is thought that provision should be made so that the trappers can be paid at once. When the men go into a town with scalps they are not in a position to remain long and require prompt payment. On every possible occasion we should stress the need for the payment by the Commonwealth Government of a gold bonus. The State is not receiving too much consideration from the Federal Government. Everybody knows what an important part gold played during the war, and the least the Commonwealth can do is to grant some assistance to the gold mining industry. Other primary industries have received assistance and have enjoyed the benefit of enhanced prices, but gold has a standard value that cannot be increased, notwithstanding the increased prices for all mining requisites. When the Prime Minister was in Kalgoorlie recently, he was certainly outspoken on the question. He said in effect that the companies must first put their house in order before asking for Commonwealth assistance. I do not intend to deal with the past; I am prepared to let the dead past bury its dead. No doubt many mistakes were made in the management of the mines, and it cannot be denied that the mines in years gone by paid great dividends, but the time has come when gold mining requires assistance and is entitled to receive it. The State Government have assisted the industry in every way possible, and it is up to the Federal Government to do something tangible, especially in view of the assistance granted to other primary industries. I cannot understand why the mining companies cannot come together on the basis suggested by the State Government and adopt a central treatment plant. Anyone with experience of mining knows that in a place like Kalgoorlie where the mines are situated in close proximity to each other, it is not difficult to ascertain the value of the gold content of the ore by fire assay. Of course it is easier to extract the gold from some ores than from others, but I see no reason why an arrangement could not be made to determine what each company was entitled to. In the underground working of gold mines there has not been much improvement since the early days. The methods adopted are practically similar to those of 50 years ago. The only improve-

ments effected have been in the treatment plants, and those improvements have taken the form of more economic handling and treatment. The adoption of a central treatment plant would lead to substantially reduced costs, because the ore would be treated in bulk by continuous process, fewer assayers would be required and the overhead charges would be reduced. The present Government have done much to assist the industry. A session or two ago they secured the passage of legislation to relieve bona fide prospectors and miners from taxation. It was provided that no prospector, syndicate or company should be liable for taxation until the whole of the money invested in a mine had been returned to the shareholders or the owners. Previously every owner had to pay on the first ounce of gold produced. The prospector who finds a show now can dispose of it, and is not taxed on the sale but upon the profit he makes. The person who backs the prospector is not taxed on the sale of anything that is discovered by his prospector. The present Government have done a lot for the mining industry. It is up to the Federal Government, when we consider the great benefit that gold was to the Commonwealth during the war period, to assist the industry now. The State Government have also granted subsidies for the carting of ore over long distances to the railways. Very small charges are made for carting to State batteries. Rebates have been given on low-grade propositions. Prior to this a person received a rebate on only 250 tons of ore, but now he can get a rebate on a low-grade proposition no matter how small the amount of ore carted may be. There has also been a reduction of 2s. per ton on the cyanide charges. This has been of great assistance to the genuine prospector. Prior to that no one could take up an abandoned show on which there was a Government mortgage. That system has been abolished. People may now take up abandoned propositions no matter how much the Government have lent upon the machinery that once was on it. The central prospecting board has also done a lot to assist the genuine prospector. No one who is a genuine prospector and is of good character has been turned down by the board. He is equipped with a turnout, and horses or camels, rations, and a certain amount of explosives, etc. He is given sustenance varying between 22s. and 30s. a week. Dur-

ing the last six months the board have granted for rations to prospectors a sum of £1,650 9s. 11d., and £192 13s. 1d. for horse feed, attention to horses, etc. The whole amount advanced in that period was £2,345 19s. 8d. Since the inception of the board on the 1st September, 1919 the total amount expended in assisting prospectors was £45,347 4s. 9d. In all 1,192 parties, representing 1,919 persons, have participated in the distribution of this money. On the 30th June, 1927, 69 parties and 100 men were still receiving assistance in some form or other. The board has assisted prospectors as follows: Coolgardie, 14 parties, 20 men; Kalgoorlie, 15 parties, 23 men; Leonora, 7 parties 9 men; Mt. Magnet, 18 parties, 23 men; Meekatharra, 8 parties, 12 men; and in outside districts where there are no mining boards 7 parties and 13 men: a total of 69 parties and 100 men. Although nothing sensational has been found by prospectors who are being assisted by the board, that body can lay claim to a certain amount of credit for the discovery of Glenelg, Mt. Gray and Mt. Vernon. It was the board that first sent parties out to those districts, and when gold was found other parties went there.

Hon. G. Taylor: Were all these parties equipped with either horses or camels?

Mr. CHESSON: Yes. In some instances people had their own equipment, but they were assisted by the board in other directions. The board is always ready to assist genuine parties. I now wish to refer to State batteries.

Hon. G. Taylor: There are not many left.

Mr. CHESSON: A few are left.

Hon. G. Taylor: There are none up our way; they are all gone.

Mr. CHESSON: State batteries have done a lot for mining in this State, and were responsible for the opening up of very big towns. For the year ended 30th June, 1927, 20,177 tons of ore were crushed for a yield of 18,552 ozs., the amount (from tailings) paid to the owners being £11,715. The total quantity of ore milled at the State batteries since their inception is 1,447,092 tons; the production by amalgamation is £4,931,004; sands treatment, £777,148; slime, £265,266; residue, £9,353; or a total value of £5,982,771. Including the tin that was treated, namely 80,728 tons, yielding £93,436, the total output from the State batteries was worth £6,076,207. The

total value of gold and tin won at the State batteries is, therefore, over £6,000,000. The gold yield for the State is worth £156,000,000. The State batteries have produced 1/26th of the total, or one ounce in every 26. That is sufficient justification for the inauguration of the State battery system, while the total yield of gold shows the value that the industry has been to the State. I now wish to refer to State lotteries. Members will recollect that a State Lotteries Bill, on lines similar to the Queensland legislation, was brought down to the House. A large proportion of the proceeds was intended for our hospitals and charities. I hope that Bill will again be introduced. No doubt many of the people of the State are gamblers. If they have no local lottery in which to invest their money, they send it either to Tasmania or to Queensland. If gambling is an evil, we cannot stop it. Let us see, therefore, whether we cannot get something out of it for charity.

Mr. Marshall: We should not be reducing gambling by having a State lottery.

Hon. G. Taylor: Will you not encourage it?

Mr. Marshall: No. People will not require too much encouragement.

Mr. CHESSON: I do not think there is any question about encouraging people. If they want to gamble, they will do so.

Hon. G. Taylor: We would be encouraging it.

Mr. CHESSON: If the proceeds from a lottery brought relief to charitable institutions, and were instrumental in relieving our sick and infirm, they would be put to good use.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Only one section of the community would contribute.

Mr. Withers: They are contributing now.

Mr. CHESSON: And they will continue to do so.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Why not let the other fellow pay?

Mr. CHESSON: The Bill, if brought forward, will meet with my hearty support. There are no half measures about me in a matter of this sort.

Hon. G. Taylor: I am surprised at you.

Mr. CHESSON: When it comes to a question of raising money for charities or hospitals, I prefer to go the whole hog. I know what we do in our district.

Mr. Marshall: Do not tell tales out of school.

Mr. CHESSON: If we can find any means by which we can induce people to subscribe to our hospital we do it, irrespective of whether it is gambling or not.

Mr. Latham: It is a bad example to set to your young men.

Mr. CHESSON: Our clergymen are not one-eyed. They take tickets, too. If the Minister will bring down the Bill I am sure this House will pass it, and, if we do not dwell too long upon it, probably another place will also pass it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is one tax the member for Nelson will not pay.

Mr. CHESSON: I now wish to speak about diamond drilling. Up to date our diamond drilling operations have not been successful in locating anything worth boasting of. I trust more drills will be put into use before long, and that we shall get the long-promised drilling plant in my district. Up there we have a few propositions which look fairly well, and something decent would probably be located with a diamond drill. One drill is already at work in the electorate of the member for Greenough (Mr. Kennedy), boring for coal. There are indications of two seams of coal fairly decent in point of size, and the calorific value of the smaller seam appears to be fairly good. If only good coal can be obtained in the Geraldton district, it will be a great benefit to my district also. One is troubled by a firewood shortage, most of the timber around the old fields having been cut out. In fact, the whole of the Murchison would benefit from a coal discovery in the Geraldton district. I hope that several more bores will be put down there, and that good seams of coal will be discovered. The port of Geraldton, too, would derive immense benefit from such a discovery; therefore the operations should be pushed on. It is hoped the Murchison field will receive a fair proportion of the money that is voted annually for development of mines. We do not ask for more than what is fair. The distribution, it is known, depends upon reports made by the Minister's technical advisers. When a mining district applies for assistance, the application has to be investigated. Now, the Murchison will stand investigation; and therefore we look forward to receiving a fair share of the grant. Lately I visited a large number of the mining centres in Western Australia, making a tour through the whole of the Murchison and Leonora dis-

tricts. During that tour I had an opportunity of going underground at Wiluna and inspecting a proposition there. No one can form an idea of underground development without going underground. There was 1,400 feet driving at the 295ft. level, cross-cutting from the shaft, running 110 ft. before the lode was cut.

Hon. G. Taylor: At what depth?

Mr. CHESSON: At 295ft. There was 1,400 ft. of driving, and at every 100ft. crosscuts were put right across the level. The average value was about 40s.

Hon. G. Taylor: Did they drive on the lode when they cut it?

Mr. CHESSON: Yes. They drove right along the lode for 1,400ft., the average value being 40s. I have a list of the values here, but it is too long to read. The operations show over 500,000 tons of stone developed, and there are winzes going down from 90ft. to over 100ft. Water can be picked up at 295 ft., and the mine will be dry from that point downwards. There is no doubt about the values at Wiluna; it is only a question of extraction. If that can be got, Wiluna will become extremely prominent in the eyes of the mining public. By oil flotation over 80 per cent. of extraction was obtained, and that rate has since been considerably improved upon. When one reaches over 80 per cent., one is getting pretty close.

Mr. J. H. Smith: What was the idea in changing the method?

Mr. CHESSON: Some other American process, which it is believed will prove more satisfactory, has been adopted.

Hon. G. Taylor: How is the mine going down at the winze?

Mr. CHESSON: Just about the same. I have not the slightest doubt about Wiluna except as to the extraction question. On the same tour we had an opportunity of seeing the pastoral areas and the developments on them. Runs that formerly carried about 3,000 sheep we are told will carry up to 40,000. Everywhere we found wells being put down and windmills and troughing put up and substantial fences erected. The class of sheep, brought from the other side, is fine. The runs are now being developed completely. Formerly only portion of a run was developed. The disadvantage of that practice is that during the summer months sheep cannot be driven, and therefore only country in close proximity to

wells could be used during the hot weather. With the developments in progress, that country will presently carry ten times the number of sheep it carried some years ago. The type of young men on the stations is very fine. Many of them have come over from the East. The properties which have changed hands have been bought by wealthy people on the other side, who have introduced considerable capital into Western Australia. They have established their sons on stations running up to Lake Darlot and Mt. Lawlers and down into my district, in which one property recently changed hands for £75,000. While travelling through the mining areas I took the opportunity to note what improvements were being made and how money was being expended in bringing batteries up to date. Latterly the foundations of many batteries erected 20 or 30 years ago were giving way. These have been put in decent working order. As regards State batteries generally, for the year ended on the 30th June last £4,014 was paid in cartage subsidies on 7,335 tons, shifted to State batteries for treatment, and £634 was paid by way of rebates on 4,136 tons of low-grade ore crushed. A thorough overhaul was made of the batteries at Boogardie, Sandstone, Wiluna, Meekatharra, Peak Hill, Youanmi, Payne's Find and Coolgardie, the total cost of the overhauls being £7,282. As a result, all those batteries are now in first-class order.

Mr. Marshall: I can inform you that the Peak Hill battery is not in good order.

Mr. CHESSON: I had a look at all those batteries but three, the exceptions being Coolgardie—

Hon. G. Taylor: That is closed down.

Mr. CHESSON: The other two I did not see were Payne's Find and Peak Hill. When I was at Youanmi, the overhaul of the battery was about completed. I had a look at the Boogardie and Sandstone batteries, and can certify that good solid work and good solid timber were put in. Peak Hill was to be dealt with after Youanmi. As the result of inquiries I made recently of the Superintendent of State batteries, I learned that Dave Wilson, the man in charge of these overhauls, had gone straight on to Peak Hill after completing Youanmi. The Superintendent told me all the batteries were in good order. I can personally confirm that statement, except, of course, as regards the three batteries I did not see. Those that I did

see, I can certify are good for another 20 years.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do these figures cover last year?

Mr. CHESSON: Yes. The State battery at Cue during the year ended the 30th June last crushed 362¾ tons of ore for a yield of 2,758½ ozs., the amount paid to owners in respect of tailings being £1,141. The total output of the Cue battery from 1st October, 1919, to the 30th June of this year is as follows—tons of ore milled, 20,476; production, by amalgamation £81,031, by sand treatment £15,356; total, £96,387. In view of those figures no one can say that the erection of a mill at the Cue battery has not been justified.

Mr. Marshall: There was one very good crushing in that return, though.

Mr. CHESSON: Cue has just about the best average in the State.

Hon. G. Taylor: Peak Hill is not in it.

Mr. CHESSON: There have been many good crushings at Cue, and unquestionably the Cue battery has justified its existence. As regards Reedy's proposition, a fair amount of work is going on, and about 760 tons of tailings were treated during the last two or three months, with an average of 25s. 6d. per ton for cyaniding, while the stone put through the mill by amalgamation returned £1 5s. per ton. That means over 50s. per ton. That mine is down 200ft. to the sulphide zone and the 50s. dirt is obtained from the 500ft. drive. The main trouble there is that the installation of an up-to-date economical treatment process is urgently required. The erection of a fully-equipped mill is essential and better trucking arrangements are necessary in order to assist in the proper working of the mine. The emerald field in the Poona district is being worked energetically and about 20 men are engaged in the operations. The published returns show that a fair quantity of emeralds is marketed and I understand that considerable development is going on. I am not in the position to pass judgment on the emeralds that are being recovered, for that is a matter for experts. I have seen many of the specimens and they appeared to me to be attractive. The company is spending a lot of money in the district and no difficulty is experienced, apparently, in disposing of the jewels. Out from Poona a fair number of men are employed in tin mining operations. The Big Bell mine has changed

hands and the Mandelstam's have taken charge of the operations. They propose to start on a big scale and great hopes are entertained of successful developments. A good few men are working at Day Dawn and the stone from the Fingal Mine is treated at the State battery at Cue. The large tonnage going through the mill there indicates that quite a number of prospectors are at work in the district. The mining prospects there have never been better and the people at Cue seem quite satisfied regarding the future. Recently an up-to-date electric plant was installed and the town is as well lit up now as any other town of similar dimensions anywhere in the State. A lighting system has been installed at the hospital, the various Government buildings and so on. That will give hon. members an indication of the progress of the town and the up-to-date spirit of the people. We have no complaints to make regarding our hospital, and are quite satisfied with the treatment we receive from the Government in that regard. The people there realise that God helps those who help themselves, and they have certainly helped themselves regarding the hospital. What applies to Cue applies throughout the whole of the Murchison. The people at the various centres realise the necessity for up-to-date hospital facilities. Only the other day a doctor from Melbourne arrived at Cue after overlanding by motor, via Leonora and through Sandstone to his destination. The people guaranteed the doctor £800 a year, with the result that the town has now the benefit of the services of an up-to-date doctor and a good hospital staff. We who come from the outback parts of the State are by no means pessimistic. I have heard members in this Chamber decrying the gold mining industry, but we feel satisfied with the progress that has been made throughout the Murchison. With the advantage of diamond drill boring, we feel sure that some valuable discoveries will be made, and that mining will in due course come into its own again. In conclusion, I have merely to state that I feel satisfied, in view of the prospect of good seasons and with mining looking up, there is a bright future for Western Australia.

MR. LATHAM (York) [8.21]: I join with other members in congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on your reappointment to your high and honourable office. Knowing how ably you guide the proceedings of the House,

I feel sure you will have little cause for complaint when the time comes for you to conclude your tenure of the Speaker's dais. I congratulate the new members who have been elected to this Chamber. In saying that, however, I must add that I feel the loss of Colonel Denton very much. He is a man who has done good service overseas for his country, and gained distinction. His absence from Parliament is a great loss to the State, and I hope at some future time we shall have Colonel Denton back with us.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LATHAM: I do not intend traversing the financial question, for it has already been ably dealt with by the Leader of the Opposition (Sir James Mitchell), the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo), and the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy). I submit that a case has been made out by those members for the Treasurer to answer to the public of the State. He will have to explain the points raised by those hon. members, or admit that they were right. I hope that the first available opportunity will be taken by the Treasurer to explain the position.

Mr. Marshall: Of course he will run away and fix everything up!

Mr. LATHAM: I shall be pleased if he does so. I think we are entitled to know something that apparently we have not been told so far by the Treasurer.

The Minister for Railways: You will get a full explanation of the financial position when the Budget is delivered.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We can get it from the "Public Accounts" as well.

Mr. LATHAM: The Treasurer should explain the various points raised by the Leader of the Opposition and other members. As to the question of land settlement, after my return from a visit to the Eastern States, I was convinced that we have not yet found out the full possibilities ahead of us. While in the East I found they were developing country as poor as our land about Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Marshall: In the goldfields areas we have the best land in Australia.

The Minister for Mines: I wish you had at York the land we have at Kalgoorlie.

Mr. LATHAM: I wish the goldfields had the rainfall we experience at York, and then there would be nothing to complain about. In some parts of the Eastern States, where land is priced at from £4 to £5 an acre, they are farming areas where the rainfall is on a par with that recorded at Kalgoorlie. In

those circumstances, if we improve our methods of cultivation, I believe we shall be able to extend our agricultural areas further than we now propose. I believe it will be proved that the light lands of the State, where scanty rainfall is recorded, will in time give us bigger returns than some of the districts where a heavier rainfall is registered. I would draw the attention of the Government to some advantages to be gained if additional railway facilities were provided, especially in the eastern portions of my electorate. If those facilities were provided, a lot of first-class land would be thrown open and a fair quantity of second and third-class land made available. So far as our farming methods are concerned, I do not know that they are capable of very much improvement, because already I consider we are much ahead of the methods adopted in the East, and particularly in New South Wales. I had an opportunity of visiting that State and Victoria during unfavourable periods, and the farmers of Western Australia have nothing to be ashamed of regarding the conditions under which they operate. In reply to the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy), I would point out that his doleful picture regarding the farmers of Western Australia was rather over-painted. There is no doubt the State has rendered good service in assisting the farmers, but, after all, practically every person in Western Australia has had an opportunity of becoming the possessor of a holding. I hope those people who think farming is such a wonderful calling will seize the opportunity to secure a block when the land I have referred to is thrown open for selection. Despite the wonderful assistance that has been rendered to the farming community, the fact remains that tremendous difficulties are involved in pioneering work in this State. No privileges or concessions that can be provided can compensate those people for the disadvantages and inconveniences under which they suffer during the early stages of their operations. I have come into touch with few farmers throughout the agricultural areas who, after spending 15 years or so in developing their holdings, have land that is valued at much more than £5 or £6 an acre, or who are able to own their motor cars.

Several members interjected.

Mr. LATHAM: At any rate, that is what my experience shows me is correct. I know there are some favoured portions

such as at Bruce Rock and Narembeen, where land commands high prices, but the farmers cannot afford to run about in motor cars because the heavy taxation imposed upon them renders it difficult for them to make both ends meet.

Mr. Panton: Of course the farmers have to walk about there!

Mr. LATHAM: I thought my remark would draw some interjections, but the member for Menzies (Mr. Panton) will realise that I did not mention State taxation alone. There are many forms of taxation and it is that that makes it difficult for the farmers to make both ends meet. Should the price of wheat reach a normal figure again, something will have to be done, particularly in the direction of reduced taxation. I believe I am correct in saying that one-tenth of the farmers' earnings goes in paying taxation in one form or another. That is a very serious matter. I have worked it out carefully and that is the result I have arrived at.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is far more than one tenth.

Mr. LATHAM: I refer, of course, mainly to indirect taxation. I was surprised to hear one hon. member inform the House that the Government had sent foreigners to his electorate to do road-making work.

Mr. Heron: He explained the position.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not too sure that he did. If the statement were true, it is a pity that the same assistance was not extended to the farmers in connection with their clearing operations. Not so long ago notices were sent to farmers notifying them that one of the conditions governing assistance from the Agricultural Bank was that no Southern Europeans were to be employed in clearing operations. If they are fit to do the work on the roads, they should be allowed to do contract work for the farmers. According to the member for Yilgarn they were used on the roads. There is no harder work than that with pick and shovel on the roads in summer time. Those men could have got very much easier work on the farms, where they would not have to labour in the heat of the day. The hours laid down by the Public Works Department for such employment is from 8 till 12 and from 1 till 5; that is to say, during the hottest time of the day. If those men had been doing contract work

for farmers they would not have had to work those hours.

Mr. Marshall: No, but they would have had to work all night.

Mr. LATHAM: No, they would not. A tremendous sum of money is being made out of clearing the land, yet the men employed on that task are not working all night. Most of them are union men, working under union conditions. They are all making good money. If we are to develop the State, and if we cannot get our own people to do the clearing, we must use those men referred to by the member for Yilgarn. Through the Agricultural Bank the Government direct that those men shall not be employed by the farmers, notwithstanding which they are put on to do much harder work on the roads.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is a very different attitude from that of the Queensland Government who put the men into the sugar plantations.

Mr. LATHAM: We seem to entertain the idea that these people shall not be allowed to work when they come here; yet the law permits them to come here and they can do the work very well. It is nonsense to say that they cut the price. I suggest that the unions would not accept them for membership if they did that; and we know that the unions are accepting them as members. If the Minister was so considerate as to want to give those people a job, I suggest they should have been employed in forming roads in the South-West.

Mr. Heron: A lot you know about it! The South-West is no good to them in summer time.

Mr. LATHAM: In summer time the climate of the South-West is the best in Australia. If it is too bad for those men, how could they do the work where they were? There are plenty of sleeper cutters in the South-West who went down there from the mines.

Mr. Heron: They were advised to get out because they were dusted.

Mr. LATHAM: If they could not do road work down in the South-West, the work in the drier areas would be far too laborious for them. If we employed those men in the South-West, it would be much better for their health, and better also for the State. Possibly it was that the Minister did not have sufficient time to see who was being employed on those jobs.

Just about that period he was not only a Minister of the Crown, but also the director of a very big election campaign.

The Minister for Mines: And a pretty successful one.

Mr. LATHAM: It certainly was a successful campaign, but the Minister did not have much influence on the results of the elections. It is not possible for any Minister to successfully carry out his Ministerial duties and also look after a big election campaign.

The Minister for Mines: Well, we had not so much money to spend as you had.

Mr. LATHAM: I only wish that as a party we had half the money the Minister seems to think we have. If it were so, we might achieve better success; that is to say, if money can buy votes, although I have yet to learn that it can, in this country at all events. However, it is quite possible that is why those men got on the roads; the Minister for Works was too busily engaged on the election campaign to know anything about them. He himself must have had to work very long days, and I suggest he did not do that job on 44 hours per week.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Another instance of one man with two jobs.

Mr. LATHAM: Certainly the Minister is a good man for hard work. However, I am sorry to say that, apparently, the strain of the overwork has had a bad effect on his health.

Mr. Heron: How did it affect you when you were chief organiser?

Mr. LATHAM: When I was an organiser I was not a Minister of the Crown.

Mr. Marshall: No, nor did you make any difference to the results of the election.

Mr. LATHAM: I cannot for the life of me understand why the chairman of the Main Roads Board went overseas just when he did. If it was intended that he should get information for the State as to the making of the best class of roads, he should have been sent abroad when they were making roads in the countries he visited, which is not in the middle of winter. It is extraordinary that the chairman should have been sent abroad to learn how to make roads right in the heart of winter.

The Minister for Mines: Where he is it is the height of summer.

Mr. LATHAM: But he left here at the beginning of January, which meant that he

would land in the Old Country or in America in February; and at that time of the year they make no roads in those countries.

Mr. Marshall: I am not too sure why he went.

Mr. LATHAM: No, unless it was to get him well out of the way while the elections were on.

Mr. Marshall: Another insinuation!

Mr. LATHAM: It seems to me it was quite unnecessary to send the officer abroad to learn how to make roads. This State offers no engineering difficulties. The class of road we build from Perth to York or from Perth to Bunbury does not require great engineering skill. All that it requires is money and labour. I venture to say the information the chairman of the Main Roads Board will bring back may be very useful to the City of Perth when bitumen roads are being put down, but outside of that we shall get very little value in return for his trip.

The Minister for Railways: If as a result of his enquiries we could save one per cent. on construction costs, it would be quite sufficient return.

Mr. LATHAM: I will tell the Minister how to save more than one per cent.: that is by letting his work by contract and getting more up-to-date methods of carrying out the work. It is disgusting to see men engaged with pick and shovel and wheelbarrow on roads being constructed by the Public Works Department while the local authorities are using up-to-date machinery.

The Minister for Mines: The Main Roads Board have a most complete plant. That is why some of the contractors put in tenders for jobs conditionally on the Main Roads Board lending them the plant. You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. LATHAM: If a contract is let for £2,000 or £3,000 a contractor cannot afford to pay £500 for plant.

The Minister for Mines: The Main Roads Board have over £100,000 worth of plant.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of motor cars.

Mr. Marshall: When you were Treasurer you purchased your share of them.

Mr. LATHAM: When the local authorities can set an example for the Public Works Department in point of road construction, it is about time we saved some money in that direction. I firmly believe that the men sent out on road work just prior to the elections were sent out to furnish votes in certain electorates.



Mr. Marshall: How do you know how they voted?

Mr. LATHAM: I do not know how they voted, but I believe many of them voted wrongly. However, they were sent out, and I felt sorry for those who had to do the work they were called upon to do in the heat of the day, when they could have been better employed in cooler localities where roads cannot be made in winter time.

Mr. Kenneally: You are very solicitous about them.

Mr. LATHAM: So would the hon. member be if he had my knowledge of the work. The local authorities do not carry out their road work in summer; they reserve it for the beginning or the end of winter. In the Yilgarn, the Northam and the York electorates the proper time to make roads is in winter.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: You know that the Commonwealth only approves of road making in certain seasons of the year.

Mr. LATHAM: But I am sure that if appealed to they would be prepared to extend the time over June. There is plenty of opportunity to make roads in the South-West in summer time. It can then be done more cheaply down there. However, in the agricultural areas we can make our roads better and cheaper in winter than in the summer. I hope the Main Roads Board will get more up-to-date machinery for their work in future.

Hon. G. Taylor: They might work themselves out of a job.

Mr. LATHAM: I think there would still be a little work left to be done in those electorates I have mentioned when the next election comes along.

The Minister for Railways: We have enough work to last for the next 10 years.

Mr. LATHAM: I am glad to hear it, and I hope we shall have the money spent in the right places at the right time. I am sorry the Main Roads Board have not seen fit to keep in decent repair the roads they are engaged upon. The condition of some of the roads carrying a great deal of traffic is absolutely shocking. I picked up a copy of the "Swan Express."

Mr. Marshall: Where is that published?

Mr. LATHAM: At Midland Junction. It states that one man was thrown out of a motor lorry coming down the York-road, and that another has died as the result of an accident on that road. Prior to the Main

Roads Board taking over that section of the York-road the local authorities did their best to keep it in decent repair.

Mr. Clydesdale: It takes far more now to keep it in repair than it did some time ago.

Mr. LATHAM: I am speaking of last winter. If the board were to get a grader and fill in the ruts it would serve to make the road passable, at all events. If they take over those roads they ought to make them possible for traffic. Coming to the handling of traffic in the city, I notice that in the bigger centres in the Eastern States the traffic authorities are anxious to keep the people moving. I suggest to the Minister and his board that that should be their aim, without too much interference. There should be no interference but to keep the people moving, and I venture to say the job of the Government and their boards is to see that the people have an opportunity to get to and from their places of business without delay. Certain restrictions have recently been imposed on motor buses. In my opinion the only people that should decide the routes of motor buses are the municipal engineers, who should specify which routes are capable of carrying the traffic. Beyond that there should be no interference. Sometimes at the close of office hours people find it almost impossible to get on the trams, and the train service from Perth to Fremantle is so infrequent that if one wishes to get down to the seaport hurriedly, he has to employ a taxi and pay about a guinea for it. Why interfere with those people who are prepared to run a frequent bus service? I notice that certain motor traffic regulations have been disallowed in another place. I hope the Routes Advisory Committee will take that as an indication that we do not want too much interference with this traffic. We want to facilitate and expedite the opportunities afforded to people to get to their places of business and back again.

The Minister for Railways interjected.

Mr. LATHAM: If there were no trains the difficulty would be increased, but perhaps there would be still more buses on the roads. The Government should realise that we have to move with the times, and that our means of transport should not be kept obsolete simply because we have a train service. I believe that both the train and tram services, if run properly, will pay for themselves, as they have done in the past, and I do not think we should interfere too much

with the motor traffic. When I was in London I noticed that the trams were not carrying so many passengers as they were formerly, and yet the buses were still allowed to run.

Mr. Panton: There are no trams in the city of London.

Mr. LATHAM: Well, they run as far as the Embankment. I was hopeful that this session would prove to be one in which no new legislation would be introduced. It is time we called a halt to piling up our statute-book with new legislation. The time is ripe for reviewing some of our statutes, and I hope this session will be devoted to work of that kind. If we are called upon to consider traffic fees I hope the Minister will make provision compelling the owners of motor cars and motor cycles to take out comprehensive insurance policies before they obtain their licenses. It may possibly be suggested that I am thus suggesting increased business for the insurance companies. I have no desire to do that, but I do wish to protect the unfortunate man, woman or child who happens to be knocked down by a motor and who can make no claim for compensation because the driver or rider of the vehicle is a man of straw. If we compelled those drivers and riders to take out comprehensive insurance policies before they were issued with licenses, there would be something to provide for the medical treatment of injured people.

Mr. Heron: Did not you cry out from your side of the House last year when we made provision for such protection?

Mr. LATHAM: No; I supported it, but I am now going further and asking the Government to insist upon every motorist taking out a comprehensive policy in order to protect pedestrians. The other day I saw a child who had been crippled for life. Possibly it was purely an accident, but the driver of the motor car was uninsured and was a man of straw. The result is that the parents are saddled with a crippled child and are unable to recover any compensation whatever. There is an easy way out of this difficulty by compelling all motorists to take out a comprehensive policy. Reverting to the question of railways, I do not know whether it is proposed at a later stage of the session to introduce legislation to provide for new lines. I sincerely hope that before any Bill is brought in to authorize a railway to serve the country east of Kondinin, some consideration will be given to the claims of the people north and south of

the Kalgarin area. I am as anxious as is anyone to see those people granted railway communication. They have been out in that country for a good many years; in fact, far too long without railway facilities. What I wish to guard against is a recurrence of what happened on the north side of the eastern goldfields line where two loops were constructed. If a railway were run from Kondinin to Kalgarin, I am afraid that the people on the south and north sides of Kalgarin would be isolated for a good many years. Those settlers took up land in good faith that the Government would continue the old policy of railway construction. I do not wish to differentiate between past Governments. It has been the policy of all Governments to provide railway facilities wherever they were warranted. I hope the fullest inquiry will be made before any railway is built to serve the whole of those districts. I venture to suggest particularly after having heard the views of the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy), that the best way to serve that territory would be to run a line from Newdegate to connect with the eastern goldfields railway. If at some future time it is considered desirable to run a trunk line through that country from the city, I shall be prepared to support the proposal. Our first duty is to the people who are tilling the soil in an area and under conditions that make it an unprofitable proposition.

Mr. Brown interjected.

Mr. LATHAM: Naturally the member for Pingelly is looking after the interests of his people, but I think he is sufficiently business-like to admit that as long as those people are served with a railway, he will not insist upon its going into Kondinin, particularly if it means isolating settlers located north and south of the proposed line.

Mr. Brown: Would it not be better for the State to adopt the comprehensive scheme?

Mr. LATHAM: We are not in a position to adopt comprehensive schemes. I hope the Engineer-in-Chief will consider the proposition outlined by Mr. W. N. Hedges in his pamphlet a few years ago. His argument was that there are natural grades that lend themselves for railway routes to carry our traffic to the coast, and it seems a reasonable proposition. I hope the Engineer-in-Chief will investigate that proposal before any more trunk lines are run out. It is an American idea, I understand, and if there is any advantage

to be gained by adopting it, I hope we shall profit by America's experience. While I was in the Eastern States I had an opportunity to visit the closer settlement areas and investigate their financial position. I have listened to speeches made from time to time condemning the south-west portion of our State and suggesting that the case is absolutely hopeless, but I remind members that in the closer settlement areas of the other States even greater disadvantages are suffered than those confronting our people. Most of the closer settlement areas in the East are handicapped by heavy capitalisation. Irrigation works in particular seem to have entailed a heavy charge against the land. In my opinion it is not so much a question of land as of industry. It is most difficult to persuade people to engage in dairying, owing to the present standard of living. Dairying to-day is the slave industry of Australia, and until the people are prepared to pay more for the product we shall find it difficult to get settlers to engage in the industry. That should not cost a great deal more. When I inquired into the propositions in the East, I found that the people were paying 1s. 3d. a lb. for butter at the factories and were sending it here and selling it for 1s. 8d. per lb. They were entering into competition with us in order to retain a hold on our trade. I can appreciate the difficulties confronting our own people. The Eastern competition keeps down our prices and makes dairying much less attractive and much more difficult to carry on. I have no desire to see the standard of living altered, but I want to see the conditions of the dairying industry improved in order to make it a little more attractive than it is at present. The only way to do that seems to be for our people to pay a little more for the product of the industry, and when they do that there will be less difficulty in getting settlers to go on the groups. I should like to see members get together and discuss what could be done to assist the groups. I believe the Minister for Lands visited the groups with a view to seeing how the conditions of the settlers can be improved. He is trying to make group settlement attractive, but the mere throwing of a couple of blocks into one and things of that kind will not alter the general situation. What we have to do is to show those settlers that we are prepared to give them a reasonable living allowance

in return for the service they are rendering the State. Our south-west country compares more than favourably with the land that is being developed in New South Wales. Of course, the older districts of that State were developed under entirely different conditions, and the standard of living at that time was not what it is to-day. Everyone in Western Australia is desirous of seeing the conditions of the industry improved. I hope the Minister for Lands will listen to what I am about to say. On my return from the Eastern States by the Trans train I noticed that as soon as we got to the Kalgoorlie-Perth section, fruit appeared on the dining-car menu. Many of the people who travel over the East-West line are Continental people travelling to Fremantle to embark for Europe or America. I hope the Minister does not think I am offering destructive criticism; I am trying to suggest something that will assist to advertise the State. My proposal is that we use portion of the Vote for agriculture to provide better fruit on that train. We could find out the average cost of fruit to the caterer—we cannot expect him to provide first-class fruit—and if the State paid the difference between the fruit he provides and the best export fruit, it would be a cheap advertisement.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The caterer on that train generally provides pretty good fruit.

Mr. Panton: Why not run the dining-cars ourselves, as is done in New South Wales?

Mr. LATHAM: I have no objection to that. I had been boasting about Western Australia producing the best apples in the world, and while the fruit provided was good and wholesome, it was not of export standard. It would be a good idea if the fruit supplied on the train were of export quality in order to show what the country can produce.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Perhaps the fruit came from the Eastern States.

Mr. LATHAM: I am sure the caterer is loyal enough to this State to serve local fruit.

The Minister for Railways: Usually the fruit supplied on that train is very good.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not complaining of the quality, but how much better advertisement it would be for the State if fruit of export standard were provided.

The Minister for Railways: It is the best fruit than can be bought in Kalgoorlie.

Mr. LATHAM: Then let the Government send up some good fruit and sell it again.

Hon. G. Taylor: Only good fruit is sent to Kalgoorlie. The fruit in the Kalgoorlie shops compares more than favourably with that in the Perth shops.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not complaining about the class of fruit.

The Minister for Railways: If the growers do not send it up to Kalgoorlie the caterer cannot get it there.

Mr. LATHAM: I suggest that the Agricultural Department through the agricultural vote should subsidise the caterer for the difference between the cost of the fruit he buys and the cost of the fruit of export standard. It is possible to buy the fruit in Kalgoorlie if it is sent up there. Apples must come out of cool store, and oranges could be sent up. I believe this would be a good advertisement for the State.

The Minister for Railways: Perhaps the export growers could make arrangements with the caterer to this end.

Mr. LATHAM: Probably the cool storage societies at Bridgetown and Mt. Barker would meet the Minister in the matter, because they too would gain a certain amount of benefit by the advertisement. We should not ask the caterer to provide the best, so long as that which he does provide is wholesome fruit.

The Minister for Railways: They have good fruit on the Victorian railways, but it is very expensive.

Mr. LATHAM: It is of good quality, but no better than ours. I asked some questions about the certificates issued by the Chief Inspector of Vermin. I cannot see that he has any right to fix the standard of vermin fence apart from that which is provided by the law. In his reply the Minister said that there was a certain section of the Act which gave the Chief Inspector this power. For the purpose of granting exemptions the only standard of fence which he can fix is that which is contained in the Act. If there are to be no exemptions, let us be honest about it and say so. Let the department advise the Minister to ask the House to strike out exemptions. I believe the House would agree to do so.

Mr. Lindsay: I would agree.

Mr. LATHAM: People should not be allowed to go on erecting fences along the boundary with an overhang of a foot over the road and with barbed wire on top. Unlike you, Mr. Speaker, I am not a legal gentleman, but I know that the person who erects a fence of that sort would be liable for any accidents which might happen as a result of it. It has been suggested that the farmers should be asked to erect their fences a foot inside. That would be as ridiculous as to have fences that are leaning over the road. The department has no right to insist that this class of fence should be put up. It has no right to frame regulations that cannot be carried out, or even to provide for a standard that cannot be complied with.

Hon. G. Taylor: The regulations must be within the four corners of the Act.

Mr. LATHAM: Of course. The authorities are going outside the Act. It seems to me that their object in doing so is to ensure that there shall be no exemptions. All we have to do is to ask the House to remove the exemption. I would support that. The regulations should not tell people they must do something they cannot do. It is not honest to the farmer, because he cannot put up that kind of fence.

Hon. H. Millington: This House placed the responsibility on the Chief Inspector.

Mr. LATHAM: The House fixed the standard for a vermin proof fence.

Hon. H. Millington: When?

Mr. LATHAM: You will find it in the second schedule of the Act.

Hon. H. Millington: The amendment you complain of is subsequent to that.

Mr. LATHAM: There was no amendment to the schedule of the Act.

Hon. H. Millington: Yes.

Mr. LATHAM: If the Inspector can say, "I am going to fix a standard that is different from the standard fixed by the law," he is exceeding his duty. The House knew what it was about when it fixed the standard of the two classes of fence, one to be vermin proof and the other to be rabbit proof. No inspector has any right to do anything except administer the Act. He cannot frame a standard of fence that it is impossible to carry out.

Hon. H. Millington: The responsibility was placed upon the Chief Inspector.

Mr. LATHAM: We fixed the standard.

Hon. H. Millington: You will have to test that.

Mr. LATHAM: The Act says the vermin proof fence shall be erected to the satisfaction of the Chief Inspector. That means that the Chief Inspector shall be satisfied that the conditions of the schedule have been complied with. Instead of that he has read something into the Act that is not there, and has even told the people they can extend their fence a foot out over the road with barbed wire on top of it. The law does not permit us to put on barbed wire.

Hon. H. Millington: The law says there is no need for barbed wire on top.

Mr. LATHAM: I have seen the standard drawing setting out these details. I will show the Minister a copy of it in his office. In the design that is sent out the barbed wire on top is shown. A fence cannot be hung over the road in that fashion.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If the standard of fence is impossible, the Minister should not allow it.

Mr. LATHAM: If it is desired that there should be no exemptions, let us be honest and say so.

Hon. H. Millington: Yes, if you fix the standard.

Mr. LATHAM: This is set out in the Act of 1925.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Bring forward an amendment.

Mr. LATHAM: The standard is that it shall be a rabbit proof fence three feet high.

Hon. H. Millington: The standard is provided so that if you build to that standard, you may get exemption from the tax. That is all. You have to satisfy the Chief Inspector before you can get exemption.

Mr. Lindsay: It is wrong to give the officers power to make laws unto themselves.

Hon. H. Millington: You have given them the power.

Mr. LATHAM: We have not done so. All that we expect of the Chief Inspector is that he shall carry out the Act. Provided the fence is of the standard set out in the schedule, we are entitled to exemption.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You should not allow the wrong to continue.

Mr. LATHAM: I wish to deal with the question of the payment for scalps. It should not be necessary to send these scalps to the city. When the Minister introduced his amending Bill on the 20th October, 1925, it is recorded in page 1,426 of "Hansard," of that year, that he said, "Payment will then be made to the Vermin Board on the

certificated statement of the Chairman and Secretary of such Board." It is now proposed to send these scalps to town. There are many places where the trains run only twice a week.

Mr. Heron: And where there is no train at all.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes. Evidently we cannot trust the Chairman and Secretary of a road board. The Minister said their certificate would be accepted. If we cannot trust them, let us appoint a police constable, or some other Government official on whom we can rely, and allow him to grant the certificates, provided he has seen the scalps.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What about a magistrate?

Mr. LATHAM: Magistrates are almost as scarce in our district as fowl's teeth.

Mr. Lindsay: You get one every month.

Hon. H. Millington: What about a Justice of the Peace?

Mr. LATHAM: The Chairman may be a Justice of the Peace. If he is not acceptable, do not let us mention any other kind of Justice of the Peace.

Mr. Heron: It is not necessary to send the scalps in.

Hon. H. Millington: There is a proviso stating that if the person nominated is satisfactory, his certificate can be accepted that the dogs have been destroyed.

Mr. LATHAM: I feel sure the Minister will remedy this anomaly.

Hon. H. Millington: We purposely put that in so that people might take advantage of it if they liked.

Mr. LATHAM: It is not fully understood. I hope the Minister will not insist upon the refund to the taxpayers who last year contributed to the local vermin rates. That is an impossible proposition. I suggest that all the money paid be refunded to the boards, and that it be placed to the credit of the fund. Let the road boards then reduce the rates next year accordingly, in cases where they like to avail themselves of the opportunity.

Mr. Heron: Let it be adjusted in that way.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes. The Minister will not allow the procedure to be optional.

Mr. Heron: It should be optional.

Mr. LATHAM: It is obligatory that the money should be refunded.

Hon. H. Millington: Or credited to the taxpayers.

Mr. LATHAM: That means a tremendous lot of detail work. Any board that wants to do that can credit their funds with the money and next year reduce the rates accordingly. In districts where big sums of money are paid out, they can be paid out of that fund.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It can be adjusted in that way.

Mr. LATHAM: There is a good deal of heartburning in the agricultural areas about the incidence of the tax.

Hon. H. Millington: There always is.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not always.

Mr. LATHAM: A letter from the York Agricultural Society has reached me to-day, containing the following resolution—"That in the opinion of this meeting the rate and incidence of the vermin tax is unfair to agricultural holders as compared with pastoral holders in view of the difference in the improved value of the land and the number of sheep carried by each." The man who is working agricultural land has to go very hard to make ends meet. If it is possible to put the tax on a better basis, the Minister should bring down an amendment to provide for that. I hope that if new legislation is to be introduced this session, a Bill will be brought down to authorise the appointment of a board to take over the utilities within the area. I believe that idea is favoured by the Government. I am only too anxious to help in the matter. The city is quite capable of controlling such utilities as water supplies, sewerage schemes, tramways and electricity. I do not see why we should burden the State by borrowing money for these purposes when the people in the metropolitan area can borrow their own money.

Mr. Marshall: The State would have to be responsible.

Mr. LATHAM: Not necessarily. The community would be responsible. At present all the people of the State are responsible. I hope a Bill will be brought down to provide for this. There is a good deal of motor transport competition in agricultural districts against the railways. I was much struck when I was in the Eastern States by the successful motor trains that I saw running there. I am sorry the Minister for Railways is out of the Chamber. The matter is worthy of investigation. In some of those States trains run on branch lines when required, once or twice a week, and they give quick passenger transport. I am hoping they will be provided in this State.

Mr. North: Motor coaches were tried here.

Mr. LATHAM: The motor coaches we had in the past proved a failure; but a good type is now running in New South Wales and South Australia, doing the work well. I know that in this State I once travelled 120 miles per motor coach, and that the trip took five hours. If we want the people to use the utilities provided by the State, we must find means for their doing so to the best advantage.

Mr. Kenneally: It was principally your people who objected to the motor coaches.

Mr. LATHAM: I am afraid the hon. member interjecting will extract some information from me. I was given to understand that the union objected to the motor coaches because the Commissioner of Railways insisted upon running each coach with one man. In New South Wales there are two men on a motor coach; one a guard, and one a driver. If that system were instituted here, there might not be so much objection to motor coaches.

Mr. Marshall: You might disclose to us the identity of the Consultative Council.

Mr. LATHAM: I do not know that the Consultative Council has anything to do with this question.

Mr. Marshall: Where do they get their election funds from?

Mr. LATHAM: We need not worry about how the Consultative Council get their funds so long as those funds are used effectively. That, really, is all we need worry about. For my part I can assure the House that very little money is provided by the Consultative Council, not nearly as much as the unions extract for election purposes from the workers.

Hon. G. Taylor: We do not get funds from the White City spinning jennies.

Mr. Marshall: You get it from more immoral places.

Mr. LATHAM: I trust the Minister will endeavour to get the people to use the railways by providing the best possible means of transport. Motor coaches are a success in other States, and can be run more cheaply than trains. The use of motor coaches obviates those long, monotonous and wearisome waits at sidings as a result of which our people are disinclined to use the railways. Motor coaches would do away with the pulling of heavy coaches, in place of which goods could be hauled. I suggest that motor coaches be put on the branch

lines and that better connections be established at the junctions. Let us profit by the experience of the Eastern States. Here the excuse for abandoning motor coaches was that the distances to be run were too long. In the East motor coaches are running long distances very successfully. If here it is a question of putting two men on a coach, I shall not object so long as the coaches pay their way. With regard to workers' homes, while all of us are continually preaching decentralisation, in practice there is as much centralisation as possible. Workers' homes are badly needed in the country districts.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Workers' homes are being built in the country.

Mr. LATHAM: Very few. Possibly Northam may be favoured in this respect; I hope it is. Since the Leader of the Opposition built the last lot of workers' homes at Bruce Rock in anticipation of occupiers—an action for which I commend him—not a house has been built there.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It takes an application six months to get through the Workers' Homes Board.

Mr. LATHAM: I hope some money will be made available for the purpose of erecting homes in the country. One cannot expect a married man to be contented if his wife is living in the metropolitan area while he is working in one of the country districts. Assistance can be rendered by providing country homes at the cheap rate at which the Government of this State do provide them. That is much more important than providing homes in the cities and towns. People established in their own homes in the country get to like rural life, and their children are much healthier and do not acquire city vices. I repeat, I hope the Government will make available a fairly large sum of money for the purpose of building workers' homes in country districts. Not too many homes are being built anywhere. The trouble to-day seems to be a difficulty in getting people to invest money in that kind of security. Who suffers from that?

Member: The capitalist.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not wanting to build houses for men who are able to obtain them for themselves. The legislation on the subject is excellent, and all that is needed is to make funds available. Let us have the amount of the surplus for a start.

Mr. Panton: That is already gone.

Mr. LATHAM: I assure the Government that I would welcome the expenditure of £10,000 or £15,000 on workers' homes in my district, and I venture to say that within three months of the houses being erected not one will be empty.

Mr. Marshall: You have ceased to be a doubting Thomas.

Mr. LATHAM: If the surplus came along, I would cease to doubt.

Mr. Clydesdale: But your conscience would not allow you to use any of it.

Mr. LATHAM: A certain amount of legislation is to be introduced, and I hope it will include a Redistribution of Seats Bill. Though it is no use being too sanguine about that sort of legislation, the time is ripe for redistribution.

Mr. Marshall: The time is ripe for amending the Legislative Council franchise.

Mr. LATHAM: A great many Labour supporters are eligible to be placed on the Legislative Council roll, but do not trouble to get on it. What we need is a better distribution of Assembly votes.

Mr. Marshall: You are consistent only in your inconsistency.

Mr. LATHAM: Such discrepancies as that between Menzies and Canning, whose representatives sit side by side, absolutely overshadow anything relative to the Legislative Council franchise. I trust, too, that in all future elections polling day for the North-West seats will be the same as polling day for the rest of the State.

The Minister for Mines: Only on one occasion has polling day for the North-West seats not been fixed later.

Mr. LATHAM: There have been occasions when polling day was the same throughout the State.

The Minister for Mines: Only once.

Mr. LATHAM: Now that a new method of getting scrutineers to the polling places is available, all the elections should be held on the same day. In the handbook prepared by the Clerk Assistant, Mr. Steere, I noticed a setting-out of election days, and I believe that on more than one occasion the North-West elections were held on the same day as the southern elections. Anyhow, I hope we shall not have too much legislation this session. Incidentally, I shall not repeat the effort of the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) as regards North-West elections. There is hardly need for much new legislation this

session, the first session of a new Parliament.

Mr. Sampson: What about redistribution?

Mr. LATHAM: If a redistribution Bill is to come down, naturally the measure may be expected in the third session. I suggest that the time of the House may well be utilised in revising some of the legislation already on the statute-book, leaving aside that restrictive kind of legislation of which we already have too much, legislation for regulation by boards and so forth. Let us give the people an untrammelled run. I trust that when the next session opens we shall be able to congratulate ourselves on a wheat yield increased still further. In that respect I suggest that this year we shall have an advantage over the Eastern States. Not that we shall always have an advantage, but I think this year the season here will be much more favourable than the season in the East. Certainly we are at present exporting more wheat than the Eastern States. With assistance rendered by the State to the settlers in the way of wire netting and water supply, we shall also have a huge increase in the number of sheep running now. A tremendous lot of work is ahead of Ministers. Let them, instead of worrying about new Bills, utilise the legislation already existing for the development and peopling of this State.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [9.25]: Initially I desire to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, upon your re-election to the position you have already occupied for three years with a singular dignity and with justice to all members. Having sat for 16 years with Mr. Angwin in this Parliament, I miss his familiar and diligent figure in the Chamber. I congratulate the Minister for Public Health, who certainly has done most excellent service in the country districts in regard to hospitals, upon his promotion; and I also congratulate Mr. Millington on attaining Ministerial rank. I feel sure that both gentlemen, so far as their policy permits, will continue to do excellent work for the State. I listened with great interest to the extensive policy speech put forward last night by the Leader of the Country Party.

Mr. Panton: What did you call it?

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON: The speech was most unselfish, and most generous to the Government in pointing out what they should do regarding the various problems affecting

the agricultural and pastoral industries and the primary industries generally, as well as the problem of group settlement. If the Government do not do the right thing, certainly it will not be the fault of the Leader of the Country Party, whose advice relative to matters affecting the country has always been and is at the disposal of Ministers. So far as Ministers conform—and in some directions they have already conformed—to what the Leader of the Country Party put forward six months ago, as well as yesterday, they will do right and obtain support from this quarter. When listening to that policy speech, and observing the grip which the Leader of the Country Party has of public affairs, my one regret was that for 2½ years this State will be denied the opportunity of giving him a considerable say in the government of the country, as no doubt he will have when the next general election has come round. The people generally can be well pleased at the improved condition of the finances. True, there are differences of opinion as to whether we have a surplus of £28,000 this year or not; but when I remember the appalling deficits of a few years ago I am glad indeed that the work done in the meantime by the man on the land in developing Western Australia, combined with the generous assistance received by us from the Bruce-Page Government in so many directions, has put the finances of the country on so satisfactory a footing that the question at issue is whether or not we have a surplus. For 15 years we have had one succession of deficits, and I am indeed glad that that condition of affairs has ceased. In my opinion, we are entitled to know from the Auditor General whether the State has a surplus or not; but even if that surplus is not there—the Premier and the Treasury officials claim it is—if it should happen, on the other hand, that the members for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) and West Perth (Mr. Davy) are correct, at any rate we are in the highly satisfactory position of having practically squared the ledger last year. We are entitled to know from the Auditor General, who is the watchdog for Parliament, what his opinion is on this question. At any rate we can congratulate ourselves upon the fact that we have come nearer to squaring the ledger than ever before during the past 15 years. That is very satisfactory to most people in this State because,



generally speaking, when a surplus is announced we look forward to a reduction in taxation. On the other hand, when we have huge deficits following year after year we know that, in a proper system of government, it must be followed up by increased taxation or decreased expenditure in an endeavour to balance the ledger.

Hon. H. Millington: This time you get decreased taxation and a surplus as well.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But you have increased taxation.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, there was heavily increased land taxation although, of course, there was decreased taxation in another direction. I wish to refer to the great assistance the Bruce-Page Government have rendered to Western Australia, thus helping to bring about our present satisfactory financial results. At the end of the last financial year—the money was not included in the returns for that period—we received from the Federal Government the disabilities grant of £450,000 for that year, followed up by a similar grant of £300,000 for this year.

The Minister for Mines: It was £200,000, not £300,000.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We are entitled to every penny of it.

Mr. Clydesdale: How much have we contributed to the cost of their services?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Ever since we have been in the Federation we have paid through the nose for the services rendered, and we have suffered serious disabilities throughout the State. The Bruce-Page Government are the first Federal Government to come to the assistance of the State, thus demonstrating their recognition of the fact that our small population of 380,000 must find the task beyond their strength in facing the development of over one-third of the continent of Australia.

The Minister for Railways: The Federal Government do not know what to do with the money they are getting through their over-taxation.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Quite so, but they have given this Government the opportunity—I wish to give the State Government the credit for doing so—of reducing income taxation by one-third. Although relieved of the burden of taxation to that extent, we in Western Australia are still as high as the highest taxed of the States of the Commonwealth. We

are still very heavily taxed and, while giving the State Government credit for reducing income taxation, it was the Bruce-Page Government who enabled them to do so.

Mr. Panton: The other States have heavy deficits, too.

Hon. H. Millington: And we are heavily taxed by the Federal Government.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is so.

Hon. H. Millington: Particularly the primary industries too.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, almost to an extent we cannot bear any longer. When endeavours are made in the Federal Parliament to bring about a decrease in the burden of the tariff, our Country Party member are always defeated because—

Mr. Panton: They are represented in the Government.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No, because Labour members are always there to vote for tariff increases.

Mr. Panton: Nonsense. Did not Page vote for the increases?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Look at the attitude adopted by Mr. Theodore who said that if 60 per cent. was not high enough, the Federal Parliament should impose a tariff of 100 per cent. and thus prevent goods from being imported.

Mr. Panton: Tell us what Dr. Page did.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I know what Dr. Page has achieved in the councils of the Federal Cabinet. I know that he is pledged to tariff reduction. The only difficulty is that the primary producers of the Commonwealth have sent out 12 supporters to help him in the Federal arena. Thus we have 13 members pledged to tariff reduction in a House of 75! If Dr. Page could get the necessary members in his own party, or if he could get support from the ranks of other sections of the House as well, he would quickly bring about the reduction in the tariff to which we are all pledged. No one is more anxious—and no one knows it better than the member for Menzies (Mr. Panton)—than Dr. Page to secure tariff reduction, but, as the hon. member knows, a Minister cannot always get everything he wants. The tariff is a non-party question except with the Country Party. We represent the only section in Federal politics pledged to tariff reduction, but 13 members out of a total of 75 have not been able to get their way because, with two exceptions, the Labour Party

are high tariffists and some are even prohibitionists, so far as imports are concerned. I mean that they oppose imported goods coming into Australia at all. Of course there are two outstanding exceptions in the Labour Party and one of them comes from Western Australia. I give the member for Kalgoorlie in the Federal Parliament credit for his consistency in that direction. Seeing that the strength of the Federal Labour Party is largely drawn from the industrial population in the protected industries of the big cities in the Eastern States, we cannot expect to secure the results we hope for from that quarter. I wish the people in the agricultural districts of the other States would give the same generous support to the Country Party in Federal politics as do the electors in the agricultural districts in Western Australia, where the two country seats are represented by two Country Party members. As soon as Dr. Page has at his disposal the necessary numbers, we shall have a sane and proper tariff reduction put through the Federal Parliament.

Mr. Clydesdale: That will not be in your time.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Recently I was privileged, in conjunction with the Leader of the Country Party (Mr. Thomson) to visit Canberra. I believe it will prove to be good for the Commonwealth that the National Parliament has been removed from under the shadow of Melbourne factories, where industrialists and manufacturers worked to influence as far as possible the various Federal members, for higher duties. With the removal of our national institution to the garden city of Canberra, where members will labour amidst rural surroundings, we should secure far better results. We are all influenced by environment and, in those circumstances, a better national point of view upon Federal affairs should be obtained in that delightful country. A broader outlook should be developed there than was possible when the Federal Parliament was located in Melbourne. There it was more a Melbourne, or a Victorian Parliament than a National Parliament.

Mr. Panton: I do not think distance will have anything to do with it.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Another direction in which the State Government have received assistance from the Bruce-Page Government has been through the migration loan. It is something to be proud of that we live in a period when both the Imperial and Federal

Governments come to the assistance of a State like Western Australia, at any rate for a few years, by each paying one-third of the interest on loans necessary for the development of this great empty, but one day to be much-populated, State. We have the land, and it is the proper sphere of the Imperial and Federal Governments to render the assistance I have indicated. It is only right that the Imperial Government should assist by sending out their surplus population to help us fill our empty spaces. Some 15 or 16 years ago Mr. Moss, then Mayor of Narrogin, spoke upon the task that Western Australia had to undertake. He was the first man I ever heard predicting the time when both the Imperial and Federal Governments would help in the task of developing the State. At that time he referred to the transfer of the surplus population of the Old Country to our empty spaces. To-day what he predicted is being undertaken and we have to thank the Bruce-Page Government for help in that direction.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But Mr. Hughes was the man who helped us first.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: At any rate, the work is in progress now and we are seeing some results. In addition to that we have had the benefit of the road grant. Dr. Page brought that idea from the United States as a result of his visit there. To-day we find that the Federal Government have made available £378,000 a year for a period of 10 years as a contribution towards making our main and developmental roads throughout the State. The grants under that heading are being distributed to the States under conditions varying from the old basis of population. Some people complain about the loss of the per capita grant. I am sorry that we are no longer in receipt of that assistance. On the other hand, the Bruce-Page Government introduced for the first time the principle of distributing assistance to the States on the basis of area and necessities, not merely on that of population. In these directions the Bruce-Page Government have rendered assistance that has been of benefit to the State. In fact the Bruce-Page Government have been in the position of the Fairy Godmother to the Western Australian Labour Government.

Mr. Panton: They knew they had a Government here whom they could trust with the money.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They are a long way from here! They don't know you!

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: At any rate they helped us to accomplish the satisfactory position we find ourselves in to-day.

Hon. H. Millington: They are guilty of wholesale robbery and we are receiving some restitution.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I do not agree with that. So far as the robbery refers to tariff burdens, I object just as much as the Honorary Minister. I belong to a party that objects unanimously in the Federal Parliament to the tariff burdens, and that party is pledged to tariff reduction.

Hon. H. Millington: But your party supported increased tariff impositions.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: They endeavoured to deal with the tariff, but their actions were nullified by—

Mr. Pantou: Dr. Page.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No, by the solid band of industrialists in the Labour Party that, with two exceptions, fought to build up the tariff wall to prevent the primary producers of Australia from securing cheap machinery and other requirements necessary for their industry, unless those requirements were obtained from the factories in the Eastern States.

The Minister for Railways: Yet they keep in power a Federal Government who increase those tariff charges.

Hon. H. Millington: That takes a lot of explaining.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I believe that the Federal Country Party is now in a better position to deal with the problem. The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) and myself, with other delegates, had the privilege of visiting Sydney a few weeks ago and taking our share in the say regarding the policy of the Australian Country Party for the next three years. So long as they participate in the administration of the Federal Government, State Ministers here can rest assured that the same measure of assistance to this State will continue, although it may not be nearly as much as we deserve. I have already referred to the relief obtained in reduced income taxation through the assistance rendered to the Government by the Federal disabilities grant. I regret exceedingly that while many taxpayers have benefited considerably in that direction, the burden on the man on the land has been built up by the Government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: About 9,000 people have to bear the bulk of the burden.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The land tax has been doubled.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Only because of revaluation of your land.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No, the rate of land tax was increased by the Labour Government until it was little more than doubled.

Mr. Marshall: You were successful with your amendments.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We were not. We fought hard against the proposed increase in the land tax.

Mr. Clydesdale: And you always will.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We fought to retain for the small land owner the exemption of £250 on rural land that had been enjoyed by them ever since that form of taxation was introduced in this State. I cannot understand why the Labour Government, who at one time obtained assistance from the small man in the country areas, should have taken away that exemption.

Mr. Clydesdale: Would you be satisfied if you were exempt from all taxation?

Mr. Marshall: No.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We hope to restore to the small landowners the exemptions that they formerly enjoyed. Then in the past the landowners properly cultivating his land paid only one tax, either the land tax or the income tax, whichever was the greater. Most of that exemption was taken away.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The whole of it.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No, the Council restored half of it. At any rate, I think the complete amount should be restored, and I hope that when the taxation measures are brought forward this year the Government will restore those exemptions and reduce the tax to the old rate.

Hon. H. Millington: Reduction of the tariff—that is your long suit.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, we are very anxious about it. Although a Federal matter, so important do the Country Party regard it that our members in the State and Federal Parliaments are pledged to the abolition of the present high tariff and the adoption of a tariff for revenue purposes. Mr. Pickering, when a member of this House, regarded it of such importance that, on two occasions, he tabled a motion asking that the House make representations to the Federal Parliament in the matter.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is your leader doing in the Federal Parliament, beyond increasing taxation?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: He is doing just as much as any man could do with only thirteen supporters in the House. I wish to refer to the new vermin tax. It is ridiculous to have two authorities collecting two separate vermin taxes. The landowner has to meet increased land taxation, heavy local rates, the vermin rate imposed by the local authority, and now this new one imposed by the Government.

Hon. H. Millington: At your own request.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No. We think the incidence of the tax unjust. We did not ask for that. Practically half the sheep in the State are in the pastoral areas, while the other half are in the farming areas; yet, contrary to our wishes, the tax has been levied on a basis requiring three-quarters from the farmer and only one-quarter from the pastoralist. That is not fair. The Government would be well advised to comply with the request that, as a formal question, I have already made to them to reduce the taxation on the men on the land. One vermin tax by one authority ought to be quite sufficient. Duplicate taxes are certainly very harassing to the man on the land.

Hon. H. Millington: This tax was distinctly asked for by your people.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: But its incidence is wrong. Moreover, the tax is too heavy on the agriculturist. I wish to say a few words on railway construction. The Government are constructing about 50 miles of railway per annum. I think that rate is too slow.

Mr. Clydesdale: Have you any complaints about the carrying out of railway work by day labour?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The rate is altogether too slow. We have plenty of migration money now. In all thirty-four millions of it are coming to Australia. I know that the Government are making representations to the Migration Committee, and I say this is the time when railway construction might well be expedited. Let us get along with it quickly and build the authorised railways and the line recommended by the Railway Advisory Board.

Hon. H. Millington: How many more do you want?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We have different reports as to the area of wheat lands still available. The Lands Department say there are 12,000,000 acres waiting to be opened

up, whilst other official sources estimate the area at 25,000,000 acres. The classification of that land, the surveying and the putting in of water supplies, roads and railways should be proceeded with as quickly as possible. Migrants have been coming here, and have made a fair start on the group settlements. We know that if we put migrants out on the wheat lands they must succeed, as they have done in the past. I urge the Government to proceed with railway construction and open up these vast areas of good land. Last session the Government had a Bill drawn up for introduction in to this Chamber. That Bill contemplated the construction of a line from Lake Grace through East Jilikin to Kalgarin, a distance of about 56 miles. Just when the Bill was to be introduced a report was put in by Mr. Stileman, the Engineer-in-Chief, suggesting a different route. The Railway Advisory Board, I think, are the proper tribunal to fix railway routes in this State. At any rate the Surveyor-General, as chairman, and other members of the board have intimate knowledge of the value of our lands, and never make a report without a most careful classification by surveyors and a personal examination of the routes. I regret that the route of that line was not recommended from a point near Dudinin on the Yillimining-Kondinin line. However, that was not done. The Government should take that report of the advisory board into immediate consideration and bring in a Bill for the authorisation of that railway from Lake Grace through East Jilikin to Kalgarin. There is a very large settlement at Walyurin and East Jilikin and right through to Kalgarin. I know of no other district where more wheat is produced or where there is a larger number of men with big wheatfields and no railway communication. This line has been recommended by the Railway Advisory Board, and a petition has been sent in by the Walyurin settlers asking that it might be made to serve them at the same time. I hope this will be done and that the line will be constructed as quickly as possible.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is wrong with Mr. Stileman's report?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It looks well on paper, but it involves an enormous expenditure.

Hon. G. Taylor: It plans for the future.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The advisory board's report is also part of a comprehen-

sive scheme. The board point out that they intend the line to be extended ultimately from Kalgarin right down through Pingrup and on to Albany. So in each case the line recommended is part of a comprehensive scheme. I feel sure the large production of wheat and wool in that part of the State will justify both lines being constructed as time goes on. But nobody suggests that at present we are in a position to build railways for people who have already one railway, just for the purpose of saving them freight by a shorter route to the port of export. All we can do at present is to build railways to serve those people with no railway at all. The advisory board have recommended the Lake Grace-East Jilikin-Kalgarin line, and I stand behind the board in their recommendation, as I have done ever since I have been in Parliament, believing that they are the proper tribunal for the selection of routes of agricultural railways.

Mr. Mann: What is the difference in the length of haulage to Albany as against Fremantle?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: As you get south the people are nearer to Albany, but as you come north they are closer to Fremantle. I do not think the claims of the rival ports, Fremantle and Albany, should come into it. Each of those ports is entitled to its natural trade. At this juncture the important thing is to see that those people growing large quantities of produce are given a railway to take their produce to a port and open up their district.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is what we have been doing all along. Hence the position we are in now.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In 1915 the Labour Government prepared a Bill for the survey of a railway from Armadale to Dwarda. On the occasion of the opening of the Narrogin-Dwarda line, the Minister for Works, Mr. McCallum, who has been a good friend to the people of the district in that respect, said the survey would be carried out. When Armadale is connected with Dwarda by rail the distance between Narrogin and Fremantle by rail will be 117 miles, as compared with 174 miles by the circuitous route via Spencer's Brook and York. Visualise what a saving 57 miles of freight would mean to the whole of the people east and south of Narrogin!

Mr. Mann: How are the grades?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Very good indeed. That line from Armadale to Dwarda

will in part comprise the first section of the Stileman scheme. So I look to the day when the Stileman scheme will be carried into effect. I hope that will be consummated within a few years after the building of the Lake Grace-Jilakin-Kalgarin line and the Armadale-Dwarda lines connecting Narrogin with Armadale. Now, I wish to say a few words about redistribution of seats. I hope the Government at the earliest possible date, certainly before we again go to the people, will introduce a redistribution of seats Bill. I am not one of those who advocate a redistribution of seats on a population basis. On the contrary, I hold that a redistribution should be carried out with due regard to the importance of country interests and the interests of those primary producers who produce 95 per cent. of our export wealth. The distance of a constituency from the seat of government should also be taken into consideration, for the people outback have only their local members to advocate their wants and they are here only half their time, while the people of the metropolitan area are always well looked after. The member for Menzies quoted figures relating to the population in various electorates. I wish to point out some glaring instance of constituencies with small populations. We have Cue with 555 electors, Leonora with 685, Hannans with 659, Mt. Margaret with 488, Coolgardie with 949, and Menzies with 265, or a total of 3,601 electors for six seats; whilst my own constituency of Williams-Narrogin has 4,817 electors and most of the agricultural electorates have from 4,000 to 5,000 electors.

Hon. G. Taylor: Look at the quality of them.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I do not think anyone, particularly those who advocate democratic government, can believe in a continuation of that condition of affairs, especially when we recollect that the member for Canning represents 17,347 electors and the member for Leederville 11,901 electors. In the whole of the Commonwealth I do not think there ever existed such glaring inconsistencies with regard to the number of electors in the different constituencies.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Do you suggest more metropolitan representation?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I suggest more agricultural representation.

Mr. Clydesdale: What about more metropolitan representation?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I think it is a pity that the last Redistribution of Seats Bill was not carried. That would have given more representation on a fairly equitable basis both to the agricultural districts and to the metropolitan area.

Mr. Withers: No other portions but those two would be considered?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The whole State should be considered. There are a number of factors to be taken into consideration, and I hope the Government will introduce an equitable measure before the next election. It would be too much to hope for it to be introduced at once, human nature being what it is. Before the next election I hope an equitable redistribution will be introduced with due consideration for country constituencies and distance from the seat of government. I hope the Premier will provide more capital for workers' homes. In the country districts there is a demand for workers' homes, and the workers should be encouraged to go away from Perth and make a permanent residence in the country.

Hon. H. Millington: Last year money was provided for that purpose.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, the Premier provided £50,000, which was quite a proper thing to do, and I give him credit for it. All I hope is that he will find more capital and that the building of workers' homes will be continued.

Hon. H. Millington: The amount is £50,000 per annum.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I urge that more capital should be provided, so that the board may be able to push on with the business of building houses whenever it receives applications for them in the country. The Government should introduce a Bill to give these unfortunate people, whose workers' homes are built on leasehold, the right to convert their leaseholds into freeholds if they so desire.

The Minister for Railways: Unfortunate! Thousands of people would change places with them if they could.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In my constituency there are a number of leasehold workers' homes, and every owner of a leasehold in Narrogin has signed a petition asking for the right to convert into freehold.

The Minister for Railways: And if they got out, their places would be filled up immediately.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The trouble is that some of the owners are railway men, and their occupation often necessitates their transfer to another part of the country. When they are transferred, there is a sort of golden casket, and the board have a lottery for the holding.

The Minister for Railways: That shows how anxious people are to take such homes.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Naturally, because they were built at pre-war values, and the owners have improved them and made gardens. The owners have to sell to the board at pre-war values, and when the board re-lease them they cannot charge more than £550 for them. There is a good deal of heart-burning amongst the people who have leaseholds. They desire the right—

The Minister for Railways: To make a profit.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No, to make the homes their own. Despite the wishes of members opposite, if the holders of leaseholds had the right to convert to freehold—

Hon. G. Taylor: They would do it like a shot.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That it so. Since they desire the privilege and to exercise it would not be compulsory, the Government would be wise to grant it. By doing so no sacrifice of principle would be involved, since the holders of all other leasehold town lots had been permitted under an amendment of the Land Act, to convert to freehold. The financial agreement is shortly to be placed before us for discussion. I am sorry that a copy of it has not yet been laid on the Table. The purport of the agreement has been published in the Press, and I take it that that statement of its conditions is fairly accurate. All I can say is that if we adopt the agreement, we in this State shall eventually be worse off. For the first few years it appears that we shall be £400,000 better off than we have been, but as the population of Western Australia increases, we shall receive no increase.

*[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]*

Mr. Marshall: As our population increases the Federal Government will reap the benefit.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Though the Eastern States at present have large populations, the time may come when the popu-

lation of Western Australia will be as great as that of Victoria, and if that day arrives the payments to the two States will be based on the population figures of to-day. I do not think that is an equitable arrangement. The agreement will need very careful consideration when it is brought down for ratification. We shall have to be very careful and I sound a note of warning that we should not sell our birthright for a mess of pottage.

The Minister for Railways: You are speaking against Earle Page now, a country party representative.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It is unfortunate that the Federal Constitution did not provide for the continuance of the per capita payments to the States. The per capita payments were limited to a period of ten years, or until otherwise decided by the Federal Parliament.

Hon. G. Taylor: What about the surplus revenue?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Premier attended the conference and I understand he approved of the agreement. When the agreement is placed before us it will need careful investigation.

The Minister for Railways: Unfortunately we have no choice in the matter.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Let me now refer to the local requirements of the town of Narrogin, particularly in the matter of public buildings. It is true that successive Governments and the Labour Government particularly, in pursuance of a vigorous policy of railway construction, have built railway lines radiating from Narrogin in all directions on routes recommended by the Advisory Board, and Narrogin has become a very important inland town. It has become a big administrative centre also, and most of the Government departments have district offices in the town. Narrogin is in the way of becoming a garden city. It is prettily laid out, and private enterprise has erected fine structures of brick in keeping with the importance of the town. When we come to the Government offices, however, and in this I am not complaining of the present Government in particular, we find practically all the departments housed in second-hand rookeries or rat traps. There is hardly a Government department occupying offices that were built for the purpose for which they are at present used.

Mr. Withers: Bunbury is in the same position.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Lands Office is located in the schoolmaster's old residence that was condemned as such about 20 years ago. It is a dark, ill-ventilated building that the local authorities suggest might be handed over to them for a morgue when a new Lands Office is built.

Mr. Marshall: Were not you in that office before you entered Parliament?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No, it was another building. The building used for the Agricultural Bank was formerly a school. It was condemned for school purposes and was then used as a courthouse and, having proved unsuitable for that purpose, is now used for the Agricultural Bank. The present courthouse was originally the agricultural hall, and as such it was used for years. It is situated on the most valuable central site in the town.

The Minister for Railways: How much would we get for that block if we sold it?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It is worth £40 a foot and perhaps more. The town is bisected by the railway. The Railway Department closed the main crossing that gave access from one side of the town to the other. I understand the department had no legal authority to do that. The time has arrived when an overhead vehicular bridge should be built to connect the two sides of that large town. The Railway offices are of wood and iron, and we desire that up-to-date offices be provided. The district police inspector's office is a little old cottage that at one time was used as quarters for the police and is entirely unsuitable for the present purpose. The Government should exhibit a little of the vision that Lord Forrest displayed years ago when the mining industry began to expand and when he built those fine Government offices in Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie. Although Coolgardie has gone down, the offices were certainly justified in both instances during the life of the gold-fields. The agricultural districts are established; their wealth is permanent, and the time has arrived, not only in Narrogin, but in the big inland towns and outports of the State, when the Government should face the task of building modern blocks of offices in consonance with what has been done by private people in the same towns. Narrogin has no railway institute. Year after year

the Commissioner of Railways writes recommending that railway institutes be built at Narrogin and Merredin. I take this opportunity to remind the Minister for Railways of the necessity for those institutes, because I know he is anxious to provide such facilities. The Governor's Speech forecasts the introduction of a good deal of legislation. Some of it I hope to be able to support. If it is introduced in a moderate and wise form it will receive the support of the Country Party. I hope the present Parliament will do excellent work for Western Australia, and I am sure that with the assistance of the Upper House—in these days we rely a good deal upon it—combined with the collective wisdom of this Chamber, this Parliament will do excellent work for the State. I am satisfied that the Ministers as administrators will continue to do good work, and I take the opportunity to thank them for courtesy and fairness with which requests from members of entirely different politics are always met by them.

**MR. J. MacCallum SMITH (North Perth)** [10.14]: I desire to preface my remarks by congratulating the Speaker on again having been appointed to preside over this Chamber. I am sorry he is not in the Chair at present, and I hope the Deputy Speaker will convey to him my congratulations upon having had that high honour bestowed upon him once more. His unanimous re-election is a wonderful testimony to the tact he displayed in presiding over the deliberations of the House, during the term of the previous Parliament. The item in the Speech that has received most attention is the mysterious surplus mentioned by the Treasurer. I am not going to criticise it, or go into figures, or endeavour to prove that it is non-existent. I know that Treasurers, like any other person, can juggle figures and make them prove almost anything. The only judgment at which I can arrive from the statements contained in the Speech is that probably our finances are becoming easier, and that most likely we are drawing nearer to balancing the ledger than has been the case for many years. I am safe in saying that, since I can remember, has it ever been possible to rely on the statement of any Treasurer regarding the finances of the State.

**Mr. Marshall:** Do you apply that to every Treasurer we have ever had?

**Mr. MacCallum SMITH:** Yes. Every Treasurer can juggle the figures and make his surplus look as rosy as possible. We should not take too much notice of figures that are placed before the House when dealing with surpluses. A surplus is a most elusive thing. If the House desires a true statement of accounts it should insist upon Treasurers producing an auditor's certificate before making an announcement. We have heard a great deal about group settlements. Members are fully aware of the seriousness of the position. A very large sum of money is involved, and no doubt this country is facing tremendous losses. We realise it is almost impossible to settle the South-West except by some system of group settlement, a system that will cost the country much money. It has been more or less an experiment, but unfortunately a very costly one. I trust the Minister for Lands, as he has promised, will take the matter in hand and put the scheme upon a proper basis. Looking back I should say it is a great pity that the greater proportion of the 4½ millions sunk in group settlement was not spent in opening up the immense area of agricultural land lying to the east of Lake Grace. Most of the country could have been cleared with that sum, and to-day we should have had a huge area of land producing wealth and bringing grist to the Government mill. In his endeavour to place the group settlement scheme on a proper basis, the Minister for Lands may be sure of my support, and I think the support of other members on this side of the House. I am somewhat in the dark regarding the financial arrangements referred to in the Speech. I ask the House to be careful before bartering away any rights the State may have. For many years we have seen the Federal Government gradually clipping our privileges and rights. For some reason our Governments have not stood up for the rights of the State. I hope when the financial agreement is brought down it will receive the careful attention of all members. Once we part with our rights we part with them forever.

**Hon. G. Taylor:** We parted with many of them when we joined up with them.

**Mr. MacCallum SMITH:** We are supposed to be a sovereign State, but that is only an empty name. There is one matter which does not appear to be mentioned in the Speech, although there may be some hidden reference to it in the proposed



amendment to the Constitution Act. I refer to the redistribution of seats. The existing position is a glaring scandal. It has been talked of from all angles. We have boroughs with fewer votes than some of the old pocket boroughs in England during the last century. That is a disgraceful stigma upon our Government and I hope some reference to it will be contained in the amendment to the Constitution Act, so that we may later on have a proper redistribution of seats. I do not care on what basis it is, so long as it is reasonable and well thought out. The present anomalies are almost indescribable. This is supposed to be a democratic country. If we want a free Government there must be proper representation by the people.

Mr. Marshall: Why worry about the representation in this House when you will not give the people a vote for the Upper House?

*[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]*

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: If we had proper representation in this House, we would have proper elections.

Mr. Marshall: If we had proper elections, a lot of you fellows would be—I don't know where.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: My friend is rather excited to-night. Perhaps he is sore that I forestalled him in addressing the House. If this House were properly constituted, most likely amendments would be passed relative to the Upper House.

Mr. Kenneally: Let us test their sincerity by giving them the opportunity to effect this.

Mr. Marshall: There are 136,488 electors without any vote for the other House.

Hon. G. Taylor: Let us clean up things in our own House.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: Let me take the Canning electorate, which has over 17,000 names on the roll.

Mr. Clydesdale: And good ones, too.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: They have no more say in the government of the country than the 250 electors of the Menzies district.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Why should they have?

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: The hon. member poses as a democrat, but he now wants to get down to autocracy, to have one man

running the country and no one else to have any say in its government.

Mr. Heron: And you want them all to be in the metropolitan area.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: He would have three or four members returned by a few hundred people, and give them the same right as others who represent as many thousands of people.

Mr. Sleeman: One vote, one value.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: Even some members opposite realise that the time has arrived for a proper redistribution of seats.

Mr. Withers: I agree with you in that.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: I hope the Government will bring it about.

Mr. Marshall: Why did not the Government you supported do that?

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: The Leader of the House promised to submit a Redistribution of Seats Bill, but unfortunately he has a short memory. I would suggest that the life of Parliaments should be extended from three years to five years. The present life is too short.

Mr. Latham: You do not refer to this Parliament?

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you want this Parliament to go on for five years?

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: If I said yes, I might be told I had a personal interest in the matter. The life of Parliament should be five years. Three years is absurdly short and seven would be too long. No sooner is the Government in the saddle than it has to prepare for another election, to the disadvantage of the country. On the eve of the recent election we heard a lot about roll-stuffing. I do not know whether such a thing occurred, for no particular instance was brought under my notice, but I do know that many reputable people said it had occurred. The Leader of the Opposition made statements daily in the Press, and other people backed him up. We have had no definite denial from members on the other side of the House.

Mr. Withers: What about the Premier's statement?

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: For the good name of the State, we should inquire into these things. If members opposite are confident there is nothing in them they should court an inquiry.

Mr. Marshall: You move the necessary motion and I will support it.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: I am pledged to move a motion to inquire into roll-stuffing. Let us clear up the matter. I am jealous for the fair name of Western Australia. I am not anxious to have it proved that roll-stuffing has been indulged in. I do not desire to see the names of my opponents tarnished by evidence proving that this has been going on. I would rather have a verdict that there was nothing in the statement. I hope that for the fair name of Western Australia the Government will appoint a Royal Commission without delay and have the matter thrashed out. A question that is of the utmost importance to my district, namely, water supply, seems to have received no attention in the Governor's Speech. I can only imagine that the Government were too ashamed to mention it. I refer to the filthy water supplied to the northern suburbs, and also to others.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is bad in some parts of Leederville.

Mr. Chesson: It is like the curate's egg, good in parts.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: It is disgraceful that the water supplied to people in some parts of Perth should be such as it is. Last week I questioned the Minister controlling water supply as to how long it would be before the people might expect to receive a decent supply of water. I worded my question something like this: "Was the Minister aware that the water supplied to the northern suburbs was still filthy and unfit for domestic use?" The Minister's reply, strange to say, was that the Water Supply Department were not aware that the water supplied to the northern suburbs had at any time been filthy and unfit for domestic use. What is the use of a Minister putting that over the House? Every member of this Chamber knows perfectly well that the water supplied at certain periods has been absolutely unfit for domestic use. The Minister himself knows it, and knew it when replying, because only on the previous day a deputation, introduced by another member of this House, had waited on him in that connection, and the Minister had replied that not only at Subiaco was there cause for complaint, and that Mr. Richardson was not the only member of Parliament with cause for complaint. The Minister added that many people knew that washing

day had sometimes to be postponed owing to the bad colour of the water. Yet two days later he told me that the department were not aware the water had ever been filthy. Why should the House be treated with contempt? Why should the Minister allow the department to deliver such an answer to hon. members? This matter is most serious to a large number of people: yet when I ask a simple question I am told that the department are not aware that bad water has ever been supplied to the suburbs. I ask hon. members—and a good many of them, I believe, live in my electorate—whether they can honestly say that the water supplied to the northern suburbs has always been as good as it ought to be? It is a scandal that we should be treated in this manner. I quite realise the difficulty. The problem is a great one, but I want to be assured that the department are doing their best to solve the trouble. How long is the bad supply to continue? The people have been most patient. We have had a disgraceful supply for a number of years, and it is still as bad as ever. We want an assurance that the department are doing their best. I am not satisfied that they are. I would like the question to be investigated by a commission of experts. At present all that is done is that when complaints are made the pipes are flushed out, whereupon clean water comes through them for a few days. The people are tired of complaining; they rather grin and bear the trouble. The present position may be all right for men who come down to town, and perhaps do not very often drink water, but it is the womenfolk who have to suffer. They cannot get on with their washing, for instance; and it is unfair and improper that little children should have to drink the horrible stuff that comes through the pipes. I am sorry that the Minister concerned is not here to-night, or I should have something more to say on the subject. At all events, I do hope that the Water Supply Department will tackle this most important question without any further delay.

Mr. Mann: The previous member for Leederville lost his seat on account of the water supply.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: More members will do so unless the water supply is put in order. I suppose it is the worst water supply anywhere in Australia. Kalgoorlie has an excellent water supply, and

so have many distant towns in the wheat belt; but here, right in Perth, we have what is probably the worst supply in Australia. Now I wish to refer to the question of meters for water. I hold that the installation of meters is simply a delusion and a snare. In this country, where there is any amount of water, where we have one of the best and most regular rainfalls to be found anywhere in the world, where all we have to do is to impound the water and convey it through the pipes to the people, meters should be totally unnecessary. It is not like a question of making beer. I repeat, all we have to do is to impound the water and let it flow at its own sweet will through the pipes to the people. Why not let the people have as much water as they want? They ought to be able to waste water if they so desire. Yet we are making the pretence that money is saved by dealing out this water by measurement. We might just as well measure sunshine or fresh air. Water does not cost this country anything at all; the only costs involved are in impounding and delivering it. Why, then, measure it out? According to the figures supplied by the department, only a few thousand pounds is paid annually for excess water. Yet the department go to the trouble of manufacturing meters, which cost over £6 each, and of repairing those meters, and replacing them when they are worn out. Further, the department keep a big staff to read the meters; and we know how often the meters go wrong, and how they rob the consumers. What is it all for?

Mr. Heron: Not too many of the meters are right.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Very few of them are right. I have had occasion to test three or four, and they have been wrong in every case.

Mr. Chesson: Without meters, some people would never turn off the tap.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: What would that matter?

Mr. Chesson: It would mean that many people would get no water at all, or at least that a lot of people would go short.

Mr. Mann: Only a percentage of consumers have meters now.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Provide larger pipes and the people will have plenty of water. There are now only 26,000 meters installed. Not half the consumers have meters. Possibly it is the meters that are the cause of the discolouration of the water; possibly running the water through

the meters results in the precipitation of iron. At any rate, the meter stunt is not worth while. It causes a lot of irritation to the people, it deprives them of a lot of water, and it is getting us nowhere. We are probably making a loss through bothering about meters. Let us give the people plenty of water, so that they may be encouraged to go in for gardens and for making home life more bearable. If we give them plenty of water, the health of the people will be improved and thus money will be saved on doctors' bills and hospital expenses. Why should we restrict the use of water at all?

Mr. Sampson: Has treatment of the water with chloride of lime been tried?

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: We are told that that is so, but I do not know to what extent the treatment has been tried. I do not know what officers have been carrying out the experiments. We ought to call in somebody who knows something about it. I am not casting any reflection upon the departmental officers, but I would like to get some outside expert opinion.

Mr. Mann: We were told that when the bore water ceased to be supplied, it would be all right; but the position is just the same since the bore water was dispensed with.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: In some places the position is worse now. I want to be assured that something is being done to remedy it.

Mr. Clydesdale: In many cases the pipes have been lined with cement, but it has been found that that is not a remedy; and lining with cement costs an enormous amount of money.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: In connection with the goldfields water supply, the pipes had been pitted and nearly eaten away by deposits of iron. A commission of experts found that by the use of lime precipitates the difficulty could be largely overcome.

Mr. Chesson: In one case it is a matter of pumping, in the other a matter of gravitation. In the latter case there is an opportunity to get all the filth out.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: The hon. member knows very well that in the case of the Goldfields Water Supply it is not a matter of pumping entirely. The water was pumped to a certain height, and the rest was gravitation. The water was pumped up to the high points on the line, and then it gravitated

from those points. I hope the Government will take this question very seriously in hand, and try to do something to improve the water service. Next I wish to refer to the long service leave promised by the Premier some time last year. That is a most commendable concession to give to old employees of the public, but the Treasurer has evidently forgotten the old saying that he who gives quickly gives twice. Although the promise was made some nine or ten months ago, it is still unfulfilled.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The promise was made more than three years ago.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: It was definitely promised about ten months ago, but that promise has not been fulfilled because regulations have not been placed before Parliament. The Minister, representing the Premier, informed me that the regulations were being prepared. I hope that work will be expedited so that they can be approved of as soon as possible. Some of the old civil servants are dying without participating in the benefits that have been promised. It is most unfair that the delay should take place. I do not say it is deliberate. If the work is expedited, then some of the older men who have been retired will be able to receive some benefit from the long-service leave provisions. I would again refer to the decision of the Government to close the Newcastle-street State school, one of the oldest and largest of the State schools. It is to be closed on the 26th of this month in order that it may be used as a junior technical school. While I do not object to the older scholars having to walk long distances to other schools, there is grave danger to the younger children in having to traverse long busy streets, with motor and tram traffic passing up and down. I know that in country districts children have to walk much greater distances, but it is unfair that the little toddlers should be expected to do that in the crowded city streets. I hope the Government will be able to make provision for a school close to the existing Newcastle-street premises in order to accommodate the younger ones.

Mr. Davy: There are 120 of them concerned.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: It is most unfair to ask those children to go to school along dangerous streets when it can be avoided. I hope the Government will give some attention to that matter. I have been informed that that

question will be considered in connection with the Estimates and I hope provision will be made for the work. The rooting up of the streets in my electorate calls for some attention. I do not know the reason why many of the streets have been torn up. This sort of thing is to be seen in Newcastle-street, Walcott-street, Bulwer-street and Stirling-street.

The Minister for Railways: Not Walcott-street.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Yes, the Minister can see that for himself. Gangs come along and open up the tram tracks and then go away and the work is left for weeks. They then come back and do a little more, and then go away. That does not appeal to me as businesslike.

The Minister for Railways: We are co-operating with the City Council in re-forming the streets.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Then perhaps the City Council is to blame.

The Minister for Railways: You should make some more inquiries.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: The fact is that the streets are torn up and left for what anyone would regard as an inordinate time.

The Minister for Mines: Do you know of any tramline that was relaid as fast as the Bulwer-street line?

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I think the work could have been done faster.

The Minister for Mines: No such work has ever been done faster.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I have known the track to be closed up for four or five weeks and nothing done in the meanwhile. I do not know if exposure to the air is part of the process.

The Minister for Mines: You walk over one part of the track only and do not know that the men are labouring on another part.

The Minister for Railways: It is entirely in the hands of the City Council now.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I do not think that is so.

The Minister for Railways: Yes it is. You make some inquiries.

Mr. Mann: The City Council have reconstructed both sides of Murray-street, but the tram track is not finished yet.

The Minister for Railways: The Council did not consult us about that and it is costing the Government between £3,000 and £4,000 because of the necessity for regrading their portion of the work.

Mr. Mann: And in the meantime the business people have to put up with the obstruction.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: Reference was made to the Workers' Homes Board, and I am reminded that the Premier promised to make available £50,000. I am told that he meant to make that amount available per annum. I am pleased to hear that, but still it is not enough. An annual grant of £50,000 represents the provision of about 50 homes in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Railways: That is not altogether so.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: It represents about one home a week. The population of the city is increasing at a greater rate than that, and if it is desired to have our working classes happy and contented, the workers should have the opportunity to own their own homes. The workers' homes scheme has been advantageous to the people and profitable to the Government.

Mr. Latham: It should not be profitable to the Government.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I believe something like £20,000 has been transferred from the Workers' Homes Board to revenue.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No. £6,000.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: I do not think any of that money should be transferred from the board.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then the Act will have to be amended.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: It should be used in the provision of other homes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They cannot do that under the Act.

The Minister for Mines: Well, if that is so we have been using the money all along to build other homes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Under the Act you should not have done so.

The Minister for Mines: We have, and we have done more than your Government ever did.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is not so.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: At any rate, the scheme has been most successful and represents one of the few payable operations of the Government. We should extend the scheme and help our workers to secure their own homes. By that means we make better citizens of them. Another matter I wish to deal with is a scheme I have referred to elsewhere. I wish to see the railway system transferred from the centre of the

city. We all know how Perth has spread within the last few years. Land is becoming extremely valuable in the heart of the city where lots are commanding fabulous prices to-day. The great bulk of the people have to pay for that in increased rents and so on. The time has arrived when something should be done to remove the congestion in the city. Perth cannot spread to the east or to the south on account of the river and it is undesirable it should extend in a westerly direction because of the hill. If the last-mentioned course were adopted it would mean that Perth would become a city of long ungainly streets. The only direction in which the city can spread is to the north, but that cannot be done because the railways bisect the town. The railways should be removed to the north; how far they should be taken is a matter for experts to determine. They might be taken as far north as Vincent-street, but at any rate they should now be removed from the city. Once that is done it will be possible to remodel that part of the city, lay it out on modern lines, and connect up all main thoroughfares. Also we could then dispense with the dangerous level crossings and that abortion of a structure known as the Horseshoe Bridge, and the Beaufort-street Bridge, which is becoming dangerously congested with traffic. If something is not done with the railway, the Government will have to provide overhead or underground crossings at Melbourne-road and at Pier-street to allow the traffic to get across the railway line. The only satisfactory way of dealing with the trouble is to shift the railway line and remodel all that part of the city. When that is done there will be ample room for expansion for the next 50 or 100 years. I do not wish to say any more at this stage. You, Sir, were not in the Chair when I rose to my feet, but I took the opportunity to extend to you my hearty congratulations on your unanimous re-election to the Chair. Now that you have resumed the Chair, I will repeat my congratulations. It has been a great pleasure to me to sit under your direction for so long, and I feel sure every member joins with me in wishing you the same happy result as we had in the last Parliament.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-reply adopted.

**BILLS (11)—FIRST READING.**

- 1, Electoral Act Amendment.
- 2, Police Act Amendment.
- 3, Judges' Salaries Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Justice.
- 4, Constitution Act Amendment.
- 5, State Insurance.
- 6, Sinking Funds.
- 7, Permanent Reserve.
- 8, Land Tax and Income Tax.
- 9, Agricultural Lands Purchase Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Railways (for the Premier).
- 10, Transfer of Land Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Justice.
- 11, Inflammable Liquid.  
Introduced by the Minister for Mines.

**BILL—CLOSER SETTLEMENT.***First Reading.*

Introduced by the Minister for Railways (for the Minister for Lands) and read a first time.

*Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

**BILL—HOSPITALS.***First Reading.*

Introduced by the Minister for Health and read a first time.

*Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

*House adjourned at 11.9 p.m.*

**Legislative Assembly,**

*Tuesday, 23rd August, 1927.*

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

**SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.**

Hon. A. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

**QUESTIONS (2)—WHEAT, DAMAGED SHIPMENTS.***Legislation.*

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Lands: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce legislation this session to prevent damaged wheat being shipped from this State as good wheat?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: This matter is receiving consideration.

*Official Report.*

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has he received a report from his officer on the North Fremantle wharf regarding damaged wheat shipped from this State? 2, If not, will he call for a report? 3, If so, will he make the report available to the House?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1. No. 2, The Department only inspects wheat for which a certificate is required, and no damaged wheat has been shipped in these cargoes. 3, Answered by No. 2.