

A reclassification should be made, though I realise that can be done only by Act of Parliament. If a reclassification were made, as the deputation to the Premier requested, it would be in the best interests of the State.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.52 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 14th August, 1929.*

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### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Ninth Day.*

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

### QUESTION—STATE INSURANCE OFFICE.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Have the figures supplied on Thursday last, relating to the Workers' Compensation Act, been audited? 2, In the figures quoted has any provision been made for losses which may occur under policies still current? 3, What was the amount of premiums received from Government departments in respect of all insurances contracted with the State Department?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The books are at present being audited. 2, Yes. 3, £86,151 6s. 1d.

### QUESTION—BUILDINGS, RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1. Which Government department is responsible for the examination and approval of the construction of buildings in

which the public assemble, such as theatres, churches, and balls? 2, Has this responsibility recently been changed from one department and placed under an official in another? 3, If so, has the department formerly responsible given its full approval to the construction and safety provision of buildings erected since the date of transfer? 4, Are the Government fully satisfied that all reasonable provision has been made for public safety in such buildings?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The Public Health Department is still legally responsible, although in practice this responsibility has now been taken over by the Principal Architect of the Public Works Department. 2, Yes. 3, Approval in respect of the construction of public buildings is now given by the Principal Architect instead of by the Commissioner of Public Health. 4, Yes.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. J. NICHOLSON** (Metropolitan) [4.35]: Before touching upon one or two matters contained in the Speech before us, I should like to join in the felicitous greetings which have been extended to you, Mr. President, by previous speakers, and also in the expressions of gratitude conveyed by them to you on the work you did on behalf of the State during your absence. We realised that Western Australia would profit by your sojourn in the great centre of the Empire which you recently had the privilege of visiting. In this we can say we were not disappointed. We learned from the columns of the Press and other sources that by your able pen and your gifts and power of speech you sought to stimulate a keen interest in this State, and particularly in our centenary celebrations. At the same time you took the opportunity afforded you on many occasions to disseminate valuable information regarding the history of Western Australia, and the great opportunities open to those competent and willing to undertake the arduous work necessarily associated with life on the land. It is interesting for us to record in connection with the centenary celebrations that we have in this

House descendants of one of the first pioneers of the State, in the Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom and his son the Hon. C. H. Wittenoom. As we all know, Sir Edward Wittenoom has held an honoured place in this community, and some of the greatest and most highly prized offices in former Governments. I would also take the opportunity of congratulating you, Sir, as I am sure every other member does, on the fact that when in London you were called upon to give evidence before the Parliamentary Committee of the Mother Parliament. You were enabled then to give information which I believe will be of advantage to the Home Parliament in connection with the framing of their own Standing Orders, and by your presence there you were able to convey to them exactly how some of your suggestions worked out in our own Parliament. Whilst you were in London performing these services I venture to think you also noted and observed with keen interest some of those events which affect us as members of the Great British Empire. For example, you had the privilege of witnessing how the affections of the people in the Homeland were stirred, and the deep concern that was evident because of the serious illness of His Majesty the King. You also had the opportunity to note the great and sympathetic anxiety created by the eventful journey undertaken by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. The tidings of His Majesty's condition whilst the eventful journey I refer to was being made were just as anxiously followed here as they were by the people in the Old Land. I think also you had the opportunity to see something of the general elections at Home, an event which in these days can certainly be said to be of world-wide interest. The announcement by the new Government of their intention to promote a world peace has been welcomed by every section. Another announcement, however, has not been so well received by us in Australia. I refer to the attitude proposed to be adopted in regard to removing the preferences afforded in past years by former Governments to Australian goods. This proposal was alluded to by the Hon. Mr. Snowden, whose name looms largely to-day in the world's political sphere. He has received with every degree of merit the eulogies which

have been expressed towards him upon his determined stand at the important conferences he has been attending at The Hague. Mr. Snowden has acknowledged that while he may be somewhat severe at times in his criticism, he is still possessed of a warm heart. It is to be hoped that in his consideration of preference to Australian goods, the warmth of his heart will evidence itself in a friendly attitude towards our needs in Australia. If these preferences are removed, it will do considerable injury to the industries, and particularly the primary industries, of all the States of Australia. It may be said that this is entirely a Federal matter. I think, however, it is also a State matter, as we are closely concerned, as a State, in everything appertaining to these preferences. I think the State Government will recognise the necessity of co-operating with the Federal Government in making representation to the Imperial authorities to secure a continuance of these preferences. If a combined effort were made on the part of all the States, it would certainly strengthen the representations that might be made and will be made by the Federal Government. It will be acknowledged that it would be unfair to pass from the subject of your absence, Mr. President, without making a reference to the Acting President. You will have seen from the records of our proceedings that in your absence we were not idle. In fact, we had a special session. As a result of this, the Acting President had much to engage his attention. It is therefore only fitting that we should express our acknowledgments to him. It will be admitted by all that he devoted himself whole-heartedly to his responsible duties, and followed closely and worthily in your footsteps and in the footsteps of your predecessors. Whilst the Acting President had an arduous task, the duties devolving on the Leader of the House (Hon. J. M. Drew) and the Honorary Minister (Hon. W. H. Kitson) were heavy, and these were shared in by and demanded the attention of members generally. It must have been a source of satisfaction to you, Sir, so soon after your return from your trip abroad, to preside again at the opening day of the new session, and to observe that the interest of the people of the State was being so well maintained. I refer to this because I feel sure that you, Mr. Pre-

sident, in common with many others, must have noted with the deepest regret the absence from the large assemblage at the opening ceremony of the well known figure of that high church dignitary, His Grace Archbishop Riley, whose death a short time previously had removed from our midst one who had earned the highest esteem and sincerest affection of the whole community. Despite failing health in recent years, the late Archbishop adhered with the greatest courage to the task of carrying out his duties. This was a manifestation of that fine spirit that inspired him from the commencement to the end of his career and served to emphasise his self-imposed resolution to promote at all times the good and welfare of the people of the State. That he accomplished this great purpose was abundantly testified to by the great tribute paid to his memory on the day he was laid to rest. On perusing the Speech of His Excellency, one recognises that it follows much along the lines of the records of the State's activities circulated from time to time under the authority of the Premier. The Speech in its first portion deals with the finances and is singularly effective in furnishing absolutely no details on the subject it purports to cover. Usually we are given details of the revenue and expenditure for the year and if a deficit has resulted, the fact is usually mentioned. These bare details surely should be supplied, but we have to comfort ourselves with the assurance that is given in the Speech that, in all respects, the finances of the State are in a satisfactory condition.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Do you think that is true?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I question it very much. In fact I hope to indicate that they are far from satisfactory. What struck me when I heard that statement read was this: What would the shareholders of a company say if a similar report were presented to them by their directors.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They would sack the man who put it up.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Undoubtedly they would. When it has been acknowledged in other statements made by the Government that there was a deficit of £276,000 to the end of June, without taking into account £350,000, which we know was placed in the Suspense Account and

which represents the saving on account of interest and sinking fund payments following upon the acceptance of the Financial Agreement, and when we realise there has been increased expenditure over revenue to the extent of £242,257 to the end of July, surely it cannot even be suggested to the most unsophisticated taxpayer or elector that "in all respects, the finances are in a satisfactory condition." In considering the general position disclosed, we must also note that the largest public utility shows a huge loss for the year. It has been claimed that if the £350,000 in the suspense account had been credited to revenue, a surplus would have been shown. So far as I understand the position—I speak subject to correction—the amount was not taken into account in the Estimates and I think the proper course was to place the amount in suspense, as the Government have done, and to discuss its disposal subsequently. Personally I think the amount, or part of it at least, should be earmarked for the reduction of our loan indebtedness. In this matter we might properly be guided by the advice of the Economic Commission when they pointed out that portion of the loans raised overseas was credited by the Commonwealth to revenue and was spent accordingly. This they regarded as bad finance. Certainly part of the £350,000 was intended to be applied to the sinking fund to meet repayments of loans, and at least that portion of the amount should be so applied and the balance, perhaps, could be applied towards the deficit. I merely give that as a suggestion for consideration because it was mentioned previously by the Premier that an opportunity would be given to Parliament to discuss the disposal of the amount held in suspense. When we refer to the largely increased revenue received in recent years from various sources we would expect, even after reasonable allowances for increased expenditure had been made, that a very proper measure of care would be exercised to prevent such adverse balances as have appeared. Wise economies could be introduced and care taken to avoid extravagance. The necessity for exercising that care and wise economy has been emphasised by the Honorary Minister, Mr. Kitson, who has just returned from an important conference in Melbourne in connection with the Loan Council. He

pointed out very properly the great necessity that existed for not only Governments but for private individuals to exercise the greatest possible economy. I hope this matter will be taken to heart seriously because undoubtedly, as I hope to show in a few minutes, having regard to taxation levied here as compared with that obtaining in other places, it is more and more necessary that we should exercise great care in connection with our finances. How are these economies to be exercised? Many varying methods may be adopted. It may be necessary to see that economy is exercised in connection with our public and departmental works, as well as in connection with appointments that are made. I shall refer to the position regarding appointments. For example, it was announced the other day that a special magistrate had been appointed to the Children's Court. We realise the great work that has been done since the court was first established by the members of that tribunal. That work has been done voluntarily and without any reward whatever. They have carried on their work in premises that were hardly fit for the purpose. I believe that when requests have been made for a change of premises it has been found impossible for the Government to provide the necessary accommodation. Even if some small repairs were asked for, it was equally difficult to get them carried out. No doubt the Government were exercising wise care and economy, but now an appointment has been made of the special magistrate. I wish to make it clear that I do not question that appointment. I believe the gentleman who has been appointed to the position will give the fullest satisfaction as he will come to his new post armed with experience that few people have for carrying out the duties of such an important office. I hope that in his new appointment he will have every success. At the same time that does not prevent me from criticising the question of appointments generally. My remarks might apply with equal force to other appointments. I do not propose to enter upon a discussion regarding that phase. In view of the position as I hope to disclose it, and the unsatisfactory condition of our finances as they were revealed at the end of July, I find it difficult to appreciate how it can be stated that in all respects the finances of the State are in a satisfactory condition. There are

two other matters to which I would like to refer. They are in connection with our railways and with the unemployment problem. Dealing first with the former we find that the loss on last year's operations amounted to £179,000. This has been attributed to two or three causes. These were that the decline in revenue was partly due to the diminished harvest and the consequent decreased haulage, and partly due to the waterside workers' strike which resulted in a loss of approximately £100,000. I am sorry that such a loss did take place because it is a clear example of what follows upon strikes and the need there is to obviate such occurrences. While these causes have no doubt contributed towards the deficit, I venture to think that we must look further afield for the true explanation. I believe it is necessary to make a close investigation into all departments of our railway system and see where economies or savings are possible. We should also investigate the possibilities of new avenues of revenue that can be opened up and thus help to prevent a recurrence of the losses I have referred to. That this is necessary must be realised because of the large capital expenditure on our railways. From loan moneys alone something like £23,000,000 is involved and, in addition, other amounts have been invested from revenue at various times. Those investments have been spread over the years since the railways were first established. It will be seen therefore that if all the items of expenditure were added to that raised by way of loan for railway purposes or in connection with the railways, the total capital represented in the railways is considerably more than £23,000,000. I might have ascertained the position, but I have not been able to do so.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: There has not been much in recent years.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The railways are not paying even a return on the capital expended. Apart from interest on loan moneys, the taxpayer has to make up the loss and therefore it is essential that there should be a full inquiry into the position. It may be urged that although we have suffered losses on our State railways, we can console ourselves by the fact that other States have also suffered similar losses.

The Honorary Minister: Yes, and much heavier.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I admit that, but I suggest that that is a bad argument to advance. Rather should those losses be calculated to give us an incentive to set the way to success. It is difficult to find other railway systems which compare exactly with our own. In fairness to the management of our railways I admit that they have many difficulties to contend with. For example, the railway lines operate over long distances, something like 4,000 miles, with many sections that are sparsely populated, and relatively small revenue being derived from those sections. It follows therefore that the paying sections have to bear the burden of the loss of the unprofitable line. There is also competition with road transport, and that is a very serious matter which is fully recognised by those in authority. If such is the case, one may ask the question, what are the Government doing to combat it? There is no suggestion in the Speech that the Government are seeking to do anything to minimise the loss.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They have given everybody long service leave.

The Honorary Minister: Can you make a suggestion?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I hope to be able to do so. We have an instance of a private railway in this State which, after many years of difficulties, is being carried on at a profit. I refer to the Midland Railway Company. I take the opportunity to congratulate that company and its management on the fact that a profit is now being shown.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: On the same freight rates as the State railways?

Hon. V. Hamersley: Yes.

The Honorary Minister: Are you correct in saying that the company are now showing a profit?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, they showed a profit in their balance sheet.

Hon. E. H. Gray: From the sale of land.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Are not the Government also disposing of land?

Hon. E. H. Gray: Our railways are not selling land.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: But the Government are selling land. If Mr. Kitson would look at the company's balance sheet he would find that the sale of land was treated not as revenue, but as capital. I am glad

he raised the question, which is important, and should be noted by the Government. The Government have been perpetrating a folly in regard to the sale of land for a long time past. Year in and year out they have been regarding land rents as actual revenue instead of using that money towards reducing the loans. Money paid in respect of land rents by conditional purchase holders is not revenue. It is not rent in the ordinary sense; it is the payment of instalments on the purchase money. The Midland Railway Company have, I believe, followed the proper course and treated the revenue derived from the sale of land as capital.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They sell on 15 years terms at four per cent. and they take the four per cent. into revenue. The greater the sales the greater the revenue.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: In the balance sheet that you saw, did the Midland Railway Company treat the sale of land as capital?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am not sure, but it would be interesting to make a comparison now that the question has been raised. I am sorry that I did not examine the balance sheet more closely. It would be well worth while inquiring into the subject. The fact remains that the company, in their balance sheet, showed a profit. I am going to admit, also, that it would be unfair to offer the company's railway as a comparison with ours. For example, the company are operating a line of only 270 miles, equal to one section of our own railway system, whereas the State railways are spread over distances of 4,000 miles through sparsely populated areas. Thus it would be unfair to make a comparison between the two. But the Midland Company have obtained success by their diligent policy of the settlement of the land, and I do not say that in disparagement of the efforts made by the State in a similar direction. The State is making the best efforts possible to settle its areas. The Midland Company are not settling their land to the detriment of the State, but in pursuing that policy, and by exercising their energies in the direction I have indicated they are conferring a benefit on our State in this way, that in providing settlers, they are also providing citizens and taxpayers for the State. We all know the history of the Midland Company and the efforts made in years past by former Gov-

ements to acquire the property. Recently the company requested to be permitted to construct spur lines, but the request was refused because it was considered to be against the policy of the Government. I am inclined to regard that decision as unsound because it is calculated to delay the work of land settlement and may prevent the increase of our population to the extent to which we desire to see it increase. Besides, if the company are prepared to find the necessary capital for the construction of these spur lines, it will relieve the Government of the necessity to find that capital, and will enable the company to open up other lands which will then be available for settlement, thus providing additional taxpayers for the State. Having regard for that position I hope the Government may yet see their way to re-consider their decision. Whilst it is unfair to make a comparison between the Midland Company and our State railways, I must also say it would be unfair to compare, say a railway in England with our system, because in England, as we all know, the companies have the advantage of a dense population with numerous factories and industries. But we can derive guidance in railway management from the experience of such companies where, despite many adverse conditions they have been able to earn profit. I have before me a report of the London and North Western Railway Company: and with the consent of the House I should like to read one or two extracts from it. These extracts may convey information of a useful nature and which the Honorary Minister asked by way of interjection a little time ago whether I could furnish. I propose to supply it through the medium of the report I have. I do not say that I am an authority, but as a layman one can see that there is some wisdom in the suggestions contained in the report. The railway operates over a very wide area in England and the company encountered, and are still encountering the same difficulties as the other railway companies operating there. For instance, since the advent of motor transport, there has been a considerable decrease in the number of passengers carried. Of course the war greatly upset the position of the railways and affected their financial position considerably. Despite that fact, however, we find they are still able to carry on at a profit—a

small profit I admit. It shows, however what can be done by careful management and the suggestions contained in the report will be worth while considering. It is pointed out that during the year the number of first class passengers decreased by 227,000, whilst the receipts therefrom increased by £4,500. The second-class passengers carried decreased by 99,000 and the receipts remained practically the same. The third-class passengers decreased by 1,634,000 and the decrease in the receipts was £189,000. That is a very serious position for any company. Of the total decrease in the receipts from passenger fares for the whole year of £569,000, £424,000 occurred up to the 11th August, and only £145,000 thereafter. The total decrease of passengers, exclusive of season ticket holders, on the line throughout the year was 2,611,000. The report says—

At the end of the week, which included the August bank holiday, the decrease was 3,000,000. Since that date, therefore, to the end of the year the number increased by 400,000.

Now comes an interesting point for Mr. Kitson—

The improved position in the latter part of the year must be attributed to the institution of lower fares and the extension of the week-end facilities, which have attracted back to the railway, traffic which had gone to the road. While it is, perhaps, too early yet to dogmatise upon the subject of fares, the policy of making substantial reductions therein and of extending facilities for week-end journeys seems to be justified. The position will be most closely watched, and if further adjustments seem to be required, we shall not hesitate to make them.

There is something in regard to fares. We know that here we have nothing in the way of inducing the people to use the railways at the week ends. They are rather induced to go into the country by means of the road, except when, but only now and again, there is an excursion to Mundaring, etc. Otherwise no inducement is held out to use the railways for the ordinary week end. With regard to the adoption of new methods the report proceeds:—

In the conduct of both passenger and merchandise traffic, many new methods have been adopted in order to meet the competition of the road or to suit the convenience of traders who are themselves conducting their business on new lines . . . . On the passenger side we have now about 50 steam rail coaches on our system, either taking the place of trains at half the cost of the latter, or competing with the road by the increased local

service. It is true that some of these new methods are experimental, but if we do not experiment with some boldness we shall inevitably fall behind in the competition for traffic under all the conditions which exist to-day.

The report alludes to the question of road traffic—

A discussion of these matters naturally leads us to speak of the granting at least by Parliament of road transport powers to the railway companies. There are three methods by which we can commence and develop the road traffic. We can purchase our own vehicles and go on the road independently of everybody else. We can purchase outright, or take shares in, existing road companies which still remain outside the control of any of the big combines; and we can make arrangements, financially or otherwise, with the latter and civic corporations for the co-ordination of rail and road traffic in such a way as seems essential to the prosperity of all of us and in the public interest. It will be necessary for us to adopt every one of these methods, and we have taken steps in these directions. We have ordered a number of buses for services which we have decided to put on the road in connection with trains, or in substitution of trains which will be withdrawn. We have purchased shares in a number of smaller road transport companies in the north of England, where we have suffered most from the loss of local traffic; and with such share purchases we have acquired an organisation under the guidance of experts in the management of bus services. To this latter fact we attach much importance. We have been and are having discussions with some of the large bus and road transport companies. Negotiations with them must necessarily occupy a good deal of time, as very important decisions, involving large issues on both sides, will have to be taken.

The Honorary Minister: What is the date of that report?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The meeting seems to have been held on the 8th March last. This is a reprint from "The Times" of Saturday, 9th March. Generally these reports are reprinted the day after the meeting is held. Dealing with reduction of expenditure, the report points out—

On the expenditure side of the railway working account No. 10, there is a total reduction of £2,779,700, equivalent to approximately 6 per cent. on the 1927 expenditure. The headings under which the principal decreases occur are—maintenance of way, works, and rolling stock £878,000, locomotive running £1,252,000, traffic expenses £462,000, and rates and taxes £250,400.

Those figures show what can be done by way of reductions and economies. Various interesting and important matters are alluded

to in the report, but I shall not refer to all of them.

The Honorary Minister: Before getting away from the question of road transport, do you suggest that our Railway Department should adopt the same method?

Hon. G. W. Miles: Certainly they should cut their fares to compete with road transport.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If, for example, an inducement were held out by the Railway Department here in the way of favourable railway rates, people would probably prefer the railways to the road. Buses on the road could act as feeders. However, nothing has ever been done in that direction, and I suggest it would be worth while to make an experiment with lorries acting as feeders for the railways. These lorries would operate within defined areas, and would undertake to lift people's goods at certain rates and convey them by rail at such rates as would put the men working road lorries quite out of the market.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I thought you were opposed to the extension of trading concerns?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: This is a totally different matter. I am opposed to State trading concerns, but the railways are a public utility. I have been at all times opposed to State trading. The Government have the railways running at a loss, and we must do something to convert that loss into a profit. Ever since their establishment the railways have been regarded as a public utility, whereas the State trading concerns were specially designated as such by the State Trading Concerns Act, in which the railways are not included.

The Honorary Minister: Would you suggest that the railways should take an interest, by purchase of shares, in the existing road transport companies?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am not suggesting that. The conditions here, as I have already indicated, are totally different from the conditions existing in many other countries. What might be a possible way of dealing with the subject in a place like England, might not be possible here. Those in control of the Railway Department must take the whole matter carefully into consideration, to see what is the best thing to be done. The position which has been

created is so disastrous to the State—it must also be most disappointing to those in charge of the railways—that a remedy must be found. One must meet new methods of competition by what seem the most feasible methods of overcoming that competition. It might be of benefit to ascertain under what conditions and with what results the South African Government have embarked on road transport in connection with their railways. The fact remains that we are not hauling over our railways the quantity of goods or the number of passengers that we should be hauling in order to make them pay. It is because we are not getting the patronage of the people that we are losing so much money. The matter requires the most careful consideration, and I am merely proffering suggestions with a view to enabling those responsible to take serious thought with a view to devising means of obviating the losses that now occur. It is not satisfactory for a great department like the railways to be run at a loss as is the case. Here is another item from the report, with which I shall conclude my reading. Later I shall be glad to let the Minister have the report with a view to its consideration in its entirety by those in charge of the Railway Department. On the subject of wagon cost it points out matters which perhaps may be imitated in our workshops—

There is also considerable opportunity for reduction in the cost of building and repairing of carriages by the further improvement of our shops, to which we are continuing to give our attention. In the economical construction of wagons we have perhaps less to look forward to, as we have done so much in this direction in our wagon shops at Darlington. The cost of building a wagon consists in the cost of material, its preparation, and its erection. By machinery which has been devised by our own staff we are now able to assemble and erect a 12-ton open goods wagon at the rate of one wagon in every 12 minutes at a wage cost of 19s. against a previous cost of 62s. On a building programme of 7,000 wagons that means a saving of over £15,000 a year. Obviously science cannot do much more here. Great progress has been made in the application of science to signalling, enabling us to dispense with a large number of signal cabins which were previously required, and by the institution of electric track circuits to secure greater safety at the same time.

Hon. H. Seddon: We have that method here.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: But apparently this is a more perfect method. The matter can be considered. These, then, are some suggestions which I make in regard to our railways; and I hope those in charge may see the advisability of trying to devise means of improving the present unsatisfactory position. Coming to the question of unemployment, we know that everybody deplores the unfortunate position in which so many worthy men have found themselves, and also the difficulties that have been occasioned to the Government. One realises that it is no easy task when a condition of affairs exists such as unfortunately has existed for some time past. The Government naturally are expected to do something, and it is a difficult thing to devise ways and means to overcome the state of affairs that presents itself. Many efforts have been made in the past to find a solution of this problem of unemployment. When the Arbitration Act was introduced it was thought we had arrived at the millennium, and that the problem had actually been solved. But can it be said that the avenues of employment, and the number of industries have increased in proportion to our increase in population since the advent of arbitration? I venture to say it cannot. The fact remains that we have increased unemployment and consequent distress. One must seek for causes. This trouble has been attributed by some to the high tariff with which many of the industries have been burdened. The effect of this has been to abnormally increase the cost of production and thereby lessen employment. For example, we have been unable to sell abroad at a profitable figure our own manufactures. Our trading is mainly confined to ourselves. Added to this, our external debt is increasing. This means increased interest, which can only be met by an increased export of goods, and by the policy adopted it is evident we are throwing a greater burden on the primary producer and the avenues of employment, and consequently industries are reduced. If again, the primary producer has a bad season, then the difficulties are added to and our financial position made worse. Our primary industries, it is said, are responsible for over 90 per cent. of our exports. So the effects of a bad season will be manifest. We are, so to speak, carrying all our eggs in one basket. The result of this

does not require to be elaborated upon. Incidental to the causes mentioned is the question of taxation. Recently the Taxpayers' Association of Victoria compiled some tables of national debts and taxation per head of population between the years 1922-1923 and 1926-1927. There has been a decrease in taxation in England and in certain Continental countries, but here unfortunately there has been an upward tendency. For example, taking the ordinary average rate of taxation per head, it would work out in the United Kingdom for 1922-23 at £17 8s. 0d., whereas in 1926-27 it fell to £14 11s. 8d. In Australia in 1922-23 the amount was £12 3s. 7d. but in 1926-27 it rose to £14 5s. 0d. In France the amounts were £6 4s. 7d. and £7 6s. 7d. respectively, or an increase of £1 2s. 0d. In Germany the amounts respectively were £5 4s. 0d. and £5 10s. 7d.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Have they an arbitration court there?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Unfortunately, no. In Italy the amount was £3 3s. 5d. in 1922-23 and £4 12s. 4d. in 1926-27. For the United States only one figure is given, namely, £6 3s. 7d. in 1926-27.

The Honorary Minister: What is included in the term taxation?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: This has been worked out with a view to ascertaining the tax per head and how it would distribute itself over the whole of the population. It is the revenue derived from taxation. Taking the national debt of each of these countries, the per head liability is—

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Can you not tell us the taxation figures for Canada?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No, the table does not include Canada.

Hon. A. Lovekin: They got £15,000,000 from liquor last year.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Turning to the national debt, we know that in England it is a stupendous sum; unfortunately I have not the figures here, but per head of the population in England it amounts to £165 14s. whereas in Australia it is £169 4s. Of course we know the population is a great factor in this, and at the same time we know that the amount of national debt in England is far and away greater than the national debt of Australia.

The Honorary Minister: Is it fair to try to compare them?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I think it is a fair way of looking at it. We are carrying a bigger load per head here than the people of England carry.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But we have substantial assets and plenty of country opened up to carry population.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, and I say we require to encourage to the utmost land settlement, and even the construction of those spur lines.

The Honorary Minister: Is it a fair comparison?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We should do everything we can to get more population and so improve our position in every way. Then, relatively, the amount of debt will appear less. If we pursue a proper policy in regard to our industries, then undoubtedly we shall be in a better position than we occupy to-day.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: The greater the population of Britain, the more trouble she has.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is due to local conditions. Naturally, we are all concerned with the remedy. I have given some of the causes, and the question is asked, what is the remedy? Many suggestions have been made, but I think it will be admitted there is only one sane method whereby the position can be improved. That is by co-operation in our industrial life and by payment on the basis of production. I have contended that all through. When we were discussing some of our Arbitration Acts and Workers' Compensation Acts I consistently maintained that there was only one method whereby this question could be determined, namely, on payments being based on production.

The Honorary Minister: Would you apply that all round?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes.

The Honorary Minister: To the professions as well?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If you like. There are some avenues in which I do not see how you could apply it. Leaving out ourselves, let us take the medical profession and work on the principle of no cure no pay. That might possibly react in a reduction in the number of medical men who would be offer-

ing for the position, and so the general community might suffer.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is said that doctors bury their mistakes, while lawyers make their clients pay for them.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I suppose there would need to be a consultation between the two professions to see what could be done in order to get a fair division. When Mr. Hall was speaking the other night, making some comment on the question of unemployment, I think it was Mr. Williams who interjected "Look at America. There you get higher wages than are paid in Australia." I will take Mr. William's suggestion as being a very wise one. If we look at America we shall see that the people there are not troubling with arbitration courts, but are paying higher wages than are paid in Australia.

Hon. H. Seddon: Higher real wages?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: A higher reward for labour. The men are earning more money working under the system in vogue in America than are men in Australia. And there is less unemployment in America than is to be found in Australia.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They are earning more money, but they are not better off.

The Honorary Minister: In America unemployment is considerably worse than it is here.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have been told that, relatively, the proportion of unemployment is less in America than it is here. That, of course, can be verified. But that is neither here nor there. The point is do we wish to adopt the method in vogue there, namely, working for a wage or return which is based on the production—

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Unemployment is universal, and so there must be some universal cause for it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Certainly it is to be found everywhere, in every country. We cannot avoid unemployment, but we can seek to do something to lessen it. There is no gainsaying that by the introduction of Arbitration Courts we have certainly failed so far to solve this problem of unemployment as we had hoped to do and we must therefore look around for the cause.

The Honorary Minister: Who suggested that the Arbitration Court would solve unemployment?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It was suggested long ago that the Arbitration Court would be the means of lessening unemployment.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Who said that?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It was suggested that the Arbitration Court would lessen strikes.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, lessen strikes and thereby reduce unemployment. The object was to secure industrial peace and by so doing, there would be less unemployment than before. As a matter of fact by means of the Arbitration Court we have neither secured industrial peace nor have we reached that happy stage for which we had hoped, namely, a reduction of the number of unemployed.

The Honorary Minister: The number of strikes has been lessened, has it not?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not know that one can say there has been any great reduction in the number of strikes. I admit it is quite fair to have some method of arbitration; I am not opposed to arbitration, but I am looking at the position entirely from the standpoint of results, and the results for which we had hoped have not been attained.

The Honorary Minister: From a Western Australian standpoint?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes. In Western Australia we have endeavoured in many instances to prevent strikes but unsuccessfully.

The Honorary Minister: Do you know any country of the world that has had fewer strikes than has Western Australia during recent years.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I cannot make any comparison of that kind. The fact remains that we have an example of America's success in industrial life. For that reason we might well try to ascertain what can be accomplished by adopting the methods employed in that country. On the 5th August there was a reference in the "Daily News" headed, "Piecework Popular. Big factories' experience. Convincing proofs." It stated—

Judging by the experience of Pelaco Limited, piecework not only brings peace in industry, but higher wages and shorter hours obtain. Whether it is advisable to adopt piecework methods is one of the greatest problems confronting Australian industries. The system is advocated by many authorities as a solution for labour problems. Over the last 15 months the Pelaco Company, employing 600 hands, has conducted experiments in comparative merits of piecework and payment by weekly wages, and after experience of both methods the em-

ployees and management are in complete agreement that the piecework system is the best for industry.

The company is one of the largest clothing manufacturers in Australia. Its yearly output includes 4,000,000 men's collars, over one and a half million shirts, and over 450,000 suits of pyjamas. For more than 20 years the factory worked entirely on piecework, but the new Federal award for the clothing trades in 1928 necessitated the scrapping of its well-developed system and the substitution of the weekly wage. The change-over proved costly, and a number of employees were thrown out of work for a month while awaiting adjustments in the factory and office routine.

After eight months' experience of the new method a variation of the award was obtained at the request of both employer and employee to permit of the re-introduction of piecework. The latter has been in operation seven months, and a comparison of results shows that the piecework system is more popular. The increase at piecework rates over the weekly wage represents a gain of £18,000 for 600 employees during the period, while the reduction of five hours a week in working hours has added the equivalent of six working weeks to the employees' leisure time. It is claimed that there is no rush or strain on the employees, who are working in concert with the management.

There is an instance provided by our own country.

The Honorary Minister: Scores of instances could be quoted to the contrary.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You cannot get away from the fact that if you make the employment of labour unprofitable, you must have unemployment.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is so. There is only one other matter to which I wish to refer and that is the Land Titles Office. Last year I asked some questions about it, and I noticed that in another place questions have been asked this session. I understand that plans have been prepared and that it is intended to provide better accommodation for the department. The accommodation at present is highly unsatisfactory for everyone concerned, and for those in control of the department it is a matter of great difficulty. Title deeds and other valuable documents have to be stored in the safes in the basement of the Supreme Court, and if anyone wishes to refer to those documents, it is necessary to make a journey to the Supreme Court or wait until the documents can be taken to the Titles Office. The present premises are quite inadequate for the growing volume of work in that department. The work

has expanded considerably in recent years, and there is probably some reason for the Government having delayed the providing of better housing accommodation. I would be glad to have some definite assurance that the work of constructing the new building for this department will be put in hand without delay. In the basement where the main part of the Titles Office is housed, I am told it is absolutely unhealthy for anyone to work, and that when men and women from the Government Printing Office go down to the Titles Office basement to do certain work in connection with the binding of volumes, as is necessary from time to time, an extra rate is paid them during the period they are working there. When we realise that the regular employees of the department are working there day in and day out and getting nothing extra, it seems hardly fair that employees of the Printing Office who go there occasionally to do work should be paid an extra rate. If it is unhealthy for the Government Printing Office employees, surely it is also unhealthy for the people who are permanently employed in the Titles Office.

The Chief Secretary: Employees of the Government Printing Office have to be paid extra in their own office if they work under a light.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There is no doubt that the present accommodation is quite inadequate for the needs of the department, and at the same time great inconvenience is caused to the general public. I shall be interested to learn that the proposed work will be proceeded with at an early date and that something will be done to rectify the present unsatisfactory position.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [5.55]: In addressing a few remarks to the debate, I should like to add my tribute of praise for the good work you, Mr. President, did while in London in connection with the centenary of Western Australia. There is one outstanding feature in this centenary year, and that is when we compare the conditions existing in Western Australia with those existing in the other States, we have reason to congratulate ourselves on the fact that we are in a very much better position both financially and with regard to employment. A great deal of the un-

employment prevailing is due to the influx of people from the Eastern States. I wish to deal later with the question of unemployment, but at present I would point out that we have a brighter outlook and I think we are in a better position than are the Eastern States. The Speech, to my mind, is more remarkable for what it does not say than for what it does say. It is well known that we finished the financial year with a deficit of £275,969. In view of that I cannot see how it can be contended that the finances of the State are in a satisfactory condition. We have also to recognise that we have an accumulated deficit of £434,639, and as it is not long since we funded a deficit of some £6,000,000, I do not see how anyone can contend that the State finances are at all satisfactory. Another point arises that makes the position more difficult and should receive the attention of the Government. It is the position created as a result of the adoption last year of the Financial Agreement. The Financial Agreement contains a clause providing that where a deficit is funded, a sinking fund shall be arranged for that deficit amounting to four per cent. per annum. When we realise the price that is being paid for money to-day, the burden that will be placed on the people of Western Australia by the funding of the deficit will amount to no less than 9½ per cent. per annum. That sum will have to be paid on any loan floated to fund the deficit. This is a matter that I maintain demands the attention of the Treasurer, because to put such a burden on the people is to impose upon them a responsibility that is not justified.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: We do not pay four per cent. on that £6,000,000.

Hon. H. SEDDON: No, because that amount was funded prior to the Financial Agreement coming into operation. Since the agreement has been passed, however, I take it the clause will have to be enforced. When speaking on the Financial Agreement Bill, I stressed the point that the insertion of the high sinking fund provision was designed to restrict Governments in the matter of their finances. The idea was to make Treasurers more careful or more conservative in their estimates in order that they might conclude the financial year with a small surplus or by just balancing revenue and expenditure. The

Premier, in referring to the deficit for the financial year just closed, said it was due to two principal causes. The first contributing cause was the waterside workers' strike and the second was the diminished harvest, as a result of which there had been a considerable reduction in railway revenue. I contend that that is not quite a fair way of expressing the position. The deficit is due more particularly to bad estimation. Had the Estimates been founded on a conservative basis instead of a most optimistic one, we should have been able to avoid the deficit last year. Our experience has been that, when one is making an estimate of expenditure, it is always wise to make provision or allow for unforeseen happenings upsetting one's calculations. We remember, for instance, when Sir James Mitchell made an estimate some years ago. His estimate was knocked entirely on the head by a series of unprecedented washaways on the State railways. These led, to not only a dislocation of the traffic, but a heavy outlay in re-making the roads that were destroyed. These unforeseen circumstances should have been provided for by the making of an estimate on conservative lines. To make an estimate as the Premier did on the basis of last year's harvest being equal to that of the previous year, was to act on a more optimistic than a conservative basis. In view of the development of agriculture in Western Australia we must expect that in some parts of the State the crops will not be up to standard. Just as we have every right to expect that in no case can there be a complete crop failure in the State, so must we remember that there cannot always be good crops in every part of it. This has been the position since 1924. The spread of agriculture and the incidence of the rainfall are such that we cannot always count upon good harvests in every portion of the State. The whole question boils itself down to one of conservative estimation. The need for that was established in view of the penal clauses attached to the funding of loans. The point is, are we going to meet the accumulated deficit by funding it, or are we going to adopt some other method? It is possible that by adopting a more conservative estimate this year than was adopted last year, we might achieve a surplus, or we might get one by imposing taxation. I was very interested in the quotation by Mr. Nicholson regarding the incidence of taxation in Eng-

land and other countries, and the comparison with Western Australia. The hon. member must know that there can be no comparison between the incidence of tax, that is, the weight of taxation in Western Australia, compared with other countries, or with the spread of taxation compared with other countries. It is well known that not more than nine per cent. of the people of this State pay income tax. That factor makes a big difference. In England there are people in receipt of £100 a year or less who pay income tax. With regard to the rate of income tax, in Western Australia even under our graduated system it is not as high as in Great Britain. The burden in the latter place is a severe one. It cannot be said that the burden in this State is severe in comparison with the conditions in the Old Country. I have heard the argument used in this House that Western Australia is very heavily taxed as compared with elsewhere. This argument was used to achieve a reduction of one-third in our income tax. When we look at the question, we find the other States are not standing up to their obligations, at all events they are not doing so in the same way as Western Australia is.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is a very heavy tax on the nine per cent. who pay it.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes. By spreading the taxation we have a wider field in which to operate in Western Australia than is available in the Old Country. The only way to enforce the responsibility on the people concerning Governmental expenditure is to arrange for a tax that will be State-wide. Every person in the State, even an office boy, should have to pay something towards finance.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Can you devise a tax which cannot be passed on?

Hon. H. SEDDON: The fairest tax is an income tax. If we had an income tax which was State-wide, this would induce a certain amount of thinking amongst the classes who at present are content to rest under the delusion that the other fellow is paying the tax and that they are escaping. Regarding the deficit, I would say that the opportunity is open to the Government either to make their estimates on a conservative basis this year, which will be a difficult task, or increase the spread of taxation with a view to meeting the accumulated deficit out of taxation, rather than impose upon the people a heavy

sinking fund due to the funding of the deficit.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They will not do that before the elections.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They may not be here afterwards.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I wish to make a few references to the question of loan expenditure. It is rather interesting to go into that point.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You will note that the 33 1/3rd reduction is only a temporary one.

Hon. H. SEDDON: We know it was made out of the Commonwealth grant which will last only for five years. It is interesting to note that between 1924 and 1929 inclusive, during which years the Collier Government have been in office, the expenditure from loan has been no less than £25,280,123. The average expenditure per annum has been £4,213,354 and last year it was £4,372,269. The interest on this money has averaged well over five per cent. The average indeed is in the region of 5 1/4 per cent. This equals a sum of no less than £1,327,206 as an annual charge for 53 years. On a population of 409,000 this works out at something like £3 per head. Let us look at the matter from another standpoint, and take the arbitration unit as the unit upon which the tax should be based, namely the unit of a man, his wife and two children. The expenditure then works out at no less than 4s. 7d. per week. Incidentally it may be interesting to note that the decision of the court a little while ago in raising the basic wage, was to raise it by 2s. per week, whereas the permanent charges which have been placed upon the population of Western Australia on the arbitration unit works out at 4s. 7d. a week. Our annual interest bill, according to the returns the "West" published in July last, amounts to £3,335,710. I note that 76 per cent. of our loans are borrowed overseas. On that basis, therefore, we have to pay every year by way of interest abroad no less than 2 1/2 million pounds. It has been rightly contended that the interest on oversea loans should be maintained by an excess of exports over imports. It is a reasonable thing to ask that the exports should pay the interest bill.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is the only way.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Interest is met each year out of the loans that are floated.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You must reach a dead end sooner or later if you go on that way.

Hon. H. SEDDON: When we look into Western Australian imports and exports we find that for some years our imports have been exceeding our exports by a considerable sum. I could go back to 1924 and show that this state of affairs existed then. It goes even further back.

The Honorary Minister: Is that the overseas imports?

Hon. H. SEDDON: The gross imports have exceeded the gross exports over a long period of years. When we compare the position of the overseas exports with the overseas imports we find a very different position. The year 1929 is typical of a number of years. In that year the imports from overseas totalled £9,422,316. The exports overseas were no less than £15,980,493. In that case there was a considerable credit balance in favour of Western Australia's trade overseas. Unfortunately, our financial transactions overseas are handled by the bankers as a Commonwealth unit. The Australian position overseas is quite unsatisfactory. For a good many years Australia as a whole has imported a great deal more than she has exported. Consequently, the credit balance which should belong to Western Australia is absorbed in Australia's total obligations and goes to pay them.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is why the Financial Agreement is so good.

Hon. H. SEDDON: This practice was in operation long before the Financial Agreement was made. The people of this State lost their only chance of taking full advantage of the position when they allowed the Western Australian Bank to be absorbed by an Eastern States institution. The whole position might have been handled to our advantage if we had retained a bank which was entirely concerned in Western Australian finance. When we lost control of the situation in that way we were bound to be absorbed in the general Australian position.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It was not big enough to carry the burden.

Hon. H. SEDDON: It is possible the Western Australian Government might have

come to an arrangement with the Western Australian Bank to take advantage of the position, but as things were we have been absorbed into the general fund. With regard to inter-State imports and exports the reverse exists. In 1929 we imported from the Eastern States goods to the value of £10,600,595. We only exported to them goods to the value of £1,205,493. Under such conditions it will be seen, as has been stated before, that we are supporting a large number of people in the Eastern States who supply us with goods and who should really be employed in Western Australia. We are justified in saying to the Eastern States, "We are certainly good customers of yours, and we seek to receive from you a bigger market for our products than you are providing at present." Unfortunately the products that are exported from Western Australia are also being exported by the other States. The market for these exists entirely overseas, and I do not know whether we should be able to make much headway if we put such a proposition up to the Eastern States. I am quoting these figures in order that we may appreciate the true position of our relationship with overseas trade.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Navigation Act seriously affects our position.

Hon. H. SEDDON: If anything, the Act is working in favour of Western Australia, owing to the fact that if there is anything in the idea of protection that afforded by this Act should encourage the establishment of industries in Western Australia which are now being operated in the Eastern States.

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

Hon. H. SEDDON: When quoting the statistics of imports and exports in connection with Western Australian trading operations and analysing the reason for the excess, I wish to stress the point that for a considerable number of years our imports in the gross have exceeded our exports. The next phase I desire to deal with in connection with loan expenditure, is to refer to some caustic criticism indulged in by the Labour Party in 1924 on this very question. They criticised the heavy loan expenditure by the Mitchell Government and in that criticism the present Premier

asserted that the State could not carry on under the ever-increasing burden of debt, which, he said, was being increased by such large amounts under the Mitchell Administration. In these circumstances it is rather interesting to analyse the expenditure from loan funds during the time the Collier Government have been in power, compared with the expenditure under the Mitchell Administration. It certainly looks as though the criticism of the present Premier at that time was made in circumstances that he found were entirely altered when he took over the responsibilities of office. It is quite evident that since his accession to office, either the Premier has had to alter his notions considerably or he has found himself in a position where he had no option but to continue the heavy loan expenditure, or even to increase that procedure, which had characterised the Mitchell régime. There is a point that arises there that will bear very severely on the conditions that may confront Australia generally in the immediate future. By virtue of this heavy loan expenditure, which is largely expended upon the construction of public works, principally engineering undertakings, there has been created in Australia a vast army of manual workers, who have been employed more or less continuously in the construction of these big engineering works. The result is that immediately one of these works closes down, a large number of men are thrown on the labour market and have to be absorbed. The usual way is to start fresh loan works, and therefore we have created in Australia a population, largely of a manual and migratory character, that is engaged in work provided for by loan expenditure. I stress that point largely because circumstances arise at times that cause all Australian Governments to reduce their programmes of loan expenditure. Such circumstances have arisen at present and a reduced loan expenditure programme has a very important effect upon this army of men who are engaged on constructional works. The next point that arises in dealing with loan expenditure relates to the direction in which that expenditure has been employed. An examination of Return No. 9, which is submitted each year to both House of Parliament in connection with the Budget, discloses the fact that during the past few years there has been very heavy

expenditure indeed in connection with agricultural group settlements activities. For for year 1925-26 the expenditure was £1,335,000; for 1926-27, £1,428,000; and for 1927-28, £1,122,000. Expenditure under this heading represents the largest individual item in the annual apportionment of loan moneys. I think the next largest refers to the railways. During the past few years railway construction has absorbed a considerable amount of loan money. I wish to stress the direction in which loan expenditure has taken place. Unfortunately there has arisen a position in connection with group settlements that has necessitated the writing off of a large amount of money. The returns published in the "West Australian" a little while ago indicated that of £1,100,000, that had been invested in some of the group settlements, and which had been taken from loan moneys, £700,000 had to be written off. As that was loan money, the obligation will rest upon the people of the State as a whole to meet the capital charges in connection with it. That is an aspect of loan expenditure that requires serious investigation by those concerned with the financial position of the State. The fact remains that the writing off of that money has placed upon the general public the necessity to pay interest and sinking fund charges on the money spent on the development of the groups generally. That brings me to the next question that is also intimately connected with loan expenditure. I refer to the 3,500 farms scheme. I was gratified to note the remarks of the Premier in another place when he dealt with this question. He pointed out that it had been found necessary to go carefully with regard to future expenditure in that direction. I think the Government were wise in adopting that attitude. It has to be realised that settlement under that scheme will take place in country that has a low rainfall although that rainfall occurs during the growing period of the year. That district may have a small variation in rainfall from year to year, but the fact remains that it is country that has distinct limitations and presents serious dangers to unwise exploitation. I was interested in reading a little while ago the report of the South African Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the con-

ditions of the agricultural industry of that country. The Commission demonstrated one very important fact. It pointed out that there had been a serious decline both in population and stock in a certain area in Cape Colony. That district had been occupied for many years. The Commission pointed out that the area referred to was within the belt receiving a rainfall of 15 inches or less. In that district, owing to the fact that a great deal of the native fodder had been eaten out, the carrying capacity of the country had been seriously reduced. The Commission suggested a series of remedies that ought to be introduced in order to save that part of South Africa. It is significant that the 3,500 farms scheme is to be established in country that has practically the same annual rainfall as that of the South African district I have referred to. During the recess, I took the opportunity to visit a certain part of Australia where stock has been carried for years. In that district they had demonstrated the serious effects of overstocking country that has a small rainfall, and where there is a great variation in connection with that rainfall. As a result of scientific investigations, it has been disclosed that the native fodder plants in that part of the country had adapted themselves to the climatic conditions, that their growth was very slow, and once the plant had been eaten out it followed that the only fodder available for stock consisted of the grasses that sprang up immediately after rainfall. Unfortunately for the permanent carrying of stock, those grasses are of a temporary nature only. The result is that during the dry periods of the year there, the country is denuded of grass. The fodder plants having been previously destroyed, the whole country is more or less an exposed waste. I have certain photographs that I would like hon. members to inspect later on to see what has taken place in the particular locality to which I have referred. It is interesting to note that in California, in South Africa and in the Eastern States scientific investigation has arrived at this specific conclusion. Scientists say that we cannot secure any new exotic plant that will do as well in these dry areas as native shrubbery and grasses. Once the native shrubbery is destroyed, a series of cumulative effects are introduced that are

all detrimental to the carrying capacity of the country. One of the most serious of those defects is soil erosion. When the soil is exposed to the action of wind following upon the denudation of the shrubbery, the wind lifts all the surface soil and carries it away. The result is that when the rain falls it cannot penetrate into the ground, nor are the natural seeds there to germinate. The result of all this is a more or less continuous desert condition in that part of the country. The South African Royal Commission was most emphatic in its statement regarding this position. It is the removal of the surface soil in which the seed germinates that prevents the re-establishment of fodder growth in that part of the country for a long period. The development of the top soil is a matter of centuries. Despite that fact, we find that, through ignorance in handling the problem, the whole of the surface soil is in danger of being carried away and the country left in a critical condition. Coming back to the consideration of the 3,500 farms scheme, the fact remains that those farms are to be established in country where the rainfall is light. There is also the fact that so far the only profitable avenues of agricultural production are represented by wheat and sheep. We know from experience in our dry areas that we are liable to failures with our wheat crop when we have bad seasons. Unless we can carry sheep and provide for a carry-over during the dry periods, either by fodder plants or the conservation of native plants, we are confronted with a serious problem. I consider it is one that, from that aspect alone, merits the serious consideration of the Government, even if it is only in the direction of obtaining scientific information regarding germination of seed in the drier parts of the country. Unfortunately, they seem to have a very low germination factor. Until these two important questions are dealt with, the launching of the 3,500 farms scheme will be attended with risk far in excess of that which we are justified in shouldering.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Are there no natural grasses and herbage in that part of the State?

Hon. H. SEDDON: There are, but I have already pointed out that they are of a temporary character; and in the dry

periods of the year they shrivel off, and the carrying capacity of the country is considerably reduced in consequence. It is top feed that is the stand-by for carrying stock through the year. There is a further aspect of the question of loan expenditure that should receive the consideration of the Government. It is just exactly what results have been obtained from the expenditure of large sums of money, and from that aspect I have to say that the figures I have been able to obtain, although not by any means up to date are certainly very encouraging. The figures deal with the period 1920 to 1927, the latter being the year up to which figures are available. I have taken the increased production of those years and compared it with the increase in the capital charges in regard to loan expenditure and have arrived at this position: In that period the production increased by about 19 million pounds and capital charges increased by about one million pounds. Placing the figures on a percentage basis the production increase was 43 per cent. and the increase in capital charges, 48.7 per cent., so that from that aspect I think we can show a very satisfactory ratio between increased production and the results of our expenditure. There is no doubt, however, that the position could be made considerably better by efficiency and increasing production. There is also the important fact that we have definitely entered upon a period of falling prices. This year, as has been pointed out by a previous speaker, we have had the benefit of the restoration of wheat prices, but it must be recognised that the price for agricultural produce has steadily been declining over the past few years, and the natural result is that with a decrease in the price of our export product, we have a diminishing return each year in production, which means that we have to increase the quantity of our production considerably to obtain the same financial return that we got in the period of high prices. A lower return for wheat will result unless we can increase our acreage. The diminishing amount of money in circulation, too, will have its effect on employment, both in the general services of the State, and in the manufacturing or secondary industries. We have to recognise that the only market we have for our manufactures is the local market, and that the secondary industries are

really living upon the production of the primary industries. From that point of view I would again like to refer to the position created by the borrowing policy that has just been decided upon by the Loan Council. I instance that we have a more or less permanent army of Government employees engaged in construction work. The first charges on the annual borrowing are the capital charges of interest and sinking fund, and it is the excess over those amounts which is available for loan expenditure. That excess will be reduced when borrowing is restricted because you cannot interfere with your capital charges. Therefore the reduction will react directly upon the army of workers engaged in Government construction work, and the unemployment problem will thus be intensified, because money will not be available to provide the necessary work. That fact and the reduced return owing to falling prices, have, I maintain, created a position that has aggravated the present unsatisfactory employment position in Australia. In this particular instance I would like to quote from a book written by Professor Shann of the Western Australian University. The professor quotes certain figures relative to the boom of 1890. The title of the book is "The Boom of 1890 and Now," and it is a history of comparisons made by him between the conditions obtaining in Australia immediately prior to the crisis of 1890 and the position as it is now. Here are his figures—

		Total production. (millions)	External payment. (millions)	Living fund.
1871	...	46.7	8.0	43.7
1881	...	71.1	4.6	66.5
1891	...	96.1	11.6	84.5
1894	...	83.8	11.7 or more	72.1 or less

The total production had fallen because of the fact that there had been a serious decline in the value of our exports. Production had remained high, but the value of the production had diminished, with the result that, because of the period of extreme optimism, there was no reserve to fall back on and the bubble was pricked. There had thus to be a painful and serious readjustment. Professor Shann draws attention to the parallel between the position as it existed in 1894 and as we find it today. I now wish to deal with the question

of unemployment, and again I will quote from Professor Shann's book because it seems particularly appropriate in discussing our financial position generally. In the summary the Professor uses the following words:

I am not insensible to the big contrast between the late eighties and the present, in that we are enjoying good prices for wool and wheat. But the level of the world prices may not prove stable. Wholesale prices have been falling steadily of late, and we cannot afford to mortgage every fresh margin of our living fund. Falling prices and the cessation of overseas credit wrought a painful havoc on the living fund of Australia in the nineties. A like combination of circumstances would do so again.

I have just pointed out that there has been a serious falling of prices during the last few years. The question of overseas credit we have seen is very materially being interfered with, and therefore those factors coming together compel us seriously to think and should act as a warning to any Government to adjust their affairs and make what preparation they can to provide for the position. The unemployment problem which is with us now, appears to have every prospect of increasing, and the present is the time to go into the question thoroughly, with a view to meeting it. There is one reassuring aspect of the position that should be referred to. It has been pointed out by financial authorities throughout Australia that there is no danger of a financial crisis of the type that occurred in the nineties. The banks learnt their lesson solidly, with the result that at the present time we find them taking precautions to guard themselves and their funds against a repetition of the 1890 trouble. We in Western Australia have had our seasonal unemployment problem for a number of years, but it has grown during recent years. I would like to quote certain figures given by the Minister in answer to a question of mine the other day, and compare them with the figures I obtained from the Government Labour Bureau, dealing with the years 1926 to 1929. Taking July when we have a big number of unemployed—owing to the seasonal nature of many of our industries—we find that in 1926 the number of unemployed who registered at the Government Labour Bureau was 1,602. In 1927 the number was 1,591, and in 1928, 2,658. In the present year the

unemployed have been with us throughout the whole twelve months in greater numbers than previously. So we find ourselves confronted with the position that we have a permanent unemployment problem, which has been attributed to various factors, the first and largest being the overflow of unemployed from the Eastern States and another factor that of migration. In addition there is the factor of seasonal fluctuations in employment, there being a big demand at certain periods of the year for men to assist on farms, and also to work for the railways during the removal of the harvest. I would like, also, to stress the position that obtains in the railway service, the figures in respect of which department have a bearing on the enormous increase of unemployment in the month of July. In July, 1924, the total number of persons employed on the railways was 7,734 and the average number of persons employed during the year was 7,682. At the end of the year there were more persons employed on the railways than the average number during the whole of the year. In the year 1925, we find that the total number employed to the 30th June was 7,716, the average number during the year being 7,949. The average number showed an increase. In the year 1929 the total number employed was 9,188 and the average number 9,613. I quote these figures because it seems to me that the policy usually adopted in Government departments of restricting expenditure towards the end of the financial year is reflected in the number of men thrown on the labour market in May and June. If the Government maintained a consecutive programme of employment and kept these men employed on regrading and other important works, we should be improving the working of our railways and at the same time improving the efficiency of the traffic operations. The question has been raised regarding the effect of arbitration. There is no doubt, as has been pointed out, our arbitration system is based on an entirely arbitrary system. The standard of wages is fixed according to the standard of comfort, and until the Arbitration Court is placed in the position of making provision for a more logical basis for fixing wages, so long shall we have this existing state of unbalanced production. There is no doubt that over the year the amount of the wage

fund is reflected in the amount of employment. If we desire to provide increased employment, we should provide production able to carry the wage fund. Naturally, one cannot take more out of the pot than one puts into it. If the wage fund is fixed at a definitely high figure per individual, only a certain number of individuals can be supplied out of that fund, the remainder being unemployed. The answer to the problem, of course, is to ensure that we have a high production per head associated with a high wage fund. In that state of affairs employment within the community would steadily increase. Reference has been made to the effects of freetrade and protection. One member made a great feature during the debate of the effect of the high tariff on employment in the Commonwealth. I do not know that the introduction of freetrade would, in fact, have a beneficial effect on the question of employment. I believe that it would simply mean the throwing upon the labour market of a large number of men who are now engaged in secondary industries; and, in our present position, how would we be in a better situation to employ those men than to employ the men now on the labour market? There is no doubt that the true secret of solving our unemployment problem lies entirely and solely in individual efficiency. We should enable the Arbitration Court, in the absence of any other authority, to determine the standard of efficiency which shall accompany the basic wage. Until that state of affairs is established, we shall have an artificial position existing in Australia. When reading the report of the Railway Department, which was placed before us, I was much interested in taking out a series of figures showing the operating expenses of the department from the years 1924 to 1929. Those figures, I contend, reflect the operation of two very important factors which are associated with Government policy. I contend that those figures reflect the operation, first of all, of the introduction of the principle of 44 hours generally throughout the Government services. I contend, further, that they reflect to a considerable extent the operation of the long service leave which was granted to public departments immediately prior to the last election. When one goes through and compares the railway figures, the comparison can be

made in two ways. We can take the gross figures and compare them, or we can take what I contend is the only satisfactory method of comparison, namely, to compare the figures of production and of expenses per man. Making the comparison on those lines, we obtained some important results. Here are the figures:—

RAILWAY DATA PER MAN EMPLOYED, 1924-1929.							
Item.	1924.	1925.	1926.	1927.	1928.	1929.	
Earnings ...	£420	£422	£404	£408	£414	£391	
Ton miles paying traffic for stock	32,907	34,868	32,942	36,008	38,441	38,186	
Total tons carried	458	404	446	441	452	437	
Paying tons carried	381	400	380	378	385	370	

I contend that those figures are more influenced by the effect of our harvests and the degree of general activity on our railways than by the efficiency of the men. I consider that the factors which show the efficiency of the railway service are reflected in the items of working expenses and number of men employed per mile. As I have already pointed out, the Collier Government took office in the year 1924; and one of their first actions was to introduce the 44-hour week as a general principle of Government Departments. It was in March of 1927 that long service leave was promised, but the manner in which long service leave was introduced into the Government departments was such that its full effect will not be felt until the end of the year 1930. Here are the figures:—

	1924.	1925.	1926.	1927.	1928.	1929.
Working expenses per man	299	296	304	304	312	317
Men employed per mile	2.12	2.06	2.06	2.25	2.34	2.35

From 1928 we see the effect of the introduction of the (Government principle of long service leave upon the operating costs of the Railway Department. I contend that the deductions to be drawn from those figures are these: First of all, there has been a generally improved efficiency in the Railway Department during the years 1924 to 1929. A comparison of the ton-mile figures reflects that, even allowing for seasonal variations. But the working expenses have been increased quite disproportionately by the two factors of the 44 hours and long service leave, with the result that the railway operating expenses have been raised in proportion to the earnings. That is confirmed when one analyses the figures placed before

hon. members. One finds that in 1925 the working expenses were 70.1 per cent. of the earnings, and that in 1929 they were 80.4 per cent. of the earnings. Under those circumstances I contend that the Government have definitely imposed upon the community increased charges in the operation of the railways, which increased charges are reflected in the working expenses, which last year showed an increase of £144,635. The Premier, in referring to the railway figures for last year, stressed the fact that two causes had operated, the first one being the waterside strike, and the second a reduction in the amount of wheat carried. As a matter of fact, if hon. members will turn to Sheet No. 2 of the return placed before them by the Railway Department, they will find that the wheat which was carried in 1929 was 864,536 tons, whereas in 1928 it was 851,229 tons. There was actually an increase in the tonnage of wheat carried during the last financial year. But the returns or earnings from wheat traffic in 1929 were £531,317, whereas in 1928 they were £536,511. Less was carried for a higher return in 1928 than in 1929. Therefore the Premier's statement in that respect will, I think, require further elaboration. The figures show that actually more wheat was carried in 1929, despite the disappointing harvest, than in 1928.

The Honorary Minister: Was it not timber the Premier mentioned particularly?

Hon. H. SEDDON: He mentioned wheat. If the Honorary Minister refers to the Governor's Speech he will find the following passage:—

The estimated wheat yield for the 1928-29 season was not realised. In view, however, of the lack of sufficient rain in many districts throughout the growing period, the actual result was most encouraging . . . . .

Referring to railway returns the Speech says—

The decline in revenue was in part due to the diminished harvest and consequent decrease in wheat haulage, and in part to the waterside strike . . . . .

When speaking on the question of unemployment last year, I made reference to the report of the Development and Migration Commission, which dealt with the question of unemployment and business stability in Australia. That report was commended to hon. members as very thorough, and as containing the results of an exhaustive inquiry

into the question of unemployment in Australia. Certain conclusions were arrived at, and those conclusions were such as would commend themselves to any student of the possibilities of an enormous country like ours. The Commission pointed out that unemployment should not be the serious trouble that it is in Australia if only the question was scientifically handled, and if only a permanent committee was appointed to continuously watch and investigate the question of unemployment. Referring to the question of statistics, the report points out that if the necessary statistics were made available they would help to improve affairs, to measure the force of the labour market, to indicate the intensity of employment and unemployment, and afford an indication of the course of production and of fluctuations in the volume of purchasing power of wage earners. The question of investigation was very seriously stressed by the Commission; and I know that if one attempts to make an analysis of the trend of affairs in Australia, and also in Western Australia, one finds oneself continually handicapped by the fact that the statistics available are insufficient and that many statistics which are urgently required cannot be obtained at all. The report points out that the work of an unemployment committee would be very considerably helped if data were made available by statistical officers in order that the committee might be able to compare the trend of affairs. There is one question which I think we should ask ourselves, and it is whether we are justified in importing from the East goods which we can employ our own people in making. That point has been stressed by another member in the course of the present debate. When we realise the position which has been attained in the matter of supplying ourselves with butter, for example, it is an indication to the community generally and to the Government of the possibilities of finding employment for our own people in supplying our own requirements, instead of spending so much money as we do in the East. Referring to page 27 of the report of the Commission, the following passage appears:—

A more uniform system of employment bureaux would (1) greatly increase the mobility of labour, facilitate the speedy filling of vacancies, and abolish the evils of chance selection; (2) tend to abolish the labour reserves of individual industries, concentrating

them into one and thus reducing the aggregate number of workers involved; (3) provide the most efficient data in regard to aggregate and percentage unemployment, and facilitate the enumeration of causes, and the elaboration of classification within industries; (4) direct attention to the over-supply and under-supply of labour in various industries, indicate rising and declining trades, and facilitate the transference to other industries of men displaced from declining trades; (5) facilitate the determination of the unemployed element; (6) furnish essential advice to vocational guidance authorities; (7) constitute the basis of an indispensable unit in any scheme for unemployment insurance.

The recommendations on page 28 are very important, and there is one which I would commend to the Government's serious consideration. Recommendation No. 8 is that the State Governments be invited to consider constituting in each State a representative committee to be known as the Industrial Stability Committee, and to study the incidence of seasonal fluctuations and formulate plans for their correction. On page 32, reference is made to the operation of price movements and the business cycle in Australia, and Professor Copeland, in the course of a very interesting report, points out the following facts:—

The relationship between unemployment and price fluctuations observed in the period 1920-23 may be analysed as follows:—(1) A rapid falling in prices has always been accompanied by a marked increase in unemployment. (2) A rise in prices not exceeding certain limits has almost invariably been accompanied by a marked reduction of unemployment. (3) A violent rise in prices such as has taken place in certain countries as the result of catastrophic inflation has ultimately led to a crisis in unemployment. (4) A period of price stabilisation following such a rise has been characterised first by an increase in unemployment, but soon after by a gradual revival of employment. (5) When the stabilisation of prices has followed a period of falling prices, the reduction of unemployment has been slow. (6) When the stabilisation of prices has followed a moderate rise, the rapid improvement in the labour market which had accompanied the rise has continued, or the high level of activity reached has been maintained.

Those quotations will serve to stress the importance of this report. I am quite convinced that the putting into operation of the recommendations contained therein would be of great benefit to the State, and would enable us to deal with our unemployment problem far more effectively than we

have been able to do in the past. I wish to direct attention to the return placed on the Table by the Chief Secretary when asked for the number of men engaged at the State Labour Bureau (a) by Government departments; (b) by municipal authorities; and (c) by other employers. Because there is a very significant fact standing out in those figures, namely that during certain times of the year Government engagements were considerably reduced in number and municipal engagements were entirely missing, whereas the number of men engaged by private employers remained more or less continuous throughout the year. All the evidence stresses the recommendation in the report that a permanent committee be appointed to deal with this question of unemployment from the long view. If we are going to absorb our unemployed and deal with seasonal fluctuations it will be necessary to have plans prepared in good time and it will be necessary also to lay out a programme of work which would enable the employment figure to be kept more or less constant. In the report of the Arbitration Court some 12 months ago the President and one of the members very strongly stressed the need the court found for adequate statistics. They pointed out that their determinations were considerably handicapped by the fact that there were not available the statistics they wanted to determine adequately and accurately the scientific or economic side of an industrial problem. Now there are one or two other questions I wish to refer to. The first is that of the interim report of the Main Roads select committee. I regret that the Government did not see their way clear to carry out the request of that committee and appoint them a Royal Commission in order that they might continue their work during the recess. Anybody who has read our report will realise that there were several very important questions that had arisen in the course of our investigations and which required careful attention. There was the evidence that considerable amendments were needed to the Main Roads Act, and also the very important question of being unable to obtain from the motor traffic, which has such a heavy effect on the wear and tear on our roads, adequate fees to maintain those roads. It now seems that a petrol tax cannot be put

into operation. Unfortunately the select committee were handicapped by the fact that very few practical suggestions were made to improve the position and obviate some of the difficulties. The suggestion put forward by Mr. Tindale, the chairman of the board, apparently was the only real attempt made to grapple with the position. I really think that in the forecasted legislation this question should be thoroughly gone into; because there will have to be very serious re-adjustments of the revenue received from motor traffic for main road purposes, and a re-adjustment also of the allocations made to the local authorities by the Main Roads Board. Again, in our report, we touched on the difficulties arising from the divided control due to the existence of a board of three members. From the evidence put before us it was clear that there had been lack of efficiency due to that fact, and the committee felt justified in putting forward the view that far better results would be obtained by the institution of a system such as that in Queensland and South Australia, under which the control of the roads is placed in the hands of a Commissioner, who is made solely responsible for the operations of his department and who is left untrammelled in the carrying out of his administration. Personally, I feel convinced that that is a most important factor in regard to the efficiency of the operations of the Main Roads Board. And since the Main Roads Board during the next 12 months will be entrusted with a very large expenditure, they should be given every facility for carrying out their operations in the most efficient possible way. I thoroughly sympathise with the attitude taken up by the Premier on the question of setting aside forest lands and not allowing them to be used for agricultural purposes. On general principles I should say the Premier has taken a stand which should merit the commendation of the community generally. He has required some very strong evidence to be placed before him ere he would consent to the forest lands being alienated and used for agricultural purposes.

Hon. W. J. Mann: He was never asked to alienate the forest lands. He was asked to make available agricultural lands in forest areas.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Evidently from the standpoint of forestry, the Premier's attitude on this occasion was perfectly right, and should commend itself from the standpoint of conserving the forestry resources of the State. In conclusion I wish to stress a hardy annual in relation to the mining industry, namely the fact that there does not exist any provision for those men who have been the most important factor in the development of the mining industry of this State. I refer to lack of provision being made for the relief of the prospectors whose health has been permanently damaged in following the mining industry. I have had brought under my notice a number of cases of prospectors who have been working out in the bush practically the whole of their lives, and who eventually have drifted into Kalgoorlie and tried to obtain work on the mines. Those men have done more to establish the gold mining industry in Western Australia than has any other section in the industry. They come in from the bush and try to get employment as wages men on the mines, and the mine managers at once refer them to the laboratory. For there is in existence a regulation prohibiting the employment on the mines of any man without a clean certificate of health. Those prospectors submit themselves for medical examination, and because their lungs are more or less affected they are unable to get a clean bill of health and so they cannot obtain employment on the mines. At the same time, owing to the construction of the Miners' Phthisis Act, they are unable to secure compensation for the damage done to their lungs. The Act provides only for wages men and others employed on a mine, and makes no provision for compensating men unless they have been engaged in working in a mine. That is an anomaly that requires rectification, if only because of what the country owes to those men who have spent the whole of their lives in endeavouring to discover new properties and so increase production in one of the most important of our primary industries. In regard to the question of compensation legislation dealing with men who have been dusted, I say the whole thing is long overdue for revision and consolidation. There is not the slightest doubt that the important report put forward by Dr. Nelson of his investigations shows a set of con-

ditions touching the men's lungs which could be readily ascertained by X-Ray examination, and he says the men can be readily classified into three or four different classes. In those circumstances it should be quite within the scope of a practical scheme to lay down a project of relative compensation so that the man whose lungs are only slightly dusted will receive a small compensation, while the man whose lungs have been more seriously damaged will receive greater compensation. Many of these men are induced to continue to imperil their health by remaining in the industry until, in consequence of the advance made by the disease, they are definitely put off, whereas in their own interests should have left the industry at a much earlier date and sought some other avocation. In a large proportion of instances it is only consideration for their wives and families that have induced them to remain in the mines. I see there is forecasted an amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act. One very important amendment that this House should insist upon is the abolition of the lump sum settlement. I have had one case brought under my notice in which a widow received a lump sum settlement on account of the death of her husband. The amount she received was £600. But within 18 months afterwards that woman came to me, or sent to me a message, asking if she could get State aid for herself and her children. That is a state of affairs which should not be allowed to arise. Had that compensation been paid to the woman periodically over a given time, it would have been wisely expended for the purpose for which it was granted. Clearly, the Act meant that the money should be available to make good to the family the loss they had suffered by the death of their breadwinner. But the lump sum settlement meant that the greater part of this money was more or less wasted, and in consequence the widow and family were thrown on the resources of the State very shortly afterwards. Other instances have come under my notice in which the lump sum settlement has worked to the prejudice of those who received it. It should be within the function of the Government to see that these settlements are paid in weekly contributions until exhausted, and that they are spread over a long period of time to enable the injured worker to regain a standard of efficiency which would fit him to earn his full wages and, on the

other hand, prevent him from foolishly handling the money in a lump sum. There is one final request I wish to prefer because it applies particularly to the mining industry. Difficulties have been arising in Western Australia when persons who were small shareholders in mining and other companies here have died and have left their property to people residing in another State. Those people have obtained probate in the State concerned, but before they could get a transfer of the shares in the name of the deceased person in Western Australia, it was necessary for them to obtain probate in this State. The peculiar position has arisen that a number of shares worth perhaps a few shillings, or one or two pounds at the most, have been in dispute and a transfer has not been registered because the cost of obtaining probate in this State would have run into pounds. That is a state of affairs which I think any Government would prefer should not continue. It is only a trivial matter, but it has resulted in a very large number of shares remaining in the names of deceased persons on the books of various companies—shares that should rightly belong to other people—but those people cannot get a transfer of the shares because the cost of obtaining probate would exceed the value of the shares.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The same thing applies with regard to the other States. If a person dies here leaving a few shares in a company in another State, it is necessary to obtain probate there.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes. It might be possible for the Government to devise means to overcome the difficulty by the payment of a nominal fee, so that a transfer could be executed without the expense and trouble of obtaining probate. I commend this matter to the consideration of the Government because it is causing a certain amount of trouble and dissatisfaction with regard to the companies concerned. I have pleasure in supporting the motion and hope that the suggestions made will receive the consideration of the Government.

On Motion by Hon. E. H. Harris, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.33 p.m.*