

Legislative Assembly.*Wednesday, 24th August, 1938.*

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

QUESTION—BRAN AND POLLARD, PRICE.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware that the "West Australian" of 4th August reported that a day or so earlier several shipments of produce, including one of 900 tons of bran, were despatched to the Eastern States? 2, Further, is the Minister aware that on 17th August it was reported that the price of both bran and pollard in Sydney had dropped 10s. per ton, bringing the Sydney price to £6 10s., and that on that date the price in Perth was £7 per ton, less 5s. per ton discount? 3, Is he able to advise why, in spite of cost of transport to the Eastern States, the price of offal in Western Australia has not yet been reduced?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, No.

QUESTION—HEATHCOTE MENTAL HOME.

Nurse Pryor's Appointment.

Mr. HUGHES asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary: 1, Is it intended to lay on the Table of the House the file dealing with the application, medical examinations and appointment of Nurse Pryor to Heathcote Mental Home? 2, What are the terms of Nurse Pryor's appointment? 3, What salary is she to receive? 4, Who appointed her on the staff at Heathcote?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, Appointed as a nurse to undergo mental training with one year's seniority over ordinary first year trainees. 3, Salary and conditions as under the provisions of Court of Arbitration award for nurses—No. 5/1935, £2 11s. per week. 4,

Appointed by the Inspector General of the Insane after receiving an instruction to do so from the Minister controlling the department.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

Westland Express and East-West Line.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the scheduled average speed per hour for the Westland Express? 2, What is the scheduled average speed per hour on the East-West Railway? 3, What are the respective ruling grades? 4, What is the ruling grade of the proposed East-West route from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, 25 miles per hour including stops. 2, Kalgoorlie-Port Pirie, 37.8 miles per hour including stops. 3, Perth-Northam, 1 in 40; Northam-Kalgoorlie, 1 in 60; Kalgoorlie-Port Pirie, information not available. 4, 1 in 80.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

MR. DOUST (Nelson) [4.37]: I have already conveyed personally to the Speaker and to the Minister for Mines and Health my congratulations on their elevation to the positions they now occupy. I do not intend to do so again, although possibly members expect me, as the Leader of the Independent Party in this House, to do so. To the newer members of the Chamber—and I include myself in that category—I offer my sympathy.

I propose to confine my remarks as far as possible to one subject, and I find it somewhat difficult to make an approach to that subject in the manner that I consider its importance demands. A few days ago the Premier described as dreary and dismal the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition. I recognise that it is not politic to make reflections and cast aspersions on the State and its ability to support the people in it, but I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the outlook at the present time is not bright. That being so, the hon. member was justified in drawing the Government's attention to the existing conditions, with a view to discovering whether it is not possible to make provision against the difficult situation with which we are likely to be faced in the near future. The hon.

gentleman's comments, of course, had special reference to the disastrous price war in most of our primary products, particularly wheat, wool, timber and fruit, and it would be possible to mention a number of others. At the moment there is a ray of light in the fat-lamb and pig industries, but I regret to say that I feel sure it is only a passing gleam. Before we are able to organise those industries to any appreciable extent, the markets from which we now derive such good prices, based on London parity, will almost certainly have fallen. It appears to me that for those products which are so largely grown in Western Australia—particularly wheat—no foreign markets are available. Other countries do not appear to find it necessary to purchase our wheat. It may be said that they do not require it; but that is hardly so, for no matter how much they need it to feed their people, they evidently have not the money to pay the price demanded. That price will give the Australian farmer a fair return for his labour.

If no export trade can be carried on from Australia—and it is almost impossible to visualise the continuance of export of wheat at its present price—two things must sooner or later occur, and occur they certainly will. We have to export, first of all and primarily, to pay for the goods we are obliged to import. If there is no export from Australia, it follows as the night the day that there cannot be any imports into Australia. There are certain tropical products, particularly tea, coffee, cocoa and various spices, but most important of all, fuel and oil, that we must import, because they cannot be either grown or manufactured in Australia. If we are unable to import them, our standard of enjoyment must necessarily be lowered greatly. There is another reason why the Australian people must export products, and that is the payment of interest on our oversea debts. If we had to repudiate the payment of that interest, it would be considered a disaster. That is to say, it would be considered a disaster if we were to continue on the lines of our present financial system. But no matter how many trials and tribulations the Australian people will have to face, we have been informed by Sir Robert Gibson, by Sir Otto Niemeyer, and by the financial advisers of the Federal Government that it is much more important to pay our debts than that the Australian people should enjoy a fair standard of liv-

ing. I desire, at least under present conditions, to subscribe to those tenets.

Mr. North: British protection is worth more than the interest.

Mr. DOUST: That remark is not actually relevant to what I have to say, but I agree with it so far as it is humanly possible—no, that is hardly the right word; so far as it is necessary. Repudiation of any contract, whether verbal or written, is absolutely repugnant to my conscience, repugnant to my sense of justice and rectitude; and I feel quite certain that it is repugnant to the minds of the majority of the Australian people. However, if we are unable to export, if we are unable to secure reasonable prices for our products, how are we to pay for imports or pay interest on our debts? The time will come—and I am afraid that it will come much sooner than many people expect—when we shall have to face those troubles. It is a physical impossibility to pay our way if we cannot export. I visualise the time when—though such action may be considered and termed repudiation—the physical impossibility of paying must bring about a cessation of payments that will be legally justified and equitable. What is the position to-day in that regard? Nearly all countries, with the exception only of the United States of America and Finland, have repudiated, and are not paying interest on money borrowed. I know perfectly well that those countries that have repudiated will never be able to pay. It is only a few short years since a chap of the name of Rufus Isaacs went to America and pledged the people of England to repay to the United States £2,000,000,000 in gold. Then he returned to England and changed his name. After achieving that brilliant bit of work, pledging the English people to do something physically impossible, he was created Lord Reading. I am sure that change of name to a great extent hides his nationality, and also hides the reason why we have so much trouble with certain people in Germany and Austria to-day.

Mr. Raphael: What was his name? "Readingstein"?

Mr. DOUST: I do not consider that interjection relevant. Digressing for a moment, I think it would be well to amend our Standing Orders so as to provide that any man who makes a hobby of keeping parrots or paroquets or rosellas should not be allowed

to make any of these psittacine, chattering interjections that are heard in the House. They are seldom relevant, rarely entertaining, and never educational.

We have a limited capacity to pay debts, and that limit is definitely bounded by our ability to market our products. This brings me to the question of finding profitable or payable markets, which at present are non-existent. To enable farmers and those engaged in primary production to remain on their properties, it is necessary to introduce a home consumption price for wheat. I believe a majority of the members of this House are convinced of that. Our present prices are not in accordance with the world parity rates, but are merely the dumping prices on the London market, regulated by the surplus supplies from other countries. All countries, with the exception of those in Asia, enjoy home prices for their products. In the United States of America, Canada, New Zealand, Germany, France and, in fact, all European countries, far higher prices rule than what we refer to as "London prices." As I have already indicated, the London rates are merely dumping prices, and we should not in any circumstances take them into consideration. Apart from the Asiatic countries, Australia is the only country to-day accepting London prices for its primary products, and in that respect we are in competition with what can be described only as coolie-paid labour. Such prices compel a standard of living that admits of an existence only, with no possibility of enjoyment or comfort among our people. They do not admit of our meeting our debts and interest commitments even within our own State. We have to look for some remedy, and, in my opinion, it is to be found in a home market. I believe that is so owing to the fact that Federal legislation provides home consumption prices for all our secondary industries. If a certain proportion of the people of Australia is entitled to enjoy a reasonable standard of living owing to the operation of tariffs that have been instituted by various Federal Governments, then surely another section that so far has not been able to enjoy such benefits is entitled to similar consideration. Surely the farmers of Australia are entitled to enjoy a standard of living in consonance with that enjoyed by the workers, manufacturers and employers

engaged in secondary industries. Will anyone dare deny that? Has any individual lost his sense of proportion to such an extent that he would be prepared to argue along those lines? There is one way and one method only, so far as I can judge, by which this injustice to the primary producers can be rectified, and that task is the duty of the Government. I refer to the Government that has the power—the Federal Government. I am perfectly certain that the State Governments are absolutely impotent to afford relief that would be effective or would meet the situation for any considerable time. A few weeks ago we read in the Press that there was somewhat of a squabble between the leaders of the two Opposition parties in this House on the possibilities of a coalition Government after the next general election. The dispute was more particularly on the question of marketing arrangements. I feel quite sure that, although that prospect was held out to the electors like a bunch of carrots, both the gentlemen in question are perfectly well aware that, even should they be permitted to control the destinies of the State, they would be incapable of assisting the people concerned in an endeavour to rectify this exceedingly difficult problem. To my mind it represents so much deception of the people, so much "hokey." It simply suggests an attempt to placate people who have almost reached the nethermost depths of despair. For my part, I consider it necessary that we should look beyond the State Government for assistance with regard to marketing legislation. Although I almost detest saying it, I believe that even to-day the Federal Country Party could force the Commonwealth Parliament to agree to everything we require. That party is in a position to do so. It is quite evident that the National members of the Federal Government would willingly give way to their Country Party colleagues and grant their just requirements in the interests of the primary producers of the Commonwealth sooner than lose their support. It seems extraordinary to me that those Ministers, knowing the position that exists to-day and appreciating how necessary it is to assist the men on the land, are prepared, so it appears to me, to prostitute the pledges they made to the primary producers in order to keep a Labour Government out of office.

or, alternatively, to retain the emoluments they receive as Ministers of the Crown.

Mr. Needham: And their trips to Europe.

Mr. DOUST: Trips to Europe do not worry them very much. I consider they must regard the men on the land as of more importance than the official positions those Ministers may hold in the Federal sphere. In Australia at present we have an excise and bounty system with regard to butter. While that is a Federal matter, it was not inaugurated by a Federal Government. In any case it is only a palliative, and while it works moderately well at the present time, it will not be long before the position becomes too heavy and will fail and fall. We must remember that this system of excise is only another form of taxation, and it is a tax that is most unscientific in its ramifications. It falls on people least able to bear it. Consequently I am very much opposed to what are known as the excise and bounty systems. There is also what is known as the levy principle and that likewise is another system of taxation that falls on the shoulders of the poorer people. Neither can that in any way be regarded as a scientific form of taxation. Recently the price of butter fat was increased to 1s. 5d. per lb. or about 160s. per cwt. Many people, particularly those in the cities, those not quite au fait with the position, consider that the farmers are receiving the whole 1s. 5d. per lb. That is not so, not by any stretch of imagination. At the present time the levy is 10 per cent. and yet the farmers are getting only 1s. 2¾d. for their choice butter and 1s. 2½d. for first-grade.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Butter fat or butter?

Mr. DOUST: Butter fat and 1s. 0½d. for second grade. What do we find? The position is that in Perth it is not possible to buy a pound of butter under 1s. 7½d. in some places, and 1s. 8d. in others, and in our own towns of the South-West—and I suppose the position is similar on the gold-fields—we have to pay 1s. 9d. The difference between the producer and the consumer is far too great, and when we consider that our production of butter fat is increasing each year to the extent of something like 10 to 15 per cent., whilst our population is only increasing at the rate of 2¾ per cent. it means that we will have to export the whole of our increased production each year. If that is so, it will be only a few years

before the farmer can equate the loss made on the butter exported and we shall be getting only 10d. or 11d. per lb. for our butter fat. Then if the London price is reduced from about 120s. as it is to-day to about 60s., the figure at which it was about three years ago, the levies must be greatly increased and our prices will be decreased further. The further we go the poorer the farmers become and it will not be many years before we will again be in practically the same position that we found ourselves in a few years ago. Therefore it will be realised that the system of levying on exports to increase the price to consumers is not equitable. Even our present prices, which are considered to be so beneficial to the farmer, are merely based on a gentlemen's agreement which can be broken any day or any minute; and it might be broken within the next two or three months. There is one firm or company in the South-West that has refused to sign this agreement. There always appears to be someone in connection with financial transactions of this type who does not play the part of the gentleman, and when his interests are jeopardised he is no longer a gentleman and he is prepared to break a pledge if he finds that it will pay him to do so. When anything like that happens, irretrievable damage is done and especially where a farming community is concerned. The interests of producers are not respected in the slightest degree. During last November and December one particular company was acting as agents for the Dairy Products Marketing Board and collected from the producers of butter fat a levy, the total of which I understand was in the vicinity of £1,700. Although the Dairy Products Marketing Board sued the company for the sum of only £1,300, the action was withdrawn, and nothing has been paid.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: From how many farmers was the money collected?

Mr. DOUST: I am not able to tell the hon. member because the company in question has factories outside my district and a guess might prove wrong and lead to some difficulty or perhaps a denial that my remarks were not true. I suggest that if, say an insurance company's agent collected certain moneys that belonged to the company and kept those moneys for his own use—just as the company to which I have referred has kept the money it collected for its own

purposes—he would be considered an embezzler and would probably be sent to gaol. That, however, does not appear to be the case with a company that is prepared to deduct 10 or 15 per cent. from the farmer's proceeds and retains the money for its own use instead of paying it all to the Dairy Products Marketing Board, which board is justly entitled to the money. But apparently nothing of that nature can be done because our Marketing Act is in some way ultra vires Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. I wish to be fair and say that the company does not consider the retention of the money to be embezzlement, and it does not consider it to be petty thieving or robbing the farmers. The company declares it has been compelled to pay an increased price for the milk that has to be converted into cheese. I wish hon. members to become acquainted with the fact that any milk converted into cheese does not carry a levy, nor has any levy been sought from the company by the Dairy Products Marketing Board. The company in question makes what is known as standardised cheese, that is, milk containing three per cent. of butter fat. The milk it purchases probably contains from 3.6 to 5.6 per cent. of butter fat and consequently the company is able to dispose of from 25 to 30 per cent. of the fat from that milk before converting the balance of the milk into cheese. It is on that 25 to 30 per cent. that the company refuses to pay the levy, although one of the factories of this company has been purchasing all the milk that it can possibly get, and separating the whole of the butter from that milk, and then converting the skim milk into another dairy product known as casein. The company also considered that the levy should not be paid on that butter fat, and at this stage I point out that the other cheese manufacturers are paying the same price for their whole milk as the people about whom I am complaining—and they are quite satisfied to do so—and to pay the levy to the board. What is most important is that they find they can purchase whole milk at the price paid by the defaulting company and make a profit. If one concern can do that, why cannot the others? It is, of course, the usual procedure. There is a reason for that, because if the company about which I am complaining did not guarantee to pay a higher price, did not guarantee to give a better grade of butter fat, and did not guarantee to give bet-

ter tests, it would find that it was impossible to purchase dairy products from the farmers. But in carrying out those guarantees, the company is acting dishonestly by giving the farmer something to which he is not entitled, and when the farmers are given something to which they are not entitled, then it becomes impossible to carry on in opposition to the co-operative concerns. The result is then that money has to be obtained by other means—taking money that does not belong to them, money that belongs either to the farmers or to the marketing board. So that they may compete in the dairying industry, they find it necessary to plunder the farmer. I do not know how long other companies interested in the disposal of dairy produce will allow this to continue. It is quite impossible for them to compete honestly with someone who is acting dishonestly. I am given to understand, on authentic authority, that another company manufacturing butter has given notice to the Dairy Products Marketing Board that it will refuse to pay the levy if the Manjimup Company does not pay it. Should that happen, then the vaunted protection which we consider so essential to the dairy farmers will certainly be gone, and we shall return to the position that prevailed some four or five years ago, when the price of butter fat was 7½d. per lb. If our dairy marketing scheme in Western Australia fails, then I am firmly of the opinion that the Australian scheme must fail also, because the other States will not allow the Western Australian companies to export the whole of our butter to the Eastern States instead of to London. If we have home consumption prices, let us steer clear of gentlemen's agreements and of the levy system, because either will sooner or later lead to disaster. Keep a wide berth of excise, because that definitely is a form of unscientific taxation. Let us use our influence in every way possible, but honestly, to compel our present master, the Federal Government, to introduce legislation providing for the payment of a straight-out bounty or an Australian price. If we attempt to achieve our end by other means, we shall be merely playing with the position; sooner or later we shall be bound to fail.

I have many other subjects on which I could dilate and perhaps devote half an hour to each, but other opportunities will occur in the near future when I shall be able to deal with them much more appropriately. I refer particularly to the deplorable posi-

tion of our tobacco growers, the depressed state of the timber industry, and the consequent unemployment therein, especially of single men. It is comforting to learn that the Minister for Agriculture, during his recent visit to Ceylon or India, has succeeded in securing an order for about 150,000 sleepers, worth about £40,000. So that for the present and the immediate future there will be more employment in the timber industry, which has passed through a very bad time during the last six months.

The Lieutenant-Governor, in his Speech, indicated that the Government would be bringing forward legislation during the present session. I hope the Government will bear in mind when dealing with taxation measures, the fact that after next Christmas we shall also have to contribute to the national insurance scheme. Legislation is also to be brought forward dealing with workers' homes and the granting of borrowing powers to local government authorities. I would also mention the want of educational facilities in country districts, and our puerile system of vermin taxation and vermin destruction. These are all matters requiring the mature and careful consideration of the House. Members have been saying a lot about them for a long time, but I am afraid these matters are not getting much better. As I have said, I will deal with them at a later date. I take the opportunity of thanking members for hearing with me so patiently during my address.

MR. WILLMOTT (Sussex) [5.22]: I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your attainment of your high position. I can assure you that I, as a new member, shall look to you for guidance. I must confess that the procedure followed in this Chamber is rather difficult for me to understand at present, but I hope that in the very near future, under your guidance, I shall be acting strictly in accordance with the Standing Orders. I desire also to thank the previous speakers for the way in which they have welcomed both the member for Hannans and myself to the House. I appreciate very much indeed the manner in which members have accepted me. I take the opportunity to pay a high tribute to the former member for Sussex, the late Mr. Vernon Brockman. He was extremely popular and his generosity was known to many. He had close friends among all sections of his electorate.

Hon. members no doubt have noticed that there is a movement on foot to perpetuate his memory in his own home town of Nan-nup. I regret to say that I am still under doctor's orders and so must not speak at length. I am, however, rapidly regaining my health and trust soon to be able to take a much keener interest in the proceedings of the House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. WILLMOTT: I trust that my participation in the debate will prove of benefit to my electors. I am pleased that the Government, although it has taken some considerable time to arrive at a decision to do so, has commenced the rebuilding of Cave House. The Government should do more in the way of advertising the South-West as a tourist resort. The South-West has many attractions. We have there some of the finest scenery and caves to be found in Australia. Perhaps the Government could make arrangements with the shipping companies whereby people passing through Fremantle could take a trip to the caves and view the scenery. Thanks to the Main Roads Board, we have wonderfully good roads in most parts of the South-West, although I admit we need more. While on the subject of main roads, I wish to congratulate all the officers connected with the Main Roads Board on the excellent work they have accomplished during the last few years. The road from Perth to Busselton, about 150 miles, is bitumenised the whole distance, and I regard that as a great achievement on the part of the officials concerned.

I am pleased to note the way in which the Government is employing single sustenance men in clearing up vacant holdings in the group areas; but I think some of the older settlers should be given a little assistance on the same lines. The old settlers are still battling very hard for a crust, and so I hope the Government will extend consideration to them. I would also advocate very strongly that young men, sons of present settlers in those areas, should be allowed to take up some of the vacant holdings. At present, a young man who is not married is debarred from taking up a holding. Boys who have been reared and trained on dairy farms should get the opportunity to take up some of the vacant holdings.

Mr. Marshall: If they were permitted to do so, they would be more likely to marry.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Some of them are too young to marry; they cannot think about marriage, because they cannot afford it. There is one matter in portions of my electorate about which we are very much concerned, and I suppose many other places in Western Australia are also concerned about it, and that is the rabbit pest. In parts of my district the rabbit menance has become very serious. I hope the Government will be able to persuade the Commonwealth authorities to allow us to have the use of the new virus at an early date. It seems that the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research has made several trials and experiments, and has found that the virus is perfectly safe in the case of domesticated animals and human beings. The virus will not, however, spread from one warren to another. If we had the virus here, we could possibly find some way—it is easy enough to trap rabbits on small holdings—to infect rabbits from one warren and put them into another. The rabbits are doing such a great deal of harm that anything that would keep them down would be of great assistance to settlers.

We heard a good deal from the member for Nelson about the dispute that has arisen over payments into the equalisation fund. This fund is controlled by the Dairy Products Marketing Board. The situation is vital to the dairying industry. If the equalisation scheme in this State were to break down, it would be a very serious matter for the dairy farmers concerned. I feel sure, too, that if it broke down here, this would affect prices throughout the Commonwealth. It is unreasonable and unfair that the producers should be asked to accept world parity prices for their butter fat. The consuming public realises the position and, I think, would be in accord with the idea of preventing the industry from falling into a bad way. It is of great importance to the farming community in the South-West that the Government should endeavour to procure the services of more veterinary surgeons. I know there is a scarcity of such experts at present, but the necessity for the treatment of animals is frequently arising, and it is difficult to obtain advice. The suggestion has been made that cheap electric power should be provided in country districts. Some time ago a scheme was prepared for the generation of power at Collie and its transmission from that centre. I

urge upon the Government to endeavour to provide means whereby cheap power can be supplied from Collie to adjoining districts, not only for township purposes but for use by the farming community in general. Cheap electric power would be of great advantage to all concerned in the South-West.

I appreciate very much the good work that has been done in connection with forests regeneration, and feel sure that the money devoted to this work will be well spent. The department is also doing good work in respect to pine planting. If this scheme is proceeded with, the State should derive considerable benefit from it. Pines, however, should be grown on suitable soil, and not on good agricultural land, such as has been the case in some instances. The timber industry has had a serious setback. Those concerned in it have had a worrying time. In my district two mills have been closed down and a number of men have had to go on sustenance. Possibly the Government could reduce railage and wharfage charges so that the industry could more readily compete on the overseas markets. All timber should be shipped from the nearest port. If this were done, the Government would be saved much employment relief and the industry might be able to pay its way. When mills are closed down, those engaged in them are forced on to sustenance work. In my district I have not been able to find work for all, and it has been necessary to send a number of married men into other areas to obtain employment. Those men are keeping two homes going, one for the wife and family and the other for themselves. They are, therefore, suffering great hardship. It is not a fair proposition.

I am afraid I have had to congratulate the Government concerning many matters, but I must also congratulate Ministers upon the extensions to be made to the Busselton Hospital. I have seen the plans and think the building is going to be a fine one. I am sure it will be a boon to the medical as well as the nursing staffs. I do think, however, that the amount that has to be found by the ratepayers of Busselton and the surrounding district, a sum of about £2,800, will represent a heavy burden to those concerned. The area takes in only the Busselton and Sussex Road Boards, for the adjoining areas have hospitals of their own. I hope, however, we shall be able to raise the money.

The Minister for Mines: The point is that you have the hospital.

Mr. WILLMOTT: We shall have it very shortly.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [5.40]: I join with other members in congratulating you, Sir, upon your recent appointment. Such congratulations have been very numerous, I am glad to say, and I concur in all that has been said. I also congratulate the member for Sussex (Mr. Willmott) upon the speech he has made. I know him very well, and also know the disabilities under which he has entered the House. In all the circumstances, I consider he made a wonderful effort. At this time last year I was very concerned about the financial emergency tax, and also the hospital tax. It is pleasing to note from the Speech that the emergency tax is to be amalgamated with the income tax. I do not know what principle will be followed, but it should be something better than we have had since the depression period started.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It could not be much worse, could it?

Mr. WITHERS: Not much worse for a particular section of the community, namely, those who are least able to pay, and do not receive the deductions under the financial emergency scheme that I hope they will get under the scheme of amalgamation. If, during the session, the Government can get through an amalgamation of taxation along the lines suggested, wonderful relief will be afforded in Western Australia, and it will be an achievement that will redound to the credit of the Government.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: So long as it is not loaded.

Mr. WITHERS: I am sure it will not be top-heavy, or may I say, bottom-heavy? On the question of the hospital tax, I should like to refer to the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition when he was Minister for Health. I blame him for the introduction of that tax, and I blame the present Government for continuing it in its present form.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: You would not have had the Sussex Hospital but for that tax.

Mr. WITHERS: Possibly not. I say in all fairness to the Medical Department that, when I have put up cases to it, I have had a considerable amount of money written off.

My contention is that it should never be necessary for the member for the district to approach the department on a matter of this sort. Men who cannot afford to pay any fees, and members of their families, may have to enter hospitals and it should not be necessary for those people to have to ask the member for the district to go to the department and make a statement that they are not in a position to pay anything, and thus induce the department to write off the cost.

The Minister for Health: The trouble is that they go to the member first, and do not give the department an opportunity to write off anything.

Mr. WITHERS: When people were exempted up to £230 per annum, there was no trouble. There is a certain exemption today. If the authorities think a person is in a position to pay, they expect him to pay. The present Minister for Health was one of the greatest opponents of the measure in question at the time it was brought down. If members will look up "Hansard," they can read what he said when sitting in Opposition, at the time when the then Minister for Health brought down the amendment to which I have referred. They will see the extent to which he opposed the amendment on that occasion. Ever since its introduction the amendment has had that effect. The then Minister for Health told us during the discussion in Parliament that all he desired was to ensure that a person who possibly had a banking account and yet did not receive £230 income for that year should pay hospital fees. We were asked whether such a person should not pay, and when we agreed that he should, the then Minister said that was all he wanted. To-day, however, when any workers or members of their families have to go to hospital, they are called upon to prove that they are not in a position to pay.

The Minister for Health: Why should not such people pay?

Mr. WITHERS: Why should they?

The Minister for Health: I know of people with £1,000 in the bank that thought they ought not to pay.

Mr. Styants: And girls who are not in a position to pay have been harassed by the department.

Mr. WITHERS: If a man is on sustenance or is a casual worker on the wharf, he does not earn sufficient money during the

year to enable him to pay hospital fees when he or his family needs hospital treatment. Such a man has already paid the hospital tax. Of course we pay the tax and we have to pay hospital fees, but that is because we are in a position to pay. A man who is on the bread line all the time cannot afford to pay hospital fees, and it should be possible for him to explain his inability to pay without members of Parliament being called in to substantiate his statement. I quite agree that the officials of the department are most sympathetic. I have no complaints whatever against the department, but the officials have their job to do. In our anxiety to raise a little more revenue, we passed this legislation and the officials have to give effect to it. During the Sussex by-election this question was raised. At one meeting I was the first speaker and I tried to pass the question on to a later speaker. However, I was reminded that the Government I supported had been in office for years and had not amended the law, and therefore had to carry the responsibility. At another meeting the electors, to use a colloquialism, hoed into the Leader of the Opposition on the same question. I shall not be satisfied until steps are taken to give those breadline workers the relief to which they are entitled.

The Speech informs us that the Municipal Corporations Act is to receive attention again this session. I feel that we fought this matter to a frazzle last session and definitely moulded a very good measure, but because of one little point upon which Tweedledum and Tweedledee could not see eye to eye—plural voting—the Bill was lost. That is a very small point for people to give way on.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: But which people?

Mr. WITHERS: Those who enjoy the privilege of plural voting. All said and done plural voting is merely a perpetuation of an old-time custom. We ought to break away from it; it is of little advantage. Through it we lost a wonderfully good piece of legislation that could have been operating to-day with beneficial results. Speaking of Bunbury particularly the municipal council could have been expending money outside the town boundaries in order to create tourist resorts but under the existing Act we are not allowed to spend it. When the Bill is brought down this session I hope there will be no need to debate it at length.

I understand that the measure will be framed on lines similar to last year's Bill and therefore it should not call for much discussion. I hope that on this occasion it will receive more sympathetic consideration from another place and that the municipalities of the State will at last be given an up-to-date Act which is certainly long overdue.

Reference has been made to workers' homes. The Workers' Homes Board has done as good a job as was possible in the circumstances. It has always been anxious to oblige workers who were applying for homes. The usual reply of the board has been that the homes could be built if only the money were available. A sum of £70,000 per annum is being derived from workers' homes, and the Government contribution totals about £35,000. Thus there is an amount of £100,000 a year available, though it does not reach that figure every year. That is a large sum to spend annually on homes for the workers. The type of home being built is quite satisfactory. Ever since I have been a member, I have been fortunate enough to secure my quota of workers' homes, though naturally I should like to get more for my district. There are half-a-dozen on the waiting list at present, and I consider they should be on the urgent list.

Mr. Patrick: We have 118.

Mr. WITHERS: But the number fluctuates. I should certainly like to see a larger number of workers' homes built at Bunbury, and if the Premier provided the requisite money, they could be built.

Let me now refer to the reconstruction of Cave House. On one occasion when the Estimates were being considered I, in the absence of the then member for Sussex (Mr. Brockman), emphasised the need for the early reconstruction of Cave House.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That decided the Government to do it.

Mr. WITHERS: I would not make that claim. Members might have wondered why I dealt with a matter outside my own district, but Bunbury depends upon the back country for its prosperity. If the town had to depend entirely upon its own resources, it would not be a very flourishing place. All the surrounding districts are of interest to the town of Bunbury and to its citizens. I attended the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of Cave House, and I am satisfied

that the new building will be worthy of the site and a credit to the Government. Members will recall how popular this resort was and the profits made year by year, and I feel sure that when Cave House has been completed, it will prove to be one of the best holiday resorts in the State.

The Government should consider the question of encouraging tourist traffic generally. Mention has been made of the excellent work done by the Main Roads Board in providing good roads. We all appreciate the work of that body and would be niggardly if we withheld our praise. The people are being asked to avail themselves of the good roads provided by travelling over them, but local bodies that cannot afford funds for the development of resorts in their districts might well be given assistance. Not many years ago, to motor from Perth to Bunbury occupied seven or eight hours, whereas nowadays some motorists consider that they must have fallen asleep if they do not cover the distance in two hours. If our tourist resorts were made more attractive, mail boat passengers would probably be only too pleased to patronise them during the stay of such vessels in Fremantle.

One matter that is agitating the minds of Bunbury people is that of technical education. We are not jealous of Collie's having been granted a technical branch, because we assisted in the fight to get it for Collie. However, I have been in touch with the Education Department with a view to securing provision for higher technical education at the Bunbury High School. I recall having mentioned this matter in 1925, on which occasion I pointed out Bunbury's disadvantage as compared with the position in the city. City lads who had received technical training had an advantage over country lads when appointments were being made. When the Minister for Education returns I hope that he will give this matter sympathetic consideration and that sufficient funds will be made available to do for Bunbury what has been done for Collie.

The High School at Bunbury has insufficient accommodation to cater for all who desire to attend. A bus service has been inaugurated between Donnybrook and Bunbury to convey a large number of scholars to Bunbury daily. Instead of those children remaining in Bunbury, they are transported from and to their homes morning and even-

ing. We cannot take exception to their returning home every night. Some years ago a wing was added to the school, and another wing is now needed. Over 300 scholars are in attendance, and less than 40 per cent. are Bunbury children. The scholars come from places as remote as Bridgetown; in fact, most of the schools in the South-West are represented at the Bunbury High School. I hope that the increased accommodation so urgently needed will soon be provided.

With other members I am pleased that the timber industry has shown some revival. I understand that the Government felt considerable concern at the lack of orders when the Minister for Agriculture left on his tour. As a result of his communicating with parties who had previously been purchasers of our timber, he has been successful in securing the reinstatement of orders that had been lost. If the Minister has accomplished nothing else during his absence, his trip will have proved advantageous to the State.

The Premier: The order was for 140,000 sleepers.

Mr. WITHERS: I read a statement in the Press that in the Nelson district a timber company was putting on 30 men. A revival of the timber industry will assist to get men off the labour market.

The Premier: The Conservator of Forests was on the spot when the order was secured.

Mr. WITHERS: I am pleased to be reminded of that; no doubt the Conservator played no small part in the negotiations. I wish now to deal with the Bunbury harbour.

The Premier: I suppose I must sit up and take notice.

Mr. WITHERS: The Premier may recline for a time while I refer to the quantity of timber that has been shipped.

Mr. Patriek: Is there any water in the Bunbury harbour?

Mr. WITHERS: The story has been spread that one of the tally clerks at Bunbury dropped some blotting paper overboard, which had the effect of soaking up all the water in the harbour, and that the harbour, in consequence, now needs dredging.

Agitating the minds of people throughout the State are the regulations framed under the Native Administration Act and shortly to be laid on the table of the House. Reference has been made to those regulations by several members in the course of the debate on the Address-in-reply. At this stage I do

not intend to deal with the regulations at any length but I hope that when they are tabled there will be a general discussion and in that discussion I shall participate. In the past the member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley), who has had considerable experience of natives, has brought before the House the position of natives in his electorate, but I have not given the matter the consideration that should have been given to it. In recent months, however, certain facts have been definitely brought home to me concerning the position of the natives in my electorate, though the number of coloured people there is small, and when the regulations are tabled I shall have something to say about the matter.

The Premier: You may find you have no cause to say anything.

Mr. WITHERS: Possibly the regulations have been re-drafted. I hope that that is so. I come now to the matter of the Bunbury harbour. Last week I headed a deputation to the Minister for Works whose attention was drawn to the necessity for further dredging the harbour. The Government has given wonderful assistance to the producers of the Bunbury area, an assistance that is not properly appreciated. I, at any rate, value the help given, but I doubt whether that help receives the recognition in Bunbury that it deserves. While the producers have derived benefit from the erection of wheat silos at Bunbury, the wharf labourers have had to suffer; because the Government, having a national outlook, could not bring itself to give consideration to one section of the community when the interests of the State as a whole were at stake. Bunbury is the nearest port to the wheat grown in big quantities in that zone. It was only natural, therefore, that the Government should feel bound to encourage the producers by assisting them to get their produce to market in the cheapest possible way. Much has been said about the regrading of railways at the expense of the community. The assertion has been made that a lesser grade and a longer distance would be better, but that would not be to the advantage of the producer. A lesser grade and a longer haulage would be detrimental to the producers because they would have to pay freight for carriage over the greater mileage, whereas the aim of the Government is that the producers should pay freight on the shortest possible distance in order that they might make a livelihood. Figures I have here comprise the general

trade return of the port of Bunbury. Those figures indicate that the wheat that came into Bunbury this year totalled 115,124 tons, valued at £837,247. Last year the quantity was 67,010 tons and the year before 55,935 tons. The great benefit derived by the producer in the zone served by the Bunbury harbour from the provision of silos is thus apparent. The total cargo tonnage handled in Bunbury in the last three years was as follows:—1936, 231,907 tons; 1937, 258,727 tons; 1938, 355,588 tons. There was thus an increase in the cargo tonnage handled this year over that handled last year of 96,861 tons and 123,681 tons more were handled this year than in 1936. I pointed out to the Minister when he received our deputation that Sir George Buchanan, in a report in 1926 concerning the harbours of Western Australia, said that a harbour could be constructed at Bunbury, but only at considerable cost. Sir George Buchanan made a hurried visit to Bunbury and the surrounding district 12 years ago, and from what he saw he said that he did not consider the production of the hinterland of Bunbury would justify the expense of constructing a harbour at the port. I am sure that if Sir George Buchanan were to return to Western Australia to-day and see the wonderful progress that has been made, he would have no hesitation in recommending the expenditure of money on the construction of the harbour he had in mind.

The Premier: Has the zone system been of any assistance?

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, the zone system has been of wonderful assistance. I can recollect the time when very little wheat came into Bunbury, but the position has materially altered as a result of the assistance given by the Government to the producers outback whereby they have been able to get their produce to the nearest port at the cheapest rate. The Labour Party has been prepared to give the primary producers that consideration even at the expense of the rest of the community. Little exception should be taken to that. I have also some figures before me dealing with the butter industry, which has made great progress, but I am not going to weary the House by submitting all of them. South-West Co-operative Dairy Farmers, Ltd., is the biggest manufacturer of butter in the State.

Mr. Patrick: The company has factories elsewhere than at Bunbury.

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, it has branch factories at Harvey, Manjimup, Busselton and Margaret River.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Is that the company that does not pay the levy?

Mr. WITHERS: No, this company does pay the levy. Butter fat payments for the last 12 months paid by this company alone to the producers amounted to £310,818. To this has to be added the bonus of £23,219 and rebate of £506, making a total distribution by this company among the farmers of £334,543, as against the distribution last year on the same basis of £246,931, an increase of £87,612. I had intended to deal with the matter mentioned by the member for Nelson (Mr. Doust), the member for Sussex (Mr. Willmott) and others, namely, the non-payment of the levy. Parliament may not be able to do much about the matter. The dispute is really one between the board and the company concerned, but the producers are suffering by the action of the company, which has taken advantage of a little loophole in an Act of Parliament which we thought was destined to give the producers practically all they required with regard to the marketing of their produce. We thought we had an Act that was up-to-date and quite clear, but one whom I might term a shrewd bird has found a loophole in the Act and taken advantage of it, and, as was pointed out by the member for Nelson, the company has succeeded in evading the payment of £1,700 to the farmers and £1,300 to the board.

Mr. Rodoreda: Why can we not do something about the matter?

Mr. WITHERS: I hope that the Marketing Board will give every consideration to the subject. A good deal of controversy has taken place through the Press and I hope the board will endeavour to persuade the Government to afford it assistance in giving full effect to the provisions of the Act.

I now wish to refer to a statement made in another place by one of the members of the East Province (Mr. Wood). Mr. Wood said:—

I do not know what was in the Government's mind when appointing the Light Lands Royal Commission. The Commission gathered no information that the Government could not have obtained from its field officers.

That was an unfair remark for any man in another place to make before the findings of the Royal Commission were made known. When that hon. gentleman reads the report

of the Commission, I think that he and other members will be satisfied that the Commission was worth while. I was not originally a member of the Commission, but I was asked by the Premier to take the place of the member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley) who was absent and unable to sit on the Commission. I acceded to the request and am pleased to say that for once I served on a Commission the appointment of which I think was of considerable value to the State.

Mr. Patrick: It was quite an education to me.

Mr. WITHERS: We certainly did obtain a good deal of information from field officers of the Lands Department, information that was of great assistance. We also secured valuable evidence from other sources and I am satisfied that when the report and the evidence are put before the Government, they will be found to contain information of immense worth to the Lands Department and to the State as a whole.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: The Commission did not cost much either.

Mr. WITHERS: No, the cost was not high. For an honourable gentleman in another place to make the statements he did, was exceedingly unfair.

The Minister for Mines: The Legislative Council is a House of review you know.

Mr. WITHERS: It was a House of preview in this case. The hon. gentleman must have been suffering from imaginitis when he suggested that the Commission had gathered no information of any advantage. The Commission took evidence from field officers as well as from other people and the Government could not possibly have spared officers from the department to travel round and gather the information that the Commission secured.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: The Commission obtained a good deal of evidence in addition to that provided by the field officers.

Mr. WITHERS: It certainly did. The Lands Department has been blamed over a period of years for having done certain things that it did not do. It has also been blamed for having done things that it was guilty of doing. No doubt when the Lands Department receives the report of the Commission it will be able to remove a number of little anomalies that have existed in the past and continue to exist. The Royal Commission performed a service that justified

the small expenditure involved; because, as members know, it was an honorary Commission. We did not get a lot of money out of it. I have not lived in the city all my life, but have travelled a bit, yet the journeys I made with the Royal Commission proved an eye-opener to me and I think to the member for Kanowna (Mr. Nulsen) also. The other members of the Commission were farmers; yet I am sure that they, too, saw a good deal that surprised them.

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne) [6.14]: It is rather a pity the previous speaker could not have extended his speech a little, for I shall not have time to get into my stride before the House adjourns for tea. Reviewing the activities of the Government over the past 12 months from the point of view of the North-West, I am glad to say that sound and solid progress has been made. Improvements have been effected that I hope will be permanent. The greatest progress has been made in regard to roads. Periodical visitors to the North-West tell me that the improvement in this direction that has taken place in the last six or seven years has been astounding and that they would never have credited that so much could be done to improve road transport at such little cost.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. RODOREDA: Before the tea adjournment I was commenting upon the improvements effected by the Government in the roads of the North-West during recent years. The improvement has had a wonderful effect on the cost of transport to the pastoralists. Within the last five or six years, to my knowledge, 1s. per ton per mile has been paid for the haulage of wool and other goods. Now, however, solely due to the improvement in roads, that cost has been reduced to 6d. per ton per mile, and even less. It may be said that the cost of transport to north-western pastoralists has been reduced by more than one half. That is a great consideration. Many of these folk were paying up to £10 per ton for cartage of goods. During the three years of the Mitchell-Latham Government, only the niggardly sum of £300 was given to each road board in the North-West.

MR. PATRICK: We thought you were coming to that!

MR. RODOREDA: Is it not deserved?

MR. PATRICK: No.

MR. THORN: Where does the present money come from?

MR. RODOREDA: From that source, the Federal Aid Roads fund, which was also available to the previous Government. Another improvement, that in the medical service, has already been mentioned by the member for Pilbara (Mr. Welsh). Unquestionably the flying doctor scheme has effected a great amelioration of living conditions in the North-West. It gives confidence to the people and particularly to women in the outback areas. This has been made possible by collaboration of the Government with the Australian Inland Mission and by the subsidy which the Government has granted. No words of mine can express the appreciation felt by the people of the North-West and especially by women on the outback stations. While on this subject I may suggest that the service could further be improved with lessened cost to the Government and greater value to the residents. I suggest that a central hospital be constructed at the pedal bases—Port Hedland in one instance, and Wyndham in the other. By this means the doctors now stationed at the various ports could be concentrated in one centre. Patients could be as easily transported to one central hospital as to the various hospitals at what I may term outports; and thus the patients would receive better treatment. There would be two or three doctors available to give each other assistance and advice. A qualified matron could be left in charge of each hospital at an outport, as is the present practice. If anything serious should occur to a patient at an outport hospital, he could just as easily and cheaply be transferred to the central hospital as to a hospital at another town. This would not involve duplication of X-ray plant and other equipment. An elaborate hospital would not be required at each port. If a patient is now brought into one of the towns where there is no X-ray plant and his case requires the use of that plant, he has either to go to another North-West port where there is an X-ray equipment, or come to Perth. That represents a considerable expense which could be avoided by the adoption of the scheme I suggest.

The member for Pilbara also commented upon the improvement in the shipping service brought about by the new State vessel. No doubt this ship represents a wonder-

ful improvement; but there is the fact, already mentioned by the member for Pilbara, that tourists take up a great deal of the space required at a certain time of the year by North-West residents. This trouble could be avoided by the State Shipping Service adopting the suggestion of the member for Pilbara, to confine the tourist traffic to a period of the year when North-Westerners are not travelling in great numbers. Moreover, that is the period of the year best suited for tourists.

Reverting to shipping facilities, I have a complaint to make of the action of the Government with regard to outports. During the last five years the State has spent £150,000 or £160,000 in providing jetties at the recognised ports. During that period the outports have been served by a private company with schooners. Now, through the action of the Government, this service is likely to be cut out from the coast. On the one hand we see the Government spending so much money to provide a service for the people at the recognised ports, and on the other hand we see the Government taking away from the people of the outports a service that has been available to them, and at no cost to the State, for the last 12 years.

Mr. Marshall: How did that come about?

Mr. RODOREDA: The Government has imposed an embargo on the carriage of petrol, which means that the company's principal cargo has been lost to it. It cannot now run at a profit, and after this wool season the lighters will probably go off the coast. I trust the Government will give serious consideration to the question. If the difficulty is not adjusted shortly, I shall take further action here during the course of the session.

Mr. Sleeman: Is that a threat?

Mr. RODOREDA: It is not a threat, but a promise. As regards the future of the North-West, I see no prospect of any material improvement except through goldmining. During the last two years the State Government has co-operated with the Commonwealth Government in a geophysical and geological survey. In view of the information that has been available, we should not let the matter rest at that. The subject should be further pursued. If the Government is inclined to ask the Federal Government to co-operate with us now in a prospecting scheme, or in some scheme to utilise the information that has been

made available through the geophysical and geological survey, good results should accrue. I am positive that wonderful opportunities exist in the auriferous areas of the North; and I hope that the present Minister for Mines will get away from the complex that apparently has possessed all previous Ministers for Mines—namely, that the only goldfields in Western Australia are the Eastern Goldfields and the Murchison.

Mr. Marshall: The State Governments have not been too good to the Murchison.

Mr. RODOREDA: Some Eastern Goldfields members, too, are of opinion that the only goldfields in the State are the Eastern Goldfields. The goldfields of the North-West have never yet been prospected adequately. Let me take one instance—the Comet mine, recently discovered. I have no doubt that scores of similar mines are to be found in the North-West. A proper scheme should be organised whereby prospectors would be sent out in parties, or in any other way the Minister for Mines might think fit, to prospect thoroughly the areas which the survey report states should be prospected. Apart from that report, I know there are good opportunities along the Ashburton and in the country contiguous to it. Prospectors have lived there for at least 30 years on alluvial gold and on dollying stone. There is no battery on that field. Probably it is the only field in Western Australia that has not yet been provided with a battery. If a prospecting scheme were initiated in that area, one or two batteries would be required. I do not suggest that the State is in a position to supply them out of its own resources; but as the Commonwealth is interested in the question—at least it is interested sufficiently to have joined in the making of the survey—the matter should not be allowed to rest.

Another question of the greatest importance to the North-West is that of water supply. On one station known to me 32 bores have been sunk, representing about 8,000 feet of sinking, at a cost of £5,000, and have got only five suitable waters. An investigation might well be made into this north-western question. I do not know whether the Minister is aware of it, but a scientific instrument has been devised for the location of water. It renders a service somewhat similar to that given by an instrument used in geological surveying. I know that the late Minister for Mines was enthusiastic about the geo-

logical instrument and had great confidence in it. The instrument for locating water is on lines somewhat similar to those of that instrument. It is an electrical device, and has been used with great success all over England and on the Continent. Water supplies adequate for large towns have been found by boring in areas where the geologists declared there was absolutely no chance of finding water. I understand that the Queensland Government has one or two of these instruments in use, and highly satisfactory results have been obtained. For my part I am not satisfied that we have yet explored all the possibilities of finding underground water in this State. As soon as water is mentioned, engineers seem to have an idea that they must build gigantic dams in the hills and pipe the water for hundreds of miles. The instruments I refer to are comparatively cheap—obtainable for sums ranging from about £200 to £600, the cost being dependent on the depth at which they will locate water. A few hundred pounds spent in that direction would be no loss to the State. The question of water supplies in Western Australia is the most vital one to which we can give consideration, as regards both the farming areas and the north-western pastoral areas. We have the country; we ask people to go on to it, and to make it worth their while to do so, we must provide water for them.

I now wish to touch on a matter that has assumed prominence of late. I refer to starting-price betting. The member for Beverley (Mr. Mann) said he was prepared to go so far as to abolish horse racing altogether. Has anyone ever heard such a statement as that before?

Mr. Mann: It was not quite as bad as that.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: Why, it is almost sacrilege. Such a statement is almost like saying that we should prevent Neville Cardus from using musical metaphors in describing cricket. Particularly is that statement an astonishing one to come from a farmer. I do not think that you, Mr. Speaker, an acknowledged horse-owner and breeder, would agree with that contention. I believe that racehorses provide a market for oats and chaff.

Mr. Marshall: That is about the only useful purpose they serve.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: While on that subject, it has probably been brought to your notice, Mr. Speaker, that the member for Guild-

ford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) made a statement to the Press relating to starting-price betting.

Mr. Needham: Do you think he has heard of it?

Mr. RODOREDÁ: Somebody probably drew his attention to it. Had the member for Guildford-Midland made that statement in this House, we could probably have suggested a remedy. We could have suggested that starting-price bettors be given a token that would carry them free by train and on to the course, so that they would be placed on an equality, in that respect at least, with the member for Guildford-Midland. However, I do not wish to pursue that subject any further.

Mr. Thorn: I do not think I would, if I were you. You are not on too solid ground.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: I shall have a further opportunity to discuss the matter later on.

Mr. Needham: The member for Guildford-Midland may be here on that occasion.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: I welcome the introduction of legislation to establish a bureau of industry and economic research. In my opinion, much information can be obtained by that means if those employed by the bureau do their work properly. That applies not only to the primary industries but to the fishing and the turtle industries, which are certainly deserving of extended research. Inquiries could also be made regarding the possibility of the establishment of the iron and steel industry in Western Australia. It would not cost any more to transport iron from Yampi Sound to Bunbury, or to wherever it was decided the works should be established, than it costs the Broken Hill Pty. to convey ore from Iron Knob in South Australia to Newcastle. I see no reason why that industry should not be established in this State. A suggestion was also advanced that paper mills should be established in the South-West to utilise the waste products from the State Sawmills. That could be made the subject of investigation, and I am certain that that industry could be established in this State.

Coming to the question of a home consumption price for wheat, I wish to make it clear that I am absolutely opposed to any such proposition if it means that the prices of flour and bread will be increased. I consider that in such an event the proposal would be more inequitable than the financial

emergency tax, because the individual who would pay would be the man on the bread-line with the large family.

Mr. Patrick: But you do not object to the price of sugar.

Mr. RODOREDA: People do not consume nearly as much sugar as they do bread.

Mr. Patrick: Don't they?

Mr. RODOREDA: I would be willing to accept an embargo on imported wheat, which is the position regarding sugar. I am not opposed to farmers receiving a home consumption price for their wheat if the money for that purpose is taken from general revenue, and a tax imposed that will make it apply equitably, but I shall not support it if the toiler is to be made to pay.

Mr. Sleeman: No, the man with the family.

Mr. RODOREDA: The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) is one of the foremost agitators for this concession to the farmers, and I do not blame him.

Mr. Boyle: I hope you used the word "agitator" in its best sense.

Mr. RODOREDA: I agree with the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) that the member for Avon and his confreres are merely here to beat the drum.

Mr. Thorn: And you are not!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. RODOREDA: Of course we are not.

Mr. Marshall: The member for Toodyay has not sufficient energy to beat anything.

Mr. Thorn: I would beat you.

Mr. Marshall: That would not interest me.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Roebourne will resume his seat. When order is called, members must obey. If they do not obey, it is my duty to name them. I allow a good deal of latitude. I do not expect absolute silence in the House, but should the Speaker deem it necessary to call for order, members must immediately obey. The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. RODOREDA: In suggesting that the member for Avon is beating the drum, I agree with the member for South Fremantle when he said that no real fight had been put up for the home consumption price. The member for Avon knows that that is so. He tried for years to induce farmers to get together to enforce their demand upon the nation, and after years of experience he realised that he would never be able to accomplish his end by that means. He therefore changed his plan and entered this

House in order to try another method. He appreciates the fact that the only method by which he can gain what he seeks is for the wheatgrowers to be in a position to enforce their demands.

Mr. Needham: You will have the member for Beverley at you again.

Mr. RODOREDA: I cannot worry about that hon. member. Country Party members must realise that the farmers will have to make sacrifices, and they must put up with all sorts of hardships, in just the same way as did the pioneers of the Labour movement, who had to suffer all forms of humiliation and degradation before they were able to secure redress.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: We are going through as great hardships as ever they did.

Mr. Doney: Greater hardships are experienced to-day than ever before.

Mr. RODOREDA: If the farmers are really genuine in their desire, they can get a home consumption price for wheat next year.

Mr. Boyle: Tell us how!

Mr. RODOREDA: Let them refuse to sow an acre of wheat next year. That would prove whether they want it.

Members: Oh!

Mr. Warner: If the farmers did that, you would be out of a job.

Mr. RODOREDA: I have often been out of a job, and that would not worry me.

Mr. Thorn: You would probably get a job as a drummer.

Mr. RODOREDA: And I could probably bring up my family better at that job than I could if I were growing wheat under present-day conditions. I was keenly interested in the speech of the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) when he dealt with the home consumption price for wheat. I consider he summed up the matter in a masterly fashion. He analysed it from every angle, and proved to his own satisfaction and that of this House how it was almost impossible of achievement. Having done so, he summed up to the jury and said, "Now, gentlemen, we have found that the accused is innocent, but I think we ought to hang him." I will admit that the member for Nedlands is rather awkwardly situated.

Mr. Hegney: He is on the horns of a dilemma.

Mr. RODOREDA: I do not know how else he could have got out of it, but he had enough respect for his own

ability to show that he did not believe in this, and although he had to ride on the wagon, he had to excuse himself first. If we do have a home consumption price for wheat, both the member for Nedlands and the member for Avon realise that it will mean complete Government control of the wheatgrowing industry, just as obtains in America. To follow the logical steps that such an action would involve would lead to collective farming by the Government, which is the position in Russia at the present time. We could not declare a home consumption price for wheat that would be profitable to farmers, and then cope with the rush to the land that would follow. Country Party members may smile at that suggestion, but they know very well that when the price of wheat rises for a year or two, there is always a rush to put as much land as possible under crop; nor can we blame farmers for taking advantage of the increased prices. If a home consumption price is fixed, it must be for some years ahead, and naturally people will rush to enter the wheatgrowing industry, as under those conditions it will be made profitable. That will be the position unless some control is exercised over the situation. In my opinion, the Government would have to declare that wheat should be grown only in certain districts, and that, I take it, is one objection that would be raised to such an action.

Mr. Warner: What would the Government say if we took your advice, and did not grow any wheat?

Mr. RODOREDA: I did not give that advice. I said that if the farmers were prepared to demonstrate that they were genuine in their demand, they would get what they wanted.

Mr. Thorn: That suggests some hope for us.

Mr. RODOREDA: Even a home consumption price for wheat would merely represent one shot of dope. Another shot would be necessary later on. Obviously the market for export wheat is contracting. Surely we do not require more experience than we have had during the last eight or ten years to realise that fact. In the course of a few years, whether we like it or not, there will be little or no market available for our wheat. The tendency throughout the world is in that direction. In those circumstances of what avail is it to suggest that we shall

grow more wheat or extend our operations, if we cannot sell our product?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: About 4,000,000 people would like to have our wheat.

Mr. RODOREDA: But we are dealing with conditions as they are, not as they should be. We must realise that. It seems to me that the member for Irwin-Moore (Hon P. D. Ferguson) has put his finger on the point that matters. I mean the economic state of the world. If the people could buy all the wheat they needed, undoubtedly we could continue to grow and export our product, but that is not the position. It will not be the position, so far as I can see, under our present system. In my opinion, the economic troubles of this world arise from the system of production for profit. That has a cumulative effect. More and more is taken out of industry each year until in the end there must be a collapse. Industry will not be able to pay what is demanded by those who finance it, and ultimately it will terminate in collapse. That is the tendency to-day. It has come to a point when depressions are inevitable, and, in fact, they can be foretold by economists with nearly as much certainty as astronomers can predict the arrival of a new comet. There are indications of a depression even now. Economists in England are talking about it, and in America all sorts of precautions are being taken, but in Australia the Hon. R. G. Casey says that if we all get together and sing "Happy days are here again" everything will be all right. He declares it to be merely a state of mind. The only thing that can delay a depression for a few years is a big world war. That is what delayed the last world depression. Then, as in America, a turn is made towards foreign trade. All nations of the world say that if you increase foreign trade everything will be right. In carrying this out there are all sorts of trade agreements made, and trade pacts, trade with this country and trade with other countries, you take more of my goods and we will take more of yours, and all will be well. But where will that get us? For instance, say that we were doing a wheat trade with Japan and in return we were taking their textiles, their cotton goods and their manufactured articles. In a few years' time the Japanese would kick up a row and say that the wheat coming from Australia was putting their ricegrowers on the dole and

then a tariff would be put up against our wheat. Our textile manufactures would make a similar complaint and then we would put up a tariff against Japan, and the tariff would be so high that none of the goods would be imported. So a trade agreement is then made, and the Japanese reduce their tariff on our wheat and we reduce our tariff on cotton goods. What benefit is that kind of thing to a country? There is nothing in this process to increase consuming capacity. We are not any nearer the solution of our problems by increasing our foreign trade. There is no greater delusion than the benefit to be derived from putting goods into ships and sending them all over the world. Why should we buy Japanese shirts or toys? We buy them perhaps because the Japanese make those articles a bit cheaper than they can be made by us. Analysing the reasons for that cheapness we find that it is due to the fact that the Japanese are satisfied with a lower standard of existence than are we in Australia. That is the only reason why they can under-sell the Australian manufacturer, and so it seems that the end and object of foreign trade is to reduce the conditions of other countries down to the coolie level.

Mr. Doney: If you say it is better that we should have no foreign trade how are you going to pay your debts?

Mr. RODOREDA: Does not the hon. member think that we would be better off if we made eight or nine million pounds' worth of goods in our own State instead of importing them from the Eastern States? Of course we would be better off, and that cannot be denied. Taking it on the larger sphere the hon. member says it is wrong.

Mr. Doney: It is from countries other than Australia that we get new money.

Mr. RODOREDA: We have enough money of our own if we employ it properly. I want to know of what benefit is foreign trade. We take on foreign trade because we have surplus goods. That is the reason, and surplus goods are mostly brought about by the fact that our own people have not the money to purchase them. Thus we export the balance.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Does that apply to wheat?

Mr. RODOREDA: I am not speaking of wheat.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Or wool?

Mr. RODOREDA: I am referring more particularly to manufactured products. The surplus is exported because the country cannot use it, and that is a good idea, provided of course the other country will take it. When we decide we are going to make the goods that we are importing from other countries, we impose a tariff to stop them from coming in and then the foreigners have to pay us with paper promises. The time comes when we will not take any more paper promises, and we will then find out that interest is to be paid on paper promises so long as money is lent to enable that to be done. We have borrowed money to pay interest on loans raised overseas until the creditors woke up and said, "No more of this." But I am drifting on to the subject of foreign debts, and it is a very big subject indeed. I have no desire to weary the House any further, I am quite satisfied that the Government has done a very fine job in relation to the North-West and the rest of the State, and I hope it will long remain in office to carry on its good work.

MISS HOLMAN (Forrest) [8.7]: It was very heartening to read in the Governor's Speech that the value of timber exported last year was so much per acre higher than that of the previous year. It is, however, sad to see that the industry is going through a difficult period at the present time owing to lack of orders from overseas. We are grateful to the Government for its efforts to remedy that position and those who have any interest in the State at all will consider that Mr. Wise, the Minister for Agriculture, has done very good work in getting further orders from overseas. I wish to thank the Premier for his statement of what has been done to help the industry, and I trust that next year will not give occasion for statements such as those that appeared in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech at the opening of the session. The timber industry is very valuable to the State. We have only to look at the railway reports to see what it means to the Government Railways. I might quote the figures for 1936-37 and 1937-38. In the former year local timber earned for the Railway Department £287,884, and in the next year there was a considerable increase, the total being £316,131. Imported timber showed an increase of only a few pounds in the freights earned. The local authorities in Western Australia, I consider, are somewhat

to blame for the fact that there is not more timber being used for building houses. We have only to go to Queensland to see what beautiful homes are erected of timber in that city. In some instances we can see similar homes in Western Australia constructed with our own timbers, but our local authorities, on the slightest provocation, declare that certain localities shall be, what they are pleased to term, brick areas. Consequently, homes built of wood in those areas are barred. I should like to see the Government take some action to prevent local authorities declaring so many brick areas.

Mr. Warner: Brick is a local product too.

Miss HOLMAN: Yes, but there are other products used which put the timber out of play, and more than that, workers cannot afford to have expensive brick houses, whereas it would be within their means, in many instances, to build a home for themselves of local timber. The expenses would be considerably lower and the conveniences as good as those afforded by brick structures. With reference to the industry itself, I regret to say it is a fact that many employees have been put off in recent days. A few mills are entirely closed down, and several mills have had to put off many men, for instance, at Argyle, Nanga Brook and Cheedora and many others. Consequently I feel that everything is not lovely in the garden of the timber industry, at any rate, since it has been found necessary to put off so many men. In this direction I should like to see action taken by the Government to encourage the use of more timber so that we might have our mills employed at their full capacity. Overseas orders have been obtained as the result of Government action and the activities of the Minister for Agriculture. This will mean the employment of a number of sleeper cutters and more men at those mills where sleepers are sawn. Unfortunately, however, that may not be sufficient. We should keep the timber mills employed if we can because the industry, as much as any other, or perhaps more so than any other, carries out the policy of decentralisation. Even in the worst periods when the timber mills had entirely stopped work and we were overcome by a slump, there were very few of the married men who had been engaged in the industry to be found crowding the cities. If they found it possible to secure any assistance where they were, they re-

mained there. The industry is valuable because the people engaged in it remain in the country and are quite satisfied to work at their calling in the country. The Forests Department has been doing a great deal of work and is entitled to much credit for what it has done, particularly in the building of roads through the forests, and also for its reforestation work. On some occasions, however, we have found that the department has been a little severe in the marking of timber and so confining the output of the mills to the extent that men have had to be put off. There is another matter to which I should like to refer and that is in connection with the Timber Industry Regulation Act, at present administered by the Forests Department. The Act was first administered by the Factories Department and that is the department that should be in charge of this legislation. We could then have printed statements and reports submitted to us as was done when the Act was first passed. With regard to housing accommodation at timber mills, I have complained on many occasions about the places of dwelling allotted by private companies to the people at the mills. I have still complaints to make in that respect. Only recently I have seen houses with water coming through the roof. Since I have been in Parliament, I have not noticed much sense of responsibility on the part of private companies with regard to the houses they provide for their workers.

We have to thank the Government for many fine roads in the South-West. I desire particularly to express my thanks to the Government for the bituminisation that has been done past Donnybrook. That is a very great convenience to the people of the South-West and the Government is to be complimented on the work. I feel sure it will not now be long before we realise our ideal of a bituminised road from Perth to Pemberton. There are other roads in the South-West district requiring similar attention. For example, there is the road from Treestville to Collic. That road passes through the forest from Harvey and shortens the distance by several miles. Then there are the Hoffman and Nanga Brook-Dwellingup roads and the road from Whitaker's Mill to Dwellingup which cuts off several miles from Dwellingup to Perth.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I have a couple of roads in my district.

Miss HOLMAN: Is that so? Then you can talk about them. We would like the Government to give special consideration to bituminising the Mornington and Jarrahdale roads. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that all these requests have been placed before the Minister, who has given us every consideration and helped us in every way possible. We, however, are like Oliver Twist—always asking for more; although, unlike Oliver Twist, we have received a great deal.

I have to thank the Health Department, the late Minister for Health and the present Minister (Mr. Pantou) for the great assistance they have given to the hospitals in my electorate. The Jarrahdale hospital just recently received a good deal of assistance from the Minister. The Dwellingup hospital also received assistance not only from the department, but from the Lotteries Commission. We hope the Minister will help this hospital still further. I do not know whether the people in the metropolitan area altogether appreciate the work done in country centres by auxiliaries, committees and the public to assist country hospitals. The hospitals in my electorate are curious in one respect. They are controlled by boards on which there are no women. That, of course, can be remedied; but there are women committees and auxiliaries helping the hospitals. The women's auxiliary at the Dwellingup hospital provides that hospital each year with all the linen it requires; it also organises egg days, jam days and so forth. The local residents are constantly raising money to help the hospital, and I am glad to have the opportunity of saying a word in praise of this good work. The position at the Mornington hospital is not quite so good, although the people do their share. It is not yet fully staffed, but we are hoping that in the near future that will be remedied. Another centre in my electorate, Donnybrook, requires a hospital. Indeed, we have almost a promise on the books that it will be erected very shortly.

The Minister for Health: It is not in my book.

Miss HOLMAN: I would like the Minister for Health to look up his records, because I am sure he will find the promise there. I was a member of a deputation that waited on one of the Ministers at Donnybrook in regard to this hospital. He

later returned to Perth and wrote a letter on the subject. However, if there is no such promise, I hope the present Minister will give us one as early as possible.

With regard to country education, I do not envy the children in the metropolitan area any of their advantages, because even such advantages are not sufficient. Nevertheless, they are great compared with the facilities for education provided for country children. Country children have not the advantage of technical school training or night classes. They must struggle to get domestic or manual training. The people in the country districts are badly treated because they cannot send their children to high schools without great expense. Not many people in the country can afford to send their children to centres where there are high schools and pay their board and lodging, which costs 22s. 6d. a week or more. It is beyond their means. Some little time ago the residents of Donnybrook requested the Minister for Education to arrange for a bus service from Donnybrook and the surrounding centres to Bunbury, so that the children in those districts could get the best possible education. Unfortunately, the request could not be granted, nor could a Government hostel be established. No one wants to say anything that would take away from the value of the education given in the various country schools, but there is much to be desired. We would like the children to get opportunity for study after they have attained 14 years of age by attending technical schools. Those opportunities are missing in very many of the country centres. In some districts the residents have built a room for the purpose of domestic or manual training and the Government has very kindly supplied all the fittings, but this cannot be done in all country centres. I would like to give a special word of praise to the parents and citizens' associations. I see that the Director of Education, at page 26 of the Education Report, gives a great deal of praise to these associations. I would like to mention some of the facilities that the associations have provided for the various schools. They are, benches, wireless sets, pianos, teaching aids, library books and pictures for schools, film projectors, tennis courts, cricket pitches, lawns, gymnastic apparatus and physical health aids in the grounds, sports material,

craft work accessories, and other items, even including rooms. We must appreciate the good work of the associations. In some of the country centres, however, no such associations exist or, if they do, they are not rich. So that we have to depend on the Government to a greater extent for help in those places. In my opinion, it is not the duty of such associations to provide free of cost what it is the duty of the Government to provide. The associations might provide the extras, but not such things as the Government itself should supply.

The report on youth unemployment is a wonderful contribution, although I regret that so far I have not had the opportunity of reading it through. To do so would take more time than most of us have available at present. I am, however, greatly impressed by such parts of the report as I have perused. Should the Government be able to carry out the suggestions and recommendations made by Mr. Justice Wolff, I have no doubt it would be for the benefit of the people.

I am pleased to note the Government is retaining the present Technical School site, so that we shall soon be able to give our young people proper domestic and manual training. Domestic students will be examined in the various subjects and, when they have completed their courses, will probably have a better status than the present workers have. Unfortunately, there is no award governing domestic workers. We have on occasions noted that they have been treated very badly indeed, in respect to hours, wages, and living accommodation. I hope, however, that we shall very soon have a domestic training college, and that the conditions of those engaged in domestic service will vastly improve.

On looking through the report of the Child Welfare Department, I notice the secretary of the department says—

Whilst agreeing that a psychological clinic is desirable, it is clear that it would be no use making a start again with a clinic unless there is in existence a properly equipped institution to care for mental defectives.

The Government should provide such an institution. It is certainly absolutely necessary that the psychological department should be re-established and that the Government Psychologist should be placed in charge of it at the earliest possible moment.

Regarding native affairs, more women protectors should be appointed. I heartily agree with the remarks of the member for Kanowna (Mr. Nulsen) on this subject, and with the remarks contained in the letters that he read to the House. A great deal is still to be done in the Native Affairs Department, and my opinion is that women protectors would help to a great extent.

Recently I had the opportunity of assisting a deputation that waited on the Minister for Works and preferred a request for the improvement of the harbour at Bunbury. My electorate is in the South-West Division, and that division has been called the garden of the State. That is a fact. There has never been a failure in the district during any season, and we know that the products of the district are many and varied. We have gardens, orchards, farms, and areas planted with potatoes; in fact, we produce almost everything necessary to the life of the State. We have also large dairy farms. Irrigation has improved the carrying capacity of our land immensely, and we know that the district is capable of producing much more than it is now producing. As the value of our water supplies becomes better known, I am sure the South-West will develop more and more into a garden.

It is absolutely necessary that we should have up-to-date harbour accommodation at Bunbury in order to export the products of the district and to carry out the policy of decentralisation.

I thank the Government for providing the money to ensure a water supply at Brunswick. Members have heard me complain on many occasions about the water supply there. The Government has now provided the money for a water scheme, which I hope will be started very soon. I trust the water will be available before summer, because every summer up to the present time the people have been short of it.

I congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment as Speaker; and, with others, I express my keen regret at the loss of two members of the House. I have thanked the Government on several counts, and I congratulate it upon its work. When it is returned, I hope it will continue in office many years to carry on its good work.

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.29]: During the course of the debate, many congratulatory remarks have been

made referring to yourself, Mr. Speaker, and also to the Minister for Health and the members for Hannans and Sussex. I wish to associate myself with those remarks and to support the sentiments that have been expressed.

I desire to make some remarks with regard to the Speech of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor. In style, the Speech differs very little from those that have preceded it. It was a thoughtful Speech. It was indicative of the appreciation by the Government of the need for giving assistance to those who are not particularly well circumstanced, whether as producers or wage-earners. The Speech gives us the promise of housing for people on the lower incomes. I welcome that. I would suggest that if possible small one-bedroom houses should be erected for aged people. One of the difficulties with which old-age pensioners are confronted is that they cannot get proper accommodation for themselves at a reasonable cost, and are forced to enter either the Old Men's Home or the Old Women's Home. If they could find suitable premises at a reasonable rent, a number of those people would not go into the homes, but would be living amongst the community. I urge upon the Government, when building a large number of homes for people on the lower incomes, to see also if it cannot build a number of one-bedroom houses for the elderly section of the community. There would then be no need for them to go into the institutions, but they could, on their pensions, live outside and be much happier than they are at present. The Speech also gives an intimation of the policy to be pursued concerning the men on relief work. It is admitted that over the years considerable improvement has been effected in the conditions that have applied. I do not say that the Government should claim all the credit for that. The improved conditions have made it possible for the Government continually to effect improvements in the scheme. The Government has done what it has been possible for it to do with the money available, and I am pleased to see that it is intended to continue that policy. The Speech envisages a certain social programme, but I do not think that goes far enough. There is no recognition of the fact that the rise in prices has very adversely affected people on a fixed income. Take those who are recipients of assistance from the Child

Welfare Department. They get 7s. or 9s. a unit, as the case may be. With that money, when prices are low or normal, they can purchase a certain quantity of goods. When prices rise, as they have done, that money will purchase less than it did formerly; therefore the standard of living of those people is reduced. The Arbitration Court fixes wages in proper relationship to prices. When prices rise, wages rise to provide for that increase. No such increase takes place in the case of fixed incomes. In a time of rising prices people who receive assistance from the Child Welfare Department and the Unemployed Relief Department, in the way of sustenance, are adversely affected, and their standard of living is decreased so much that it becomes inordinately low. Something ought to be done to remedy that position. A proportionate increase should be made in the amount payable when prices rise. That brings me to the question of malnutrition, which is so prevalent throughout the world. I am primarily concerned with the position as it exists in Western Australia. Some plan of nutrition is vital to the health of the community. Unfortunately, nutrition is based upon purchasing power, not upon physiological needs. To-day numbers of people are living on a standard which is ever so much lower than it ought to be, and are being denied the proper articles of diet, because they have not the purchasing power with which to supply themselves with those articles. The other evening I noticed, when reading a publication, that Sir John Orr, an expert in the matter of diet in relation to health and one who has been consulted on occasions by the British Government, set out what he considered a proper ration for children between five and seven years of age. He says that one daily ration should consist of $1\frac{3}{4}$ pints of milk, one egg, 1oz. of fish, meat, liver or cheese, 4oz. of green leafy vegetables, 6oz. of potatoes and other root vegetables, some raw fruit and vegetables. That diet, he says, would supply about two-thirds of the food requirements per day, as it supplies all the vitamins, minerals and proteins necessary for children of that age. The rest of the daily food could be made up from cheaper foods, such as fats and cereals. What chance have a number of people on low incomes of providing a diet of that nature either for their children or themselves? They could not possibly do it. By the time

they have paid their rents out of their small incomes, it would not be possible for them to provide that diet. Throughout the world a large amount of money has been and is being spent on armaments. The Federal Government is vigorously proceeding with a programme of armament, but the armaments will be of very little use if we have a C3 population and the majority of the people are unfit and cannot use those armaments. It would be a good investment if the Federal Government did something to increase the standard of living of the people on the lowest rungs of the ladder. Some time ago, Mr. Bruce, the High Commissioner of Australia, was given considerable publicity because he said that people ought to be given more food, and should eat more.

Mr. North: That was said of Europe.

Mr. TONKIN: We know that. Mr. Bruce did not suggest how this could be done, nor did he advance any method that could be employed to bring it about. Thousands of people would consume more food, and a better class of food, if they had the money with which to purchase it. If State Governments have not sufficient funds with which to increase the amounts that are paid to those people, it would be a good investment for the Federal Government to supplement the State funds, and increase the amounts paid to people dependent on the State. Reference was made in the Speech to the fact that unemployment was at a fairly steady figure during the year. We have apparently reached the stage in this State of the almost irreducible minimum. It is a remarkable fact that today, for the same unit of physical energy, plus machines, the average ratio of productivity is twenty times what it was in 1914. One man can now do the work previously done by twenty men. That must mean tremendous technological unemployment. I think, therefore, we have reached a figure that is almost the irreducible minimum. One of the worst features of this is the fact that so many young people have suffered so seriously. I know of hundreds of young men who are now about the age of 22 or 23, and who have never had a regular job, but spend more time out of work than in work. This idleness is leading men to crime. The other day there came under my notice a young man of good family. His people had never been in trouble, nor had he ever been in trouble. I knew he had been idle for months, and I

found that, in order to make a break, as he termed it, he endeavoured to rob a shop in one of the suburbs. He was caught and tried before the court, but I am glad to say he was let off on a bond and given another chance. It is not that young fellow's fault that he got into trouble. He tried for months to secure regular employment, but he was able to get a job only for a day here and a day there. When he reached the age of 19 he became more expensive to the establishment that employed him, and was sacked. It became difficult for him to find employment anywhere. His case would be similar to that of dozens of other young men, who have scarcely any future before them. If the mode of life of the community is such as to make it impossible for men to work, it becomes the responsibility of the community to maintain those who cannot get work. If our social order is such that thousands of people find it impossible to obtain work, and that is the position in a capitalistic country, then it becomes our responsibility to provide for their maintenance. We should tax ourselves to the extent that it would become possible to employ these people. We will have to accept the position that from now on it will be essential for all Governments to maintain a large army of men in Government employment. Farmer representatives in this House advocate that the community should come to the assistance of the farmers. They say the existence of agriculturists is threatened, and that they cannot live on the prices they are getting. It is claimed that the farmers have no income, and that it is the duty of the community to tax itself to keep those people on the land.

Mr. Patrick: Pay a fair price for their commodities.

Mr. TONKIN: I am not going to argue that point; it will come up later. If it is the job of the community to keep the farmers on the land, it is the job of the community to keep all men in work. If there are hundreds of men who cannot obtain employment because private enterprise has no vacancies for them, it is the job of the Government to get sufficient money from the people to provide employment for those men. If that is agreed to, I have no objection to the same thing being done for the farmers.

The member for Avon, when speaking of the plight of the farmers, said that the condition of agriculture in Britain was one of

comparative prosperity. I dispute that statement. I am not prepared to agree that the condition of the agriculturists in this State is any worse than that of agriculturists elsewhere, although I say that the plight here is parlous. Sir Archibald Sinclair, speaking in the House of Commons in October, 1937, said:—

Take what criterion you like—the value of the output, the acreage under cultivation, the number of men employed on the land—you will find the position of agriculture has steadily deteriorated. According to the preliminary statistics for 1937 as issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, the arable acreage is down by 102,000 acres, as compared with 1936, the total acreage under all crops and grass is down by 91,000 acres, and the steady decline in the number of agricultural workers employed on the land has continued, and there are now 9,500 fewer than in 1936.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: We are 500 per cent. worse than that.

Mr. TONKIN: The hon. member is prone to exaggerate, and that is what he is doing now. The hon. member knows the extent of arable land in Great Britain, and knows that that country could be put in a corner of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Patriek: More agricultural products are produced there.

Mr. TONKIN: And many more people are there to consume them.

The Premier: And a lot more people engaged in it, too.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Therefore the decrease is greater.

Mr. TONKIN: Despite the fact that steps have been taken in Great Britain to assist the agriculturists because of their parlous plight, there has been a falling off in the acreage and in the number of workers employed.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Very small.

Mr. TONKIN: So great has it been that Sir Archibald Sinclair drew attention to the fact in the House of Commons last year.

Mr. Marshall: If there has been a falling off, it is a straight-out contradiction of the statement by the member for Avon.

Mr. Boyle: Not at all. Those workers have been attracted to other industries.

Mr. TONKIN: There is no prosperity in the agricultural industry in Great Britain. If the farmers there were prospering, there would not be the need to take the steps that are being taken.

Mr. Patriek: Farmers there know what they are getting, anyhow.

Mr. TONKIN: The other evening the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) when referring to the financial position of the State, spoke about the large increase in the amount of revenue received from taxation. He proceeded to say that had the increase been due to an increased taxable income of the State—a sign undoubtedly of prosperity—it would have been very gratifying. The House was led to infer that the increase was not due to an increase in taxable income.

The Premier: Oh; he mixed up the figures.

Mr. TONKIN: The member for Nedlands then said that there was an abysmal difference between national income and taxable income; that we could have a colossal national income and no taxable income. What a remarkable statement to make! This House expects better than that from the member for Nedlands, and is entitled to get better from him, because he knows better.

Mr. Watts: How do you know?

Mr. TONKIN: I shall prove it. The member for Nedlands said we could have a colossal national income and no taxable income, and then proceeded to give two illustrations. He told us that if we had a harvest of 20,000,000 bushels at 5s. per bushel, we would have a national income of £5,000,000, and that if we had a harvest of 40,000,000 bushels at 2s. 6d. a bushel, we would again have a national income of £5,000,000. Then he added—

Assuming that the cost of production was 3s. a bushel, in the first instance there would be a taxable income of £2,000,000, and in the second instance there would be no taxable income at all.

The hon. member was not entitled to assume 3s. as the cost of production in both instances. If the harvest was so small that we had only 20,000,000 bushels, the cost of production per bushel would be considerably higher than if the crop were normal.

Hon. N. Keenan: If there was half the acreage, what would be the difference?

Mr. TONKIN: There would be a reason for having only half the acreage.

Hon. N. Keenan: Suppose there was only half the acreage.

Mr. TONKIN: Let me deal with the other point first.

Hon. N. Keenan: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. TONKIN: The hon. member gave those two illustrations—40,000,000 bushels at 2s. 6d. and 20,000,000 bushels at 5s.—and he assumed that the cost of production would be the same in each instance. The hon. member knows that if the crop was light, the cost of production per bushel would be higher than if the crop was normal. If the harvest was large, the cost of production per bushel would be considerably lower than the normal cost of production.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: What if the average was the same?

Mr. TONKIN: In taking the cost of production as a fixed figure in both instances, the hon. member was doing something that might exist in theory but could not exist in practice. Therefore I say he was not entitled to assume anything of the kind. If he considered the matter, he would probably find in the two examples he gave that there would be very little difference in the amount of taxable income received by the people engaged in the production of wheat.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Tell us what the position would be if—

Mr. TONKIN: I will tell the House what I wish and not what the hon. member desires me to tell.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: You are misrepresenting the position.

Mr. TONKIN: No, I am not; I have not yet finished my remarks on that point. A taxable income of £2,000,000 would necessarily mean that there had been a very serious diminution of the taxable income elsewhere, because, if our harvest was only 20,000,000 bushels and the price was 5s. a bushel, the price would suggest that there was something wrong in the country from the fact of its being so high. Probably it would be due to scarcity.

Mr. Patrick: That was the average last year.

Mr. TONKIN: Was there a good harvest last year?

Mr. Patrick: It was not too bad.

Mr. TONKIN: And not too good. A harvest of 20,000,000 bushels at 5s. a bushel would mean less work in the community and would suggest, to me, at any rate, that there would be a serious diminution in the taxable income elsewhere in the community. But if there was a harvest of 40,000,000 bushels, even though the price was 2s. 6d. a bushel, and even though the farmers might not have much taxable income, there

would be so much additional work as compared with that afforded by a harvest of 20,000,000 bushels that the taxable income of the rest of the community would be increased. The member for Nedlands, however, said that we could have a colossal national income and no taxable income. I put it to the House that if we had a colossal national income, it would be a physical impossibility to have no taxable income. Yet that is what the hon. member said would happen. He proceeded to tell us that taxation was not based on national income, and had very little to do with national income. He said that taxation was based on taxable income. I remind the hon. member that if his statement were true, a good deal of the financial emergency taxation that was levied would never have been levied if taxable income was to be the basis for taxation. It was levied on the national income.

After arguing that the Government's increased tax collection was not due to the increased taxable income of the State, the hon. member said it might be that the reason for the increase was that given by Mr. Dunstan, the Premier of Victoria, when a deputation waited upon him some time ago. He was quite emphatic that the increase in revenue was not due to the increase in taxable income, but he gave no other reason for it. All he said was that the reason might be the one given by Mr. Dunstan. This is Mr. Dunstan's reason—

The incidence and severity of taxation was greater in Western Australia and Queensland than elsewhere.

So the hon. member infers that possibly the reason for the increased collection in this State was the incidence and severity of the tax. The hon. member must know that that is wrong, because the rate of tax and the incidence of the tax were known at the time of the imposition of the tax—at the time the calculation of income was made. To say that the large increase was due to the incidence or severity of the tax was to say something which, in my opinion, was not in accordance with fact. I believe the reason for the increase is that there was a large increase in the taxable income in the State. I do not want the House to accept my opinion without some corroboration. I refer to a publication sent to members from the University of Western Australia containing an article written by

Colin Clark, M.A., one of the professors. The article contains this statement—

A number of forces, too complex to analyse now, have been steadily carrying the Australian national income upwards until for the current year it has reached the record figure of over £800,000,000.

That is general throughout Australia.

Mr. Seward: For what year was that?

Mr. TONKIN: The publication bears the date of April, 1938, so it would be for the year 1937-38. Mr. Clark says that over a period of years the Australian national income has been mounting until in that year it reached the record figure. Therefore I say that was the reason for the large increase in tax collection—a gradually improved national income—not, as the member for Nedlands would have us believe, the severity and incidence of the taxation imposed.

The Speech indicates that the Government proposes to alter the system of taxation this year. An idea of what will be done is given inasmuch as the Speech points out that the assessment will be made with due regard to ability to pay. In considering this matter, I endeavoured to decide what I thought should be the figure for exemptions from taxation. I came to this decision: That each year, or if that be too short a term, at the end of each period of two or three years the exemption figure should be altered to make it the same as the average of the annual income. I find from my study that the average income in Australia is £300 per annum, which, in comparison with that of other parts of the world, is high. Accordingly, £300 ought to be the exemption figure for taxation. No person who receives less than the average of the annual income of the Commonwealth ought to pay taxes. If we adopted that system and the income of the people on the higher rates rose, with the result that the average income also rose, that of course would have the effect of increasing the tax upon those receiving very high incomes. But as it would be a large increase in their income that would make the increase in the average annual income, those people would be well able to pay that tax. On the other hand, if the average of the annual income were to rise because there had been a large increase in the incomes below the average rate, that would have the effect of reducing taxation for those on the higher incomes. The State would then have less revenue, but it would not need as much as

it did before because of the fact that the people on the lower incomes had had their incomes increased, and thus there had been brought about the higher average. Therefore, there would be less need for social services and the Government would not require additional money. By adopting that figure, which seems to me the reasonable figure, we would have the fairest method of taxation possible. We should not say to those people who receive less than the average income of the Commonwealth, "You have to pay a tax to assist others," because they themselves would be in need of assistance. I know that in some countries the average of the annual income is particularly low. In Russia, I believe, it is equivalent to £80. That is very much lower than ours. The amount is high in Sweden, Holland and Norway, and I think in New Zealand. Ours compares very favourably with other countries. The figure I have suggested seems a reasonable one to adopt, and if we were to say that the average of the annual income was to be the exemption rate, we should not be imposing a hardship upon anybody and should be able to raise sufficient money with which to carry on the various social services of the State.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Is not the average income of the great majority of people below £300?

Mr. TONKIN: I am unable to answer the question because I do not know. If I were to hazard a guess I would say "Yes," but I do not know and therefore I will not say that I do. But even if the great majority of the people had an income of under £300, that would mean that to give the whole of the population such a high average income, those receiving over £300 would be obtaining a lot of money and would be well able to pay the tax required to carry on the services rendered by the State. But should there be an increase in the income of those under the average, that would have the effect, as I have already stated, of reducing the tax on those on the higher incomes, and that would be just and equitable, because by means of the higher income of those below the average there would not be the same need for the great amount of money previously required by the Government. If the Government intends to give consideration to the fixation of an amount below which no taxation shall be paid, I hope what I have said will be taken into account.

Before I conclude, I remember that although I promised to deal with a certain interjection, I have neglected to do so. The interjection made was as to what would be the position if only half the acreage were sown as it had been supposed was sown in the example quoted. Of course, if we assume those conditions, the comparison becomes valueless.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That is what the hon. member intended.

Mr. TONKIN: He did not say so. He spoke about a colossal national income and I do not see how we can get a colossal national income if only half the acreage of wheat is sown. I do not think those conditions can be pre-supposed. To give a fair illustration of the relative prices of wheat and the relative income in both instances, he would have to take the harvest from the same acreage and he would have to take it as having been put in under somewhat the same wage conditions, but given those same conditions I repeat that he would not be entitled to assume that the cost of production would be constant in both instances because we know it would not be. Where the harvest was particularly small, naturally there would be a higher cost of production per bushel than where there was a large harvest. If a man were harvesting three or four bushels to the acre his cost per bushel would be very high indeed, whereas if he were harvesting 24 bushels to the acre his cost per bushel would be very low. The hon. member is not entitled to assume that the cost of production would be constant in both instances.

I heard the member for Nedlands in an aside make some reference to my being a schoolmaster. I do not know what that has to do with the matter. I would remind the hon. member that when I came into the House and delivered my maiden speech on the Address-in-reply the fact of my being a schoolmaster did not stop the hon. member, in a subsequent speech that he made, pulling my theories to pieces, a practice which I understand is rarely adopted in this House. I bear him no malice for that.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I think you made a very good speech.

Mr. TONKIN: I bear the hon. member no malice. I appreciated his remarks and derived great benefit from them, but I have now been in Parliament longer than 24 hours, and I think I am entitled to pit my

opinion against the opinion of the hon. member. He made a statement that I considered was highly fallacious and schoolmaster or no schoolmaster, I deemed it my duty to point out where he was wrong, and I make this final statement, that I have yet to be convinced that any country can have a colossal national income and no taxable income.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [9.10]: After having listened for a week to speeches from the opposite side of the House I was at first too despondent to make any remark on the Address-in-reply debate. To-night, however, I shall endeavour to make my contribution. In my opinion unemployment is still the most important problem the community has to face. Notwithstanding the improved financial position, the Government has not found it possible to give full time employment to all the unemployed. The fear is expressed that if such full time work is provided the Government will eventually have to retrace its steps and all will have to revert to part-time employment. I believe, however, that there is a means of taxation that would return the additional amount necessary to enable the Government to find full time work for those that need it. In this State at the present time is an industry that is in a very prosperous condition. While that industry has been taxed to a certain extent, it has not been taxed as much as it should be and as much as it is taxed in other parts of the world. I refer to the goldmining industry. The tax imposed on that industry is a small one and I consider it is possible, without being unduly harsh, to get far more out of it. In South Africa £79,495,000 worth of gold was produced last year and the State took £9,388,000. I am prepared to admit that conditions there are not comparable with those in this country. I maintain that it is possible to get much more out of the industry here than we are obtaining at the present time. If a proportionate amount were taken from the industry in this State we should have at our disposal £800,000. When the goldmining industry was in a parlous condition the Government went to its assistance. I agree that that was as it should be. Now that goldmining is in a flourishing condition, it is up to those concerned to do something for the State that has done so much for the industry in the past. A few of the mines in this State

were practically on the point of closing down when gold was at £4 an ounce and, but for the action of the State, would have done so. Thanks to the late Minister for Mines the Government went to the aid of the industry and now that the price of gold is over £8 an ounce the capitalists from the other States should not expect to get it all, but should be prepared to put something back into the coffers of the State so that employment may be found for those who are out of work. Gold is not like other commodities. When gold is taken from the ground it is gone. Primary products may be raised year after year, but once gold is taken from the earth it cannot be replaced. I hope that if lack of finance is preventing the Government from putting the unemployed into full-time employment, an endeavour will be made to secure a little more money from the gold-mining industry.

Our friends opposite have painted a doleful picture of the farming industry. I agree with them that at present things are not looking bright. However, that has been the position on several occasions already, and I do not think there is a man in this House, or in this State, or in Australia who can say what the price of wheat will be after next harvest. The member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) laughs. If he thinks he is an authority who can give us the information, we shall be pleased to hear him when he rises.

Mr. Patrick: The price will be low.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I have previously seen the price pretty nearly as low as it is now, and by the time of the following harvest wheat had become a favourable proposition. We are told that Russian wheat will keep the price down. Undoubtedly the wheat industry is in a bad position at present, but there is no use in getting downhearted. I hold that the wheat farmer should get more for his wheat than he actually receives, in view of the price of bread. Either we are paying too much for our bread, or the farmer should get more of the price we pay for it. The fall in the price of wheat has not affected the price of bread at all. No matter how the price of wheat may fall, the price of bread remains the same.

Mr. Doney: Then you will not be against a home consumption price for wheat.

Mr. SLEEMAN: At present we pay 5½d. for a loaf of bread, and the price of wheat I believe is now below 2s. 6d. per bushel.

Mr. Patrick: It is 2s. 3d. per bushel.

Mr. SLEEMAN: And we still pay 5½d. for a loaf of bread. Who gets the profit? I do not think the baker does. If he does, he should be made to sell bread cheaper than he is doing. When bakers buy flour ahead at a low price, it makes no difference in the price of bread. At the peak period of the war wheat was about 9s. per bushel, and we paid only about 6d. per loaf, with a variation of about ½d. An investigation should be made to ascertain who gets the money. Undoubtedly the farmer is not getting it at present. I do not believe, either, that the baker is getting it. I suggest that the State go into the milling trade. Let us have State flour mills. Some farmers may not agree with that proposal, but it represents one way out of the difficulty. If wheat can be bought at 2s. 3d. per bushel, as our friends opposite say, the price of bread should be less than 5½d. per loaf. Country Party members may say, "What do you know about farming?" I do not set myself up as an agricultural authority, but I daresay I know just as much about the farming industry as the Leader of the Opposition the other evening showed he knew about the coalmining industry. We now have men on the land who are not capable of producing wheat at a profit, in view of present prices. I know there are many abandoned but good farms in other parts of the country. The Government desires to have abandoned farms taken off its hands. I suggest that men on poor blocks be shifted to abandoned blocks which are more likely to return a profit from the growing of wheat.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Quite a lot of that has been done.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I know that a number of men are on land which, in my opinion and in the opinion of others, will never be able to produce wheat at a profit. It is stated that the rainfall is wanting; and without a sufficient rainfall wheat cannot be produced. The member for Mt. Marshall (Mr. Warner) may agree that in many places people are attempting, hopelessly, to grow wheat at a profit.

Mr. Warner: I would not say that.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Give such people a chance on better land, and let us see what will happen.

I hold that with the extra revenue that could be obtained from the goldmining industry, men should be put on full-time work. Moreover, works of a large nature should be

undertaken. At present many small, tiddley-winking jobs are started, and the men sent out to them are home again after a week or two. We should look ahead and plan large works. One work I would suggest is the widening of the Kalgoorlie-Fremantle line. Every time one passes over that railway, especially eastwards, and observes the various breaks of gauge, one cannot but wonder why the Commonwealth and State Governments persist in maintaining the narrow gauge line from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle. If that line were widened, one would go from Fremantle to Port Pirie, where there is a change, and right through to Albury with only the one break. The State Government should take up this matter with the Commonwealth Government, and get something done.

Mr. North: It should have been done years ago.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Yes, many years ago. That job would not cut out. So many men would be planned for to do the work in so many years, and the work would be continuous. Nowadays 10 or 15 or 20 men are picked up to go out to a job, and before one knows where one is they are back on one's hands. Then there are the single men. In my electorate crowds of them are to be found. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) also mentioned this matter. Some of those men have never had a job since leaving school. Not much provision is made for them by the Government. Every morning one sees them in hundreds—without any exaggeration—simply clamouring for jobs. The sight of them reminds me of a poem Rudyard Kipling wrote about soldiers—

It's Tommy this, and Tommy that, and
"Kick him out, the brute!"

But it's "Forward, Tommy Atkins!" when
the guns begin to shoot.

Apparently, the only time single men are wanted nowadays is when the guns begin to shoot. The man who has never had a job since leaving school has little to fight for. Provision should be made for such men. True, the Government has had a number of single men out in the country at 30s. a week; but hundreds of single men have never had the chance to secure even such work. I hope the time is not far distant when they will have an opportunity of securing constant employment.

I hold that if the primary industries are failing, we should start secondary industries.

I was amused recently to hear the Leader of the Opposition talking about our secondary industries. Why, members on this side of the Chamber pleaded with a former Government to try to save one of the secondary industries, one which would be of the utmost value to the State. I refer to the State Implement Works formerly at Fremantle. The opponents of Labour were always deerying the works and the implements they produced, with the result that now no implements are made at Fremantle. The works should have been employing hundreds of men instead of our supplying funds for McKay's and other Eastern States manufacturers. Members ought not to deery the making of agricultural implements in Western Australia and then advocate the establishment of secondary industries here. It is too inconsistent.

Mr. Patrick: If the quality had been better, there would have been no trouble.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is a wonder the hon. member does not say that Western Australian wheat would bring more than 2s. 3d. a bushel if it were of good quality. Does the member for Greenough assert that the tradesmen of this country are inferior to those of Victoria? He ought to have more respect for the people of Western Australia. Our tradesmen are second to none in the world. As regards the establishing of secondary industries here, there is no real difficulty except that of the prejudice against local products. Certain Jonahs are always out to deery local industry. But for that fact, the implement works at Fremantle would to-day be supporting hundreds of men. However, hon. members opposite are satisfied to have broken down what they called a socialistic concern. They would do anything to wipe out a Western Australian State trading concern. In Fremantle there are now simply a few men employed as hands in engineering work. Some people stop at nothing to discredit a local industry, and then in the next breath declare that we should start secondary industries here. For instance, I am sick of hearing people say Western Australia cannot produce jam. In the manner of the member for Greenough, people say that jam can be produced only in Tasmania.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Surely you do not believe that?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I believe it because I have heard people say so. I have heard people in Western Australia say that jam

cannot be produced in this country, and that if the local jam were only as good as Jones's Tasmanian jam, it would sell itself. We can produce anything here as well as it can be produced in the Eastern States.

Mr. Thorn: Of course we can. You are only making up a song.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The member for Toodyay will presently be telling us that Western Australia cannot produce sultanas equal to those produced in the Eastern States. Similarly, our political opponents say Western Australia cannot produce agricultural implements. If the implements produced by the State works had not been so constantly decried by opponents of State manufacture, those works would be in a flourishing state to-day. The reason why State implements are not now being used is that the works were closed down by a party which did not want a socialistic concern, as they termed it, to make agricultural implements.

There is another industry I wish to mention. We have heard quite a lot about Yampi Sound in the past, and I suppose we shall hear more about it during the current session. Instead of importing iron to make implements at the State Implement Works, a sympathetic Government would have enabled us to manufacture our own iron. It would not be necessary to bring iron ore from Yampi, because there are wonderful deposits of iron ore much closer to the metropolitan area than Yampi. Yampi's turn will come later. I hope to see the day when iron ore from nearer deposits will be transported to Fremantle and put through iron and steel works there.

Mr. Patrick: Are those deposits close to the seaboard?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Very close to the seaboard. Within a few miles of the hon. members' district. One of the finest iron ore deposits in the State is to be found near or inside that district. Moreover, throughout the Murchison wonderful deposits of iron ore exist. That is also the case outside Southern Cross.

Mr. Patrick: But I want the iron works at Geraldton instead of at Fremantle.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am not wedded to Fremantle for that purpose. However, the iron works must be established at a place possessing either coal or electricity. If there is neither coal nor electricity at Geraldton, the works cannot be established there.

I suggest that such works should be established at Fremantle. At the present time the geographical position of Fremantle makes it an ideal centre for such operations. With the completion of the extensions to the East Perth power house, ample electricity will be available for such works if established.

Mr. Patrick: I have a coalfield in my constituency.

Mr. SLEEMAN: But so far it has not been developed. Some time ago we were told that great things were to be done with the deposits at Eradu, and I hope that the time will come when operations on the coalfields at Eradu and the iron ore deposits at Talling Peak will be in full swing. I am broad-minded enough to express that opinion for I have at heart the desire to see our industries developed wherever it is most convenient. If the hon. member should be fortunate enough to secure the development of the coalfields at Eradu, and iron and steel works should be established at Geraldton, it would mean that that part of the State would prosper, and I would be the first to extend my congratulations. I hope the time will come when not only shall we be manufacturing our own agricultural implements, but that we shall have our own iron and steel works. When I visited Newcastle I was struck by the number of men employed in the steel industry. While the proposed iron works in this State would not be nearly as extensive as those at Newcastle, it may be of interest to say that when the day shift was working at the Newcastle steel works alone, I saw 2,000 bicycles stacked up, which meant that there were 2,000 men at least working at that time. In addition, there were 105 motor cars and a number of buses owned by men employed at the works. That will give members some idea of the employment provided by that industry. If we could have our own iron and steel industry in Western Australia, we would have so much wealth kept in our State instead of sending our money to the Eastern States.

Mr. Withers: Why not have the iron and steel works at Bunbury, which is adjacent to the Collie coalfields?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I would not object to that. If the member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) thinks I am wedded to Fremantle, to the exclusion of every other centre of

the State, he is wrong. I do not care where the iron and steel works are established, so long as we have them in the State. I know that if they are established in Bunbury or Geraldton, or somewhere else, at least portion of the proceeds will find its way into my electorate. Another industry that I advocated some time ago, concerning which I wrote to the Minister for the North-West, is that relating to whaling. I suggested that the motor vessel "Kangaroo," which was recently sold, should be retained and sent North for whaling purposes. In his reply, I have to admit that the Minister raised objections that were quite reasonable. He pointed out that steam would have to be provided, and other extensive alterations to the vessel would be necessary. In fact, he almost convinced me that the "Kangaroo" would not have been a satisfactory vessel for the industry. At the same time I consider something should be done along the lines I suggested. We allow foreigners to bring their vessels into our waters, and take much wealth from us. We should make an effort to conserve some of that wealth for our own people. Irrespective of whether the "Kangaroo" was suitable or not, I believe that we should do something regarding the whaling industry. Year after year American, Norwegian and Japanese ships reap a rich harvest from the whales off our north-west coast, and we all know what wealth there is in whale oil. Should not that wealth be retained for our own people? At least we should have some portion of it. We know that the Government is in need of funds, and it could make profits from this industry, if it were embarked upon. Apparently, we are content to allow foreigners to come here and take anything they desire, and we permit our own people to go short of their requirements. I hope the Government will see to it that something is done in the near future, and so participate in the wealth that is being drawn from our waters.

Another avenue in which the Government should embark is home-building. For years we have heard about homes that should be erected. We have listened to statements about what the Workers' Homes Board is or is not doing. I believe there is ample scope for a large building scheme for small homes, the cost of which would be within the reach of people who are at present working under the Government relief

scheme. I have a pamphlet circulated by the State Sawmills Department at Show time. It contains plans of buildings, the prices of which are given as £59 15s., £79 18s., £95 4s., £107 11s., £141, £165 and £179 14s. The type of houses indicated would be welcomed by hundreds of people in the metropolitan area. I have made inquiries at the Workers' Homes Board office and I have been informed that, on top of those prices, an additional £40 or £50 would have to be provided for labour in the erection of the buildings. When the Mitchell Government was in office, I told the late Mr. Scaddan, who was Minister for Industries, of the plight that the people were in regarding the housing problem. It was then arranged that timber to the value of £70 would be allowed to people who applied for it, and the labour of erection of homes would be carried out by workers who were employed by local governing bodies. The people were very thankful for that concession. If members were to inspect those houses to-day, they would find that they had been made very comfortable. The owners have lined them and have added a room or two, according to requirements. The present Lieut.-Governor, Sir James Mitchell, inspected some of those houses and was agreeably surprised at the difference in their appearance compared with their condition when first erected. While I was very pleased and thankful to Mr. Scaddan for that concession, the homes that were made possible were on the small side and we should now be able to do a bit better. If homes were made available at a reasonable cost, homes for which the people could be expected to pay, hundreds would avail themselves of the opportunity to acquire them. The average Australian is a handy man and he would be able to effect improvements as the necessity arose with the increase in the family. If steps were taken in that direction, it would mean the circulation of money, not only in the timber industry, but in other directions as well. We heard talk about homes being made available at £700 or £900 and later still at £400, but it would be infinitely preferable to get down to bedrock and make them available at a more reasonable price. Of course, if people are not satisfied with what is offered, we cannot compel them to take such homes, but in my electorate there are dozens who would readily avail themselves of opportunities to secure homes such

as I have indicated. Then, again, one member mentioned brick areas. It is time Parliament did something regarding that question. Local governing bodies seem to be able to declare large tracts of country to be brick areas, and so people are compelled to go out considerable distances if they desire to erect wooden houses. It is all nonsense to allow local authorities to exercise such a power. It would be satisfactory if it were exercised within reason, but, in my opinion, the action taken in many instances is beyond reason. I consider that power should be taken away from the local governing bodies.

From time to time references are made to the necessity for enforcing all motorists to take out third-party risk insurance policies. I have dealt with that matter on several occasions, and have been told that I was trying to prevent the poor man from having his motor car. I do not believe that for one moment. I will not accept that as an excuse for the third-party risk insurance provision not being enforced in this State. Far too many people have been killed and their families have been deprived of the breadwinners. It is often found that a man of straw has been responsible for the fatality and the dependants have not been able to secure any damages. The time is long overdue for action in this respect, and in my opinion no motor vehicle should be allowed on the road unless the owner is possessed of a third-party risk insurance policy. There are few States in Australia where that law does not apply, and I hope that before the time is ripe for the next licenses to be taken out, this provision will be enforceable in Western Australia. Another phase of the licensing question should receive attention, as it has in Victoria and New South Wales. The motor license should date from the time an individual purchases his car. If that provision operated here, it would save the unholy rush that is experienced annually during the 14 days from the 30th June to the 14th July. In Victoria and New South Wales, if a person buys a car in February, his license is good for the 12 months ending in February of the succeeding year. If he buys it in June, the license carries on till June of the following year, and so on. That is a vast improvement on our system, and operates to the convenience of both the motor car owners and the department. It certainly avoids the rush that we experience here, and obviates the delays that inevitably occur.

I was interested in the speech delivered by the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver), although I thought it was rather illogical in parts. I particularly refer to her remarks when she said—

I cannot blame the married people in Australia for not having children. In some of the schools I visit, more than a fourth of the children have parents who over the year receive considerably less than the basic wage. Some of them have families and £100 a year to exist on. If we were to give liberal endowments either in money or in kind to parents, there would be no dearth of children. Let us make marriage, the home and children, more attractive.

I agree with her that endowment should be provided, but I do not believe that they should be granted for the same reason as the member for Subiaco advanced. I believe endowments should be provided because at present there are so many large families in this State, and I do not know how the parents make ends meet. Under Arbitration Court awards, even if the worker is on full time, it must be remembered that the basic wage provides only for a man, his wife and two children. In those circumstances I cannot for the life of me make out how they can provide for their large families. I am in agreement with the member for Subiaco that endowments should be provided in respect of families, but when she claims that by virtue of that concession there will be no dearth of children, I cannot believe her assertion.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: You do not know that.

Mr. SLEEMAN: But what I do know is that the poor people have the children and the poorer they are the more children they have. This would not encourage the richer people to have children. Without fear of contradiction, I make that claim regarding the poorer people. There would appear to be some reason in the argument if it were advanced that the poor people were not able to have large families, but the fact is that they do have them. The argument propounded by the member for Subiaco that such an endowment would induce richer people to have children does not carry conviction with me. She must know that a lot of the nice people, those comprising the so-called upper class—the rich people—would rather contribute to the profits of the makers of certain drugs than have children. I am satisfied that such people, rather than emulate the poorer individuals and have children, would prefer to

tuck under their arms the pups of poodles, pomeranians and pekinese.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It is your Government that allows the drugs to come in.

Mr. SLEEMAN: If that is so, the hon. member should take some action to stop it. I was not aware that the present Government was permitting those articles to enter the State. As I was saying, it is not the poor people who use those drugs. I know that, because the people in the district I represent are poor and their families are increasing. I know that the Minister for Education officially does not like to see an ever-increasing number of children, because he is not able to provide aquedate school accommodation for them. Personally, however, I am certain that he appreciates large families. My experience has always been amongst the poorer class of people; it is they who come to me for assistance, and most of them have four or five and, in some instances, six or more children.

Mr. Thorn: That is what keeps them poor.

Mr. SLEEMAN: And that is why I believe there should be child endowment. Some women I know have as many as four or five children, all of whom might be said to be babies. In cases such as those there should be child endowment. They are unlike the nice people who have very few or no children at all.

Mr. Hughes: What do you mean by "nice people"?

Mr. SLEEMAN: The wealthy class, referred to sometimes by the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) as social butterflies. They have sometimes been called really nice people, and are the class who prefer pomeranians to babies. On this front bench there are three members who are proud of the fact that they are fathers of a total of 13 children. I repeat that I agree with the member for Subiaco, who advocates child endowment, though not for the people who can afford to have children, but who do not. The member for Subiaco does not ask that child endowment should be granted to those who already have children; her purpose is to raise the birthrate. I claim that it will not do so.

Mr. Patrick: Has it not had that effect in New South Wales?

Mr. SLEEMAN: In New South Wales, where there is child endowment, the birthrate is no higher than it is in Western Aus-

tralia. There is another aspect, and I know the member for Subiaco will agree with me. The single men are not being given a chance to marry. We are aware that there are 500 or 600, or even more, who have been drawing 30s. a week for the past six or seven years. What chance have they to marry and to establish homes of their own? None at all. Further, if a single man does marry and then goes to the department to look for work, the first question asked him is whether his marriage was compulsory. The department has no right whatever to ask such a question. It should not matter in the slightest degree to the department whether the applicant for work was or was not forced to marry. If, however, it should be that the applicant's marriage was compulsory, he has a greater chance of getting a job than the individual who was not forced into matrimony. If we desire to raise the birthrate, we must hold out some hope for the single men. How can we expect the single man earning 30s. a week to save enough money to get married? If we desire to increase the birthrate, we must give single men, and single women as well, every chance to get married.

Mr. Warner: You are in the position of making the Government do it.

Mr. SLEEMAN: How am I in that position? I know what the hon. member thinks. His belief is that we should vote against the Government and push them out. If we did that, the country would be a thousand times worse off with a National Government in power. If the hon. member can show me a way by which we can improve the position of the worker by turning out this Government, I will listen to him. I put in three years in this House with a National Government in power, and I have not forgotten what that Government was like.

Mr. Hughes: What about the sustenance men on 7s. a week?

Mr. SLEEMAN: When the National Government was in power, there were men on just bare sustenance. I do not stand for 7s. a week for C class men, but I am not going to see the present Government put out, because the Government that would succeed it would be ten times worse.

A good deal has been said lately about men with Labour tendencies being given jobs by the present Government. Some members have complained that Mr. So-and-so, who received an appointment, was a supporter of the present Government, and that somebody

else who was also a supporter of the present Government received a position somewhere else. I have yet to learn that an individual should be refused a job because of his political inclinations. The present Government has never done that kind of thing. Did not the Government now in power appoint Sir James Mitchell to the post of Lieut.-Governor, and was Sir James Mitchell a supporter of the present Government?

Mr. Hughes: You always made out you did not know who made the appointment.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I never said anything of the sort. Then was not Sir Hal Colebatch appointed by this Government?

Mr. Patrick: He was not appointed by the present Government.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Perhaps if members will give me a chance to speak, I will proceed. Mr. Harry Maley was appointed to a position by the present Government, and he was an opponent of ours. Nothing was ever said about that, but immediately someone who happens to be a supporter of the Government now in power is appointed to a public position, there is a hue and cry. My last opponent was not a Government supporter, but he got a nice job in the Aborigines Department, and is now in the North-West. It makes me sick to hear people say that Jones was a Labour supporter, and because of that he got a nice job. Anyway, I hope Jones will always get a job and I hope, too, that if Sleeman at any time wants a job, he too will get one.

There is one more matter to which I wish to refer, though it may not be regarded by some members of the House as being of any importance—I refer to the headgear worn by Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: You are reflecting on the Speaker.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Far from it, and it is not my intention to reflect on the Speaker or on any member of the House. I have not been able to learn why the wig has been resurrected after an absence from this Chamber of 5½ years. I remember when the late Mr. Walker was Speaker, he declared that it was for the House to decide whether he should wear the wig. I have looked up all the authorities I can find on the subject of the Speaker's wig. From Nelson's Encyclopedia, vol. 12, page 578, I have extracted this—

Wigs or perukes were used in cases of baldness, on the stage, by judges and barristers, and formerly for fashion. They have

been found on Egyptian mummies. Early Church writers denounced wigs as of the Devil, but finally adopted them as professional attire in the 17th Century.

Members are laughing, but I assure them there is nothing to laugh at, and it is not a subject for joking.

Mr. Thorn: On a point of order. I desire to know whether the hon. member is not reflecting on the Chair when he tries to ridicule the wig you, Sir, are wearing.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is in order. There has been no reflection at all, personal or otherwise.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that there is nothing personal in my remarks, and I would be the last to reflect on the Chair in a matter such as this. Hon. members have tried to make a joke of it, but I am dealing with the question in all seriousness.

Mr. Thorn: Is this all for the good of the State?

Mr. SLEEMAN: It would be good for the State if the hon. member were not in it. The Encyclopedia Britannica, volume 28, page 624, on the same subject says—

Messalena assumed a yellow wig for her visit to places of ill-fame. Messalena was the wife of the Roman Emperor Claudius, and mother of Britannicus. . . . In those days men were distinguished by the cut of their wigs. . . . Men of letters and merchants were distinguished by the grave full-bottomed wig, or more moderate tie, nearly curled; the tradesmen by the long bob or natty scratch; the huge tie peruke for the men of the law.

Members will see that I have gone back as far as I possibly can and have failed to discover that the wearing of the wig has ever made for greater dignity or for the better conduct of the House. If either or both of these ends could be brought about, I would not mind if all members had to wear wigs, but I cannot find anything to show what good it would be.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Judges wear wigs.

Mr. Hughes: You are jealous.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I might put a wig on you if I thought it would make you any better. I cannot think of any reason why the Speaker should wear the wig and I regret that the custom has been revived after the previous Speaker laid it aside for five and a half years.

On motion by Mr. Raphael, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.2 p.m.