

Bank intend to appoint those who have held the agency for the State bank, to act similarly in connection with the Commonwealth Savings Bank business under the amalgamation.

The CHAIRMAN: The clause is necessary to wind up the business.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is so.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 9—agreed to.

First and Second Schedules, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

BILL—LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 9.40 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 13th October, 1931.

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

QUESTION—PIG INDUSTRY.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (for Mr. J. I. Mann) asked the Minister for Lands: What was the price paid for boars and sows recently purchased by the Government in the Eastern States, and the total cost landed in the State?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:
1, The purchase price was £459 7s. 6d.
2, The charges for landing are not yet available.

BILL—LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—POOR PERSONS LEGAL ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1931-32.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 8th October on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Richardson in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council. £1,256:

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [4.38] I do not propose to deal with the financial aspect, except insofar as it relates to unemployment. In that connection I propose to make a statement which I hope may prove to be of some little value. In times of stress there is plenty of advice, but when all is said and done there is only one way in regard to unemployment which has ever been successfully tried; that method is the placing of people on the land. I do not suggest anything in the way of settlement for the production of wheat or of any other cereal, nor do I suggest anything in the way of group settlement; but I do suggest that action should be taken in regard to the provision of allotments of land, and that those who are approved as being reasonably likely to make a success of the proposition might be enabled to work them. The unemployment position is exceedingly difficult, and it faces every section of every people of the world. It is said there are upwards of 20 million persons unemployed in Europe and

the United States of America. The position is that production exceeds consumption. Machines are turning out goods faster than they can be consumed. In addition—and perhaps this is the most vital and most fatal disability — distribution, comparatively speaking, has remained stationary. In Canada and the United States and in many other parts of the world, labour-saving farming machinery has displaced rural workers in very large numbers. However, it is futile on our part to urge anything against that. Progress is being made, we cannot go back, and if we are to compete with other countries we must take advantage of the economic production which machinery provides. In addition, scientific progress cannot be stopped. I do not for a moment urge that any restriction of labour-saving machinery should be brought in or should be countenanced in Australia; for I realise that while our position in competition with the rest of the world is to-day most difficult, without the aid of labour-saving machinery it would be hopeless.

Mr. Marshall: We cannot feed our own people yet.

Mr. SAMPSON: The position is that we lack distribution; there is ample production, but our distributing methods have broken down.

Mr. Marshall: Why cannot we feed our own people?

Mr. SAMPSON: While our wharves are glutted with wheat, and while at every railway siding during the wheat period there is to be seen an unprecedented harvest, nevertheless the prices for wheat and wool are such that under present conditions it is impossible economically to produce those commodities. It would be quite easy to condemn the Federal Governments, all of them, for the so-called settled policy of Australia, high protection, but we are quite helpless in that respect. We know that very largely that is the basis of our troubles. There is one method which has been advocated in this House on many occasions, namely that whatever the price, we must produce as much as possible and as cheaply as possible, thereby enabling our producers to stand up in competition with the rest of the world.

Mr. Marshall: Why not feed our own people first?

Mr. SAMPSON: Efforts to feed the people of Australia are being made to a greater extent than in any other part of the world.

From that standpoint, Australia can face the world with pride. It has never failed to look after those that are in need. I do not desire to dilate upon that phase at the moment, but may do so at a later stage of my remarks. Whatever can be done, I realise there can be no solution for 100 per cent. of the unemployed. There will always be some unemployed. The history of the world shows that, and never more unmistakably than now.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: There was no unemployment in war time, was there?

Mr. SAMPSON: In war time there are different problems to meet. If the hon. member implies that during war time we should sit down, and not tackle the difficulties which the country is facing in the matter of defence, etc.—

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I do not imply that. During war time an organisation existed which made everybody work.

Mr. SAMPSON: During the war there was a great deal of inflation. Every nerve and sinew was strained. Every endeavour was made to combat the foe which was at the gates of the Empire.

Mr. Marshall: It is a pity the same sinew and energy are not being developed now in supplying food to our people.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the hon. member suggests that another war will provide the solution, I am not with him. It is the duty of the hon. member, and of every thinking man in the country, to do all he can to help to solve this problem. Can it be solved? I submit that it can be partially solved by placing people on their own holdings, and I shall endeavour to develop that line of argument. This can never be a complete solution. At best it will be a palliative, but a palliative that can be depended on, and if persisted in the number of unemployed should decrease. If men were placed on small blocks adjacent to those centres where casual work might be available, much distress would be obviated. This would to a large extent save the degenerating effect of the dead-end dole. In Denmark a good deal of progress has been made in that way. I am told that unemployment is less there than in most other countries. I could read something to members about that, but the progress of Denmark in respect to intense culture and the development of primary industries, particularly dairying, is so well known that there is no need for me to do so. I desire that those who are provided with blocks of land, upon

which they should have a shack or small home, and who are engaged in agricultural development, should be placed in areas that are adjacent to big centres where seasonal work is likely to be available. Their location adjacent to railways is important. At present the position of our boys and girls, as well as of numbers of men and women, is most discouraging. Recently we read the communication from the head master of the Perth Boys' School, Mr. T. C. Chandler. He stressed his anxiety for the future of our boys, a future that is particularly dark. The proposition I have to submit deals more with the parents than the lads themselves, although I agree with Mr. Chandler that it is the duty of every citizen to do everything in his or her power to provide these lads with opportunities to work. If the proposition to which I have briefly referred, namely, the settlement of people on small blocks of land of three or four, five or six, or 10 or 20 acres, is taken up, it would be necessary for a time to continue to provide sustenance. I urge upon the Treasurer and the Minister for Unemployment Relief to give the fullest consideration to this step. It would be futile to place men or families on blocks and expect them forthwith to earn a living. That would be unreasonable. It can be said that the produce they would raise, at least that part of it which is used by them, would return them their full retail value. The argument may be advanced that this production would help to glut the markets with the food-stuffs which these small holdings would be expected to yield. I refer to poultry, eggs, vegetables, fruit, small berry fruit, etc. The position to-day is that these people are not enjoying the foods to which I have referred. They are living very frugally. If they were established upon small blocks, it would not be many months before they were able to raise at least enough of these foodstuffs for their own requirements. With the development of the scheme, jam factories and preserving works would spring up. With the establishment of these factories, there would be a material reduction in the value of imports into the State. These imports during the year 1930-31 amounted to very nearly £11,000,000, the major portion of which could well be produced in this State. Some of the items are: meat and fish (fresh and preserved), £153,000; spirits, beer and wine, £222,000—we could not produce all of this but we could produce all the beer and wine—to-

bacco, cigars and cigarettes, £600,083; bacon, ham, butter, cheese, eggs and milk, £683,000.

Mr. Sleeman: These do not include implements.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not want to refer to anything which may prevent primary producers putting up a fight in competition with the rest of the world. Wearing apparel, much of which could be produced here, amounted to £2,696,000.

Mr. Sleeman: What do you wear in support of local industries?

Mr. SAMPSON: If the hon. member is going to cross-examine me on my wardrobe, he will divert me from the heavy task I have set myself of proving the statements I have made. The imports of timber, cement and furniture amounted to £73,000. I will pass over oils, rubber goods, machinery, etc., although there are many lines that could be made here. I will also pass over vehicles and parts. The value of wheat, flour, oats, oatmeal, millet, bran and polard, potatoes and onions imported was £60,800; jams, jellies and fruits £207,000. and so on. The list is by no means to our credit. An enormous amount of money leaves the State that could be kept here. I would refer to the pertinent interjection of the member for Fremantle. He suggested that people who spoke of wearing Western Australian clothes, and using Western Australian goods, should keep their eyes open, and test out the sincerity of some of their fellows. When they light a cigar, or cut a plug of tobacco, or smoke a cigarette, they should be certain they are smoking local products. If they are locally made, that is so much towards helping those who for the time being are not able to help themselves.

Mr. Sleeman: What about supporting Western Australian tobacco?

Mr. SAMPSON: That is well established in regard to quality. The connoisseur in tobacco has no occasion to go beyond our State. Those who are the best judges of My Lady Nicotine will acknowledge the truth of my remarks. I have referred to the imports. That is a full and complete answer to anyone who says that, by doing what I have suggested, namely, producing small-farm products per medium of those who are now unemployed, they will be glutting the local market. They will be saying something that will not bear examination. We must preserve the morale of those who

are at present denied work. The position from their point of view is very black. There is little hope for a man while he is unemployed. There is no doubt that our people are being demoralised. Blackboy and Hovea merely stand for the moving of the unemployed from one sector to another. Whilst at Blackboy the men are denied honest work, and are provided with a home, there is no outlook for them so long as they remain there. Degeneracy must follow the men under such conditions. To deprive them of work must have a harmful effect upon them and those who are to follow. In respect to Hovea, I understand that wood is being cut by the men there for departmental and governmental use. This undoubtedly means that others are being deprived of employment. I refer to the unfortunate bush worker. No man works harder or receives less for his efforts than the bush worker, and yet he is being deprived of the right to earn his meagre living. It may be said that since this wood is being cut for departmental and governmental purposes no harm is being done. In the years that have passed it has been the custom to call tenders for wood supplies. To-day, however, the bush worker is deprived of the opportunity to supply this wood, and his future outlook is a black one indeed. I have very great sympathy for wood cutters.

The Minister for Railways: It is obvious why.

Mr. SAMPSON: Many years ago I was a wood cutter myself. To-day I could not stand up to a day's work with the axe, but when I was a lad of 16 in South Australia I took a contract for wood cutting.

The Minister for Railways: You have a good memory.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is an absolute fact.

Mr. Kennally: I suppose the wife does it now.

Mr. Corboy: How long did the contract last?

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not desire to strike a personal note, but introduced the incident to show that I know something of the difficulties these men have to face. The same would apply to many workers in the bush—charcoal and timber workers. To establish a camp of that nature is merely to remove unemployment from one section to another. It deprives a most hard-striving body of men of an opportunity to secure a living. However, I am most anxious that I should

not be adjudged guilty of merely destructive criticism. If those who are so placed were given the opportunity of obtaining blocks of their own, the Government supplying perhaps a few sheets of galvanised iron, while bush timber would do instead of scantling, they would be able, with a few weatherboards and a stove and a tank, materially to ameliorate the hard conditions under which at present they live.

The Minister for Railways: What would they do then?

Mr. SAMPSON: They would be established in their own homes, and that is a great thing. Moreover, whatever the man did in developing the block of land, he would do for himself; and that is a most important matter.

The Minister for Railways: Quite a number of men on blocks of land have been there for donkey's years, and are now drawing the dole.

Mr. SAMPSON: I was not aware of that. I take it that the Minister is not referring to farmers?

The Minister for Railways: No.

Mr. SAMPSON: I presume that the men to whom the Minister refers as being in need of the dole are on blocks of land that are still comparatively in their virgin state, not yet having reached the stage of productivity, and that consequently these men require the assistance to which the Minister has alluded. We must tackle this question from the standpoint of those who, unless something of this nature or some other effective means is adopted, have a hopeless future. Of all the schemes that have been tried, the only scheme that has proved to be permanently successful is the cultivation of land. We have to go back to first principles. We have to go back to mother earth, the foundation and source of all wealth. When we have done that, then those men, no matter how hard they have to work, will be working for themselves. At times there is seasonal work offering; and when it offers, those men, being located, as I said, near to the railways, near to centres of industrial activity, will be able to take that seasonal work, and thus the position which obtains in older countries of the world, on the Continent and in England, would be brought into effect here. Moreover, it would be a worthy and a noble effort. Let me acknowledge the advice so often given through the columns of the "West Australian" by Mr.

R. V. Randal, who time after time has referred to the importance of giving to those who are unable to secure employment at least the satisfaction of having some sort of a home of their own. No matter how humble that home, there would be an entirely different feeling generated: and in place of the dissatisfaction which is inevitable when men are brought together in large numbers in camps, there would be the satisfaction to those men of being enabled to fight for themselves and for their wives and children by building up their own little blocks and securing something in the way of a living. The great majority of the men in the camps to which I have referred, and also men who are holding on to their homes, as one might say, by the skin of their teeth, are essentially industrious, are keenly anxious to put up a fight for those who are dependent upon them. And these are the men who are denied honest work. We have thousands of acres throughout Western Australia close to the railways which could be utilised for the purpose to which I have referred—at Wanneroo, throughout the Hills, and in much of the South-Western district, and also adjacent to Perth. Further, I claim that notwithstanding the criticism which has been levelled at Yanchep, there is good land in that locality for closer settlement. Yet, in spite of the fact that the State owns thousands of acres of these lands—

The Minister for Lands: Oh no.

Mr. SAMPSON: In spite of that fact, nothing of a constructive nature is being done to bring these areas of land into activity. They are allowed to continue to lie idle. While we have no effective closer settlement legislation, the position may be that those lands will continue idle for many, many years to come. Our railways constitute as grave a problem as any Treasurer, any Parliament or people or country at present has to face. What is the position? Trains are running, and a good service is provided; but the transport which is necessary in order to make the system a paying concern is denied to it. How many times have we heard in this House from various speakers, and how many times have we read in the newspapers—the late Mr. J. C. Morrison was one of those who advocated this most vigorously—of the need and importance of forcing into use land which lies idle adjacent to our railways! But we do not do it. We take refuge in the plea that because

on the Continent, in England, and in the United States of America there is unemployment, justification exists for unemployment here. Yet Australia, and particularly Western Australia, are new countries. We have it within our power to do what is essential. We have it within our power to give these men the land they need. We have it in our power to make their lives worth something. As it is, these men are endowed with life, but many of them would prefer that such a gift had not come their way. The land, as I said, is available in thousands of acres without cost to the Government; and it can be provided for these men at a very low price. I am aware that they have no money, but a small charge could be made, and should be made, and there should be a stipulation that without the permission of the Minister in charge of Unemployment Relief the blocks should not be disposed of. The actual building of the homes—simple, humble, but still homes—could be carried out by the men themselves. The ordinary labourer is quite capable of doing what would be necessary. I have had a plan prepared of the proposed shack, but I do not propose to deal with the matter in a technical way. That could be done better by some officer appointed by the Government or by the Minister who is concerned. In my remarks I do not wish to imply any doubt in respect of the sincerity or the work of the Minister in charge of Unemployment Relief. It is a most difficult proposition. That will be readily conceded. But unfortunately the provision of sustenance or rations, whatever it may be termed, is not a solution of the problem with which we are faced. A solution is found when allotments and homes are provided for these people. They could grow vegetables and small fruits such as Cape gooseberries, strawberries, and so on. If it be said that all the land is not suitable for that class of production, I will reply that I know that full well, but that some of the land is capable of doing it. Indeed, there are, as hon. members know, many rich gullies in the Hills that are to-day as they were at the dawn of creation. Nothing has been done; no use has been made of this land. There is plenty of water, and a fairly large number of blocks could be surveyed and used for the purpose to which I have referred. In respect of poultry and eggs there is a big market overseas. I would be the last to advocate the production of some commodity which would mean that the hard-striving settler would be

denied a market; but we know that we have reached the stage where production is insufficient to provide the requirements of our jam and pickle factories and so on, but is sufficient for the local market. We have also to tap the markets overseas. They are being tapped. We have sent abroad our first thousand boxes of butter and many thousands of boxes of eggs. The demand for eggs abroad is great, and I believe that the present export could be multiplied twenty times without surfeit being reached. The price of eggs overseas is better than the price of eggs locally. If the Agricultural Products Act which was passed not long since were in operation, and the careful grading and forwarding of eggs assured there would be an opportunity for this State which is not enjoyed by any other Australian State.

Mr. Marshall: Some of the unemployed in this State would like to grade the eggs for you. Why send the eggs overseas when there are hungry people here?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am anxious that the hungry people in this State should have an opportunity of working out their own salvation. The hungry people in this State know that there is no future unless they have their own little holdings; and that can be done, and it will be done if the persistent interjectors who I know have the cause of these people at heart will help in steadfastly and persistently insisting that the Government should take this step. The position to-day, unfortunately, is that however good those men are, they must inevitably before long degenerate. They are being denied work, and the reception of the dole cuts at what is of the very best in the best of us. No man can receive the dole for any length of time and retain the spirit of self-reliance which is so essential if he is to make good. Therefore non-action at such a time as this is criminal. We are acting unfairly to our own people, and to those people whom we invited to come to Western Australia. It is possible to improve their lot. That can be done, and it should be done. Moreover, it can be done with but little additional cost to the Government beyond that which the present system involves. As I said earlier, it would be necessary to make sustenance available for some time after the blocks have been taken up. These people must be given an opportunity of developing the land. Another phase, which has

really little connection with the matter I am discussing, is that only those who are in receipt of sustenance are eligible for work. With that aspect I do not propose to deal at any length, but it is most unfair that men who by virtue of their independence, by virtue of that manly British spirit which we boast of so much, will not accept the dole until their absolute necessity demands it, should not be given some share of the work which is provided by the people of the Commonwealth. The great majority of those who are in receipt of rations or sustenance are keenly anxious to do work in return for it. In point of fact, meetings have been held in various parts of the State to demand that work be given to them, as they are not prepared to receive payment unless permitted to work for it. That is the spirit that animated our forefathers; it is the spirit that rendered possible the work of the Australian pioneers. It is the spirit which will help those who are concerned in wrestling with this difficulty and to see a way out of it. I know it is important that those who are provided with blocks should also be furnished with advice. Not all men are gifted with the power of initiative, and not everyone can go on a block and know exactly what to do. It is wonderful what progress can be made if a little advice is forthcoming at the outset. Indeed, even if advice were denied, necessity knows no law, and the final result would be that homes would be established and, in place of a degenerate people, we would have a manly, self-reliant, independent citizenship, the units of which would be able to stand up to all the ravages in which misfortune might involve them. I would be grateful if members would permit me to read portion of a report on the progress made in India, where there has been remarkable agricultural advancement. I have said that we must get back to the primitive, and to first causes. I will quote from a cabled report from London, which was published in the "West Australian" of the 4th July, 1931—

As regards agricultural education proper, there has been steady development during the year and the facilities for short courses at agricultural colleges and experimental farms are now provided for training adult cultivators in most Provinces. Among other enterprises of the recently-established Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, now seriously at work, is the locust investigation. The committee concerned has helped to co-ordinate efforts in dealing with the present

scourge, which, it is stated, is part of an extensive and exceptional migration extending from the Western Sudan through Egypt, Palestine, Irak and Persia into North-West India.

The Minister for Lands: They are following the lead set by Western Australia.

Mr. SAMPSON: I would be proud indeed if that meant progress. The report also contains the following—

The progress and condition of India during the past year are examined in a 500-page volume prepared from detailed reports from each Province, and presented to Parliament to-day by the Secretary for India (Mr. Wedgwood-Benn). In view of their bearing on current discussions, many facts revealed are of special interest. The report shows that nearly 290,000,000 of India's 320,000,000 inhabitants are engaged in agriculture.

Those are stupendous figures, and illustrate the truth I have endeavoured to place before hon. members, namely, that we must get back to the land. Here we find that 290,000,000 of India's 320,000,000, inhabitants are engaged in agriculture. The report proceeds—

Of the cultivated land, 52 per cent. is held by peasant proprietors, 18 per cent. by permanently settled, and 30 per cent. by temporarily settled larger proprietors. The administration undertakes, in the absence of private activity, the functions of seedsman, manure seller, agricultural engineer and implement dealer, and also the development of modern agricultural methods. This development is possible only by well-organised propaganda and ocular demonstration of new methods from the viewpoint of the cultivators' own requirements is a fundamental principle underlying the educational activities of the Agricultural Department.

I shall not read any more. It is sufficient for me again to emphasise that of the 320,000,000 inhabitants of India, 290,000,000 are engaged in agriculture. That is a most striking fact.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I understood there were 10,000,000 beggars in India.

Mr. SAMPSON: They would be some of those not engaged in agriculture. It is that begging class that does not count in the building up of any State. Perhaps they are men and women who have been deprived of the opportunity that should be at the disposal of our people. We have Crown land available for productive purposes. Let us use that land and give those who are prepared to undertake the work, and who are selected and approved for that purpose, an opportunity to establish their own homes.

We are shooting at the sun, the moon and the stars, but in the meantime we are walking on the daisies at our feet. It is that which is near at hand that will provide us with the solution of the difficulty. It is the land; and yet people are denied the opportunity to work, through no fault of their own.

The Minister for Railways: Are you quite sure you are not mixing daisies with dandelions?

Mr. SAMPSON: It is a serious matter, and it is our bounden duty to see that our people are given an opportunity to do something for themselves. What a farce it is, discussing the Estimates! What is the use of the rigmarole we go through? There are citizens who are being denied the right to live. All this procedure is so much mummery.

Mr. Sleeman: There are many people who would prefer a loaf of bread to all this flowery language.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is what I want to give them. I want them to have an opportunity to live and to work. India is an older country than Australia. In India they know, and they act. We have not yet realised that our path lies in the direction of the cultivation of our own land, and in making provision for those who are in such desperate need of a little help at the present juncture.

Mr. Hegney: You should apply that argument to the farmers.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have nothing to say in regard to the farmers, except to express my keen admiration for what they have been able to do. They themselves are up against it because some of the hon. member's Federal colleagues insist on loading the men on the land with excessive costs in connection with their various requirements in order that certain implements and tools may be produced in Australia. If the farmers were given an opportunity to procure their tools of trade at London parity, they would be able to stand up and fight the world and win through, instead of, as they are to-day, being slugged to death by the disgraceful charges they are called upon to meet.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: What are they doing where they can get all this cheap machinery?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not comparing Western Australia with England.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Or America?

Mr. SAMPSON: Nor yet with the United States of America. Both those countries are largely dependent upon secondary industries. They have looked to that class of production as the means by which they shall find a place in the sun, but not so in Australia. We have not yet emerged from the stage of having to depend upon primary production. The United States of America boasts perhaps the most highly scientifically organised people in the world in the manufacture of machinery, and has been able to secure much of the trade of the world. As to England, I have nothing but admiration for that wonderful country, and for the manner in which she is able to stand up to her difficulties. Reference might be made to the unemployment difficulty in Britain, but, comparatively speaking, it is a small matter. I do not know how many of our people are out of work here, but they may represent 25 per cent. of our population. Compare our position with that obtaining in the Motherland, where there are about 2,500,000 out of work, a number that would scarcely be noticed there. Thus there is no point in that from which a comparison may be drawn. The dole has been described as an anæsthetic, which I regard as a very fair description of it. No cure is actually effected; the dole is merely a palliative. When he comes to, the patient is still on his back, and still ill.

Mr. Sleeman: If you do not do something for him, he will never come out of the anæsthetic.

Mr. SAMPSON: Exactly. We should not be required to give him an anæsthetic. I desire to see him given fresh air on his own block of land, where any work done will be work for himself.

Mr. Marshall: They are getting enough air, but no food, at present.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope that the hon. member will assist me in my endeavour to see that every approved citizen of this State will have an opportunity to go on the land on his own small block.

Mr. Raphael: You put them on, and they come off! What will you do then!

Mr. SAMPSON: I am dealing with a definite scheme. I want small blocks provided where settlers may establish their homes and, when not doing seasonal work, they can develop their holdings. I have every respect for the arguments put forward by

Mr. R. V. Randal, a man who has himself suffered and who loses no opportunity of advocating the interests of those who are in distress and destitute.

Mr. Raphael: Are you saying that because he is in your own district?

Mr. SAMPSON: For the moment I had forgotten that fact, and I do not think it need enter into the discussion. The object of the anæsthetic to which I have referred is to carry us over a painful and parlous time. The dole, as it has been termed, has been introduced from Britain, but our position is dissimilar. Britain's markets are shrinking and she has her unemployed. Our markets have shrunk, but that shrinkage is not permanent. There are indications of the turn of the tide already, and soon the wheat and wool industries may be back almost to normal. On the other hand, the loan industry will not save Australia. We have depended too long upon that industry. We have contended that so long as we can put up good arguments to London, we can get more money. Thus this great Australian industry of securing loans from the Motherland has grown in importance. Each additional loan meant that the position became easier, Consolidated Revenue benefited, wages improved, and conditions generally were buoyant. But that sort of thing does not make for progress. There is nothing permanent about it. At present, to use a colloquialism, the people of Australia are engaged in taking in each other's washing. We are unable to produce various requirements of other countries at a price that will enable us to compete for that trade. The farmers cannot supply wheat at competitive prices, with the result that Australia is in the doldrums.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: No country could produce wheat at present prices.

Mr. SAMPSON: We could produce wheat profitably if our Federal masters would only see the light, and enable our farmers to secure their implements, fencing wire and other requirements at prices equal to London parity.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: The farmers have not bought any of those requirements this year, and still they cannot produce at a profit.

Mr. SAMPSON: The trouble is that the requirements were purchased in previous years, and the farmers still owe money on them. They cannot pay for them in view of their present circumstances. }

Hon. J. C. Willcock: They cannot produce at the prices ruling, even without paying interest, so what is the good of talking that way?

Mr. SAMPSON: The trouble is that it is impossible to say just where the influence of the high tariff begins and ends. The tariff permeates every secondary industry. The manufacturer in Perth cannot produce wares at the price at which he should be able to produce them. He produces at a price which carries the heavy burden of protection, and that is unfair to the primary producers who have to stand up to the requirements of world markets. For a moment or two we might profitably consider the secondary industries. The protection they receive actually makes for inefficiency. We cannot produce goods at the price that other countries can produce them. Why? Our Australian soldiers returned from the world war covered with glory, but I make bold to say there are few men in Australia who, if they had to compete with a resident from another country in the field of secondary manufacture, would be able to do so. We are the last word in inefficiency. We have no trade beyond our own borders, and we would not have the internal trade but for the fact that imported goods have to bear heavy tariff duties.

Mr. Hegney: That is not due to inefficiency on the part of the worker.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not dealing with this question from the point of view of party politics. I wish to suggest what might be done to help unfortunates housed at Blackboy and elsewhere and unable to secure work.

Mr. Raphael: Would you suggest that the same thing should apply to the unemployed in England?

Mr. SAMPSON: In what way?

Mr. Raphael: I was asking you a question.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not appreciate the significance of the question.

Mr. Raphael: You are advocating small blocks for the unemployed.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have no influence in England, but I hope I have a slight influence in this House. At any rate, I have the right to express my views, and I do so in all sincerity. If my suggestion were carried out, I believe the difficulties and destitution that face so many of our citizens would be

ameliorated. Our primary producers are being reduced almost to a state of impotency. They are fast coming to the conclusion that the future holds nothing for them, but that has no relation to the provision of small blocks of land for the unemployed. Wheat and wool prices have improved. It will not be long before conditions are better. It is a truism that anything mundane does not long remain the same. Unfortunately, the number of unemployed is increasing, and the tragic part is that they must be supported by the decreasing number of people in work. Every man who is put out of work helps to put another out of work, and so, like the snowball, a most unfriendly type of snowball, the position grows worse. It is a dreadful position. One means of combatting it is as I have indicated.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

Mr. Marshall: Could we put any of them on the Peel Estate?

Mr. SAMPSON: I should like to put the hon. member there. If it were possible to remove him to some part of the world that was the very antipodes of this place, I should be prepared to contribute to the cost.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The question is the Legislative Council vote.

Mr. SAMPSON: It would be better for everybody if all our people were at work, and the suggestion I have made would mean work. It would also ensure homes for those people; it would bring content, and life would be made worth while to those who at present are faced with a most desperate outlook. Whatever money is available for assisting the unemployed should be spread, and this is one way by which it could be spread. It should not be within the power of holders of blocks to dispose of them except with the permission of the Minister. I do not wish to make the blocks leasehold. I want the holders to possess the fee simple and the satisfaction of full proprietorship, which is very important. We must give them security of tenure, and must insist that those who are provided with blocks live on them and work them.

The Minister for Railways interjected.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have already mentioned that those who have blocks and are receiving sustenance are dealing practically with virgin land.

The Minister for Railways: They are not.

Mr. SAMPSON: It would not be long before the holders were able to look after themselves.

The Minister for Railways: There are some in your own district.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not wish to contradict the Minister; courtesy alone would prevent my doing so, but the orchards to which he is referring are in an embryonic state, not in full bearing. It is not a question of having experienced men. Nature requires several years before she brings a tree to full bearing, and until that period has elapsed, an orchard is a liability and not an asset. But though a man has to keep an orchard during the early years, later on it will keep him. I want the blocks that I suggest should be made available to be used for the growing of vegetables and small fruits, and for the keeping of poultry.

The Minister for Railways: You cannot make a living from the growing of vegetables in the metropolitan area to-day.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not asking that vegetables be grown merely for sale; they should also be grown for the holders' own requirements. Poultry should be kept and eggs produced for export. The poultry industry is a more valuable trade to the United States than even the wheat industry.

Mr. Raphael: With eggs at 4d. a dozen.

The Minister for Railways: They are 8d. a dozen.

Mr. SAMPSON: It seems inevitable that a certain amount of ribaldry should be introduced, but I say mine is a sound proposition. The people who are engaged in the poultry industry are doing reasonably well, and with the added quantity of eggs being exported overseas, they will do better.

Mr. Raphael: That is more than some of your own electors say.

Mr. SAMPSON: I know what hard-striving men and women are engaged in the industry. No people, perhaps, work harder than those to whom the hon. member is referring. Still, I do not want to deal with this question from the point of the electorate. Unemployment is State-wide, and it is our duty to do whatever we can to alleviate it. My scheme is not a new one; it is the oldest in the world, namely, the cultivation of the land. If we provided the unemployed with blocks of land, we should get somewhere and the future would hold some hope for them. The late Sir Rider Haggard wrote on this question in a book entitled "The Land of the Poor,"

and in Part II. of it he specially referred to the provision of blocks of land for the people. I do not intend to quote his words, but the wisest men of the British race throughout the ages have urged the use of the land. "Look after the land, and the land will look after you." Deprive a man of the land and of opportunities to earn a living, and anything might happen. He becomes the prey of those who advance principles which, if given effect to, would have a very detrimental effect, not only upon the man himself, but upon the country. I have referred to what is being done in India. I quite realise the disparity that exists between that country and this, but the Indians are in a better position than our people who are denied honest work.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: No, the position of the Indians is miserable.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have already explained that of 320,000,000 people in India, 290,000,000 are engaged in cultivating the soil.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: And not getting a living.

Mr. SAMPSON: If our people are to be fed, if the effect of the dole is to be stayed, and if the independence of Australia is to be retained, self-reliance must be encouraged.

Mr. Hegney: The success of the holders of blocks would depend on the state of the market.

Mr. SAMPSON: Not entirely. The people would also produce for their own requirements. Self-reliance would be re-established when men could produce for their own requirements. The balancing of budgets is keenly desired, but is it possible? The Treasurer has budgeted for a deficit of almost a million and a quarter; drastic economies have been effected and thousands of people are in receipt of sustenance from the Government. Every man who is thrown out of work helps to deprive another man of work, and so the wretched menace of unemployment extends. In Australia at present it is impossible to balance any budget. The Premier may work night and day and plan as he may, but he cannot possibly balance the budget while present conditions exist. My proposal is a simple one. It deals with first causes. The Premier has always expressed his belief in the land. Will he give the men who are out of work, who are qualified and who are approved, an opportunity to take up small blocks on which to establish homes for themselves? All that would be required in

addition would be a few sheets of iron, a few lengths of weatherboard, a stove and a tank.

The Minister for Railways: They have those things already.

Mr. SAMPSON: Men who were thus equipped would not require sustenance after a comparatively short period.

The Minister for Railways: They are getting it now.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope the Minister is not endeavouring to inveigle me into expressing criticism of the men who have been approved by his officers. That is the last thing I would wish to do.

The Minister for Lands: What would those men do to earn a living?

Mr. SAMPSON: I regret that the Minister did not hear the earlier part of my remarks. They would produce for their own requirements; they would keep a few fowls; they would keep bees, and they would practise what Mr. Randal describes as the peasant arts. They would learn to depend upon themselves and they would get through, just as the Minister got through.

The Minister for Lands: No, I had a market to which I could export my produce.

Mr. SAMPSON: There is a market for much of the produce that those men could raise. We do not produce the right fruits. We have to be educated in this work. We want the help of the Department of Agriculture so that orchardists may be instructed in the right fruits to produce.

The Minister for Lands: We have not the money to do that.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Government have the money for sustenance. As I have stated, all that would be required in addition would be a few sheets of iron, a few lengths of weatherboard, a stove and a tank. I might urge the establishment of orchards. I have urged the establishment of vegetable gardens and poultry farms, and so on. This will have to be done if we are to get anywhere at all. The way in which we are going now is leading us nowhere. By handing out the dole as we are doing, we are destroying that which is most valuable—self-reliance.

Mr. Raphael: There is a Chinese market gardener, even, on the dole.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is not often the hon. member is right, and I am sure he is wrong this time.

Mr. Raphael: I am right.

Mr. SAMPSON: Let the hon. member contemplate the position of the man who is married: How is he to get on unless he has a home?

The Minister for Railways: Why ask the hon. member?

Mr. SAMPSON: We want our men to retain their manhood. I took the liberty, to suggest means whereby at least a section of these people could have their positions improved. We will go from bad to worse until the world's markets improve. In the meantime, are we not justified in considering the urgent cry and the needs of our own people? While the world's economic equilibrium remains upset, are we to sit and moan and ring our hands, or are we to endeavour to provide for our fellow citizens the opportunity to establish homes for themselves? Those who think that sustenance is the solution of a difficulty such as that existing to-day should read the history of the world. They should read about the men of the past. Sustenance was never heard of in the old days. Men then fought for themselves and stood for their rights, they had their own blocks of land and were able to provide for those dependent on them. What sort of people are we to develop, and to what extent will they degenerate in the years to come if we continue for long the payment of sustenance? It is a false policy and will not get us anywhere. Its only effect will be to wipe us out as a nation. I have already spoken of the futility of borrowing. In recent months there have been many references to the orgy of borrowing and spending. What has been the result of it? From our own Savings Bank money was being gradually withdrawn. Why? Because the depositors did not have homes of their own and were not able to produce their own requirements. This is the foundation of all their difficulties. It can be claimed also that taxation has been overdone. The Treasurer would be safe in offering a prize to anyone who could suggest a new method whereby the people of the State might be taxed. I know that the last thing he wishes to do is to add to the already high burden of taxation. A financial monsoon has struck the country and there is no alternative but to adopt every possible means to get in a few pounds. It is a remarkable thing to learn from overseas how self-sacrificing and virtuous we are! What we have done has been described in England as Australia's heroic

effort, and this viewpoint has been commended in the London Press. I contend that the establishment of camps for the unemployed is a shameful thing. At the same time I congratulate the Minister in charge of unemployment on what he has done. Circumstances, however, have changed, and every day the atmosphere alters. In the early days of the depression it seemed that what the Minister did in establishing a camp at Blackboy, and making it a condition on those occupying it that they should work for their board and lodging, was the proper thing. Since then, however, the position has changed. I know that this matter is receiving the serious consideration of the Minister, and I tell him, as every citizen will tell him, what he is doing is getting us nowhere. While at the outset it seemed all right, at the present time it is wrong. But the camp having been established, it is a difficult thing to remove it. I earnestly hope that a way will be found whereby it will be possible to arrange for the men in camp to take up blocks of land in the manner I have outlined. To my own Leader I would say that I bear in mind the great monuments he has erected in the wheat belt and in the South-West. I want his record to be one which will not be affected by the shamefulness of a permanent unemployment camp. I urge that those who are privileged to have control of the affairs of this State shall spare no effort to give to those who desire work—and the majority of the unemployed do desire work—the opportunity to work out their own destiny, and where necessary that each should be given an allotment of land. Later, then, it will be found that the problem of rent will no longer stare them in the face, that they will always be able to provide food for themselves, and that there will be no fear of starving.

The Minister for Lands: There is no one starving now.

Mr. SAMPSON: I agree, but while sustenance goes on there will be no real solution of the difficulties. I know it will be said that it is quite easy to say these things. All the same, I am anxious to put up constructive criticism, and I say again that if we go back to first principles, and follow on the lines adopted by our forefathers right through the ages, then something will have to be done and our unemployed at least be in occupation of a piece of land, and will have a humble home in which to live.

[Mr. Richardson took the Chair.]

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [5.56]: I rise with a great deal of diffidence to speak on the Estimates, realising that only those with financial experience should offer opinions on the existing position of things. Since the previous Estimates were presented to us, much water has run under the bridge. Conditions to-day are altogether different from what they were at this time last year, and I do not suppose that anyone in this Chamber could foresee what the position would be 12 months ahead. I regret very much that the Premier has budgeted for a deficit of £1,226,000, though it is possible at the end of the present financial year the deficit may be even greater. While one cannot help being to some extent pessimistic, we ought to try to be optimistic and hope that things will mend in the not distant future. We well know that the financial position is changing from day to day, and it is possible that in six months' time the position will be brighter than it is now. There is one feature about the deficit that should not be overlooked, and it is that a considerable portion of the total will be paid out by way of sustenance to the unemployed and in the payment of exchange. This means that, to a certain extent, we shall be living within our means. There are many people in the back blocks who are under the impression that bad management on the part of Governments and Parliaments is responsible for the existing position of affairs. Our system of Government is practically the same to-day as it has been since time immemorial; it is practically the same to-day as it was when King John was forced to sign Magna Charta and leave the affairs in the control of the people themselves. We well know that the condition of everything in this world has changed. Have we advanced with the times under our system of government? Under our party system we have the Opposition on that side of the House where we sat a little while ago. If we were all to go to the hustings to-morrow, no doubt the Opposition would tell the electors that they could evolve a better scheme by which to lift the country out of its depression. I am sorry to say the electors are very easily influenced, and probably would determine to give the Opposition a chance. Then if they got into power they would try to put their policy into effect. It is not always in the best interests of the country that such

a policy should be put on the statute-book. What is the cause of our present depression? Undoubtedly it is world-wide. It seems to me to be the aftermath of the war. During the war and immediately afterwards money was very plentiful. We were able to repatriate our returned soldiers. Money was flowing like water and we could go on the London market and borrow as much as we wanted. We never thought there would come a day when our products would be grown at a loss. But we find now that we have come to the end of our tether, and are not in a position to borrow any more money. So we have this great depression.

Mr. Marshall: If there were another war there would be as much money as ever available to-morrow.

The Minister for Lands: Where would you get it from?

Mr. Marshall: Where we got the last.

Mr. BROWN: If the prices of wheat and wool were to rise to-morrow it would be easy enough to find money. The money must still be in the world, even although it is locked up. America and France hold two-thirds of the world's gold, but now that England is getting away from the gold standard, it is possible that things may change, may improve a little. Indeed, fortunately, they have improved a little. I do not know whether it is due to the policy of the present British Government, but undoubtedly wheat has risen in price. But in considering the depression we can only come to the conclusion that we have an over-supply of products in the world. Take wheat, from which is produced bread, a staple product. England, we know, is the dumping ground for surplus products from all over the world. She opens her markets to all foreign countries as well as to her own Dominions. I am pleased to note that some of the political leaders in Great Britain say they must have a tariff. If they could put a tariff around the English market and give preference to the British Dominions, it would be to our advantage. Of course the Labour Party in England say they must give the people a cheap breakfast and must have a cheap loaf. The result is that Russia, which can produce wheat cheaper than we can, is flooding the English market, and so the English people are patronising a foreign country instead of consuming the products of the British Dominions. If there were an English tariff giving preference to

the British Dominions it would be to the advantage of Australia. In my opinion the price of wheat will automatically right itself. The area under wheat in Western Australia, indeed in the Commonwealth, is very much diminished. Last year in Western Australia we produced over 50,000,000 bushels of wheat, whereas this year the forecast is for 36,000,000 bushels. I understand that South Australia is going to have a record harvest, but that in Victoria and New South Wales the acreage has been greatly reduced. There is no doubt the whole of our wheat crop will be considerably less than it was last year. Of course, after all, the Australian production of wheat would not have any material effect on world prices, for we have to consider other wheat-growing centres as well. If those other wheat countries were to produce considerably less than they did last year, the difficulty would automatically right itself. It is impossible profitably to grow wheat at 2s. per bushel. Many of our wheat lands, cultivated for a long time, have become wheat sick and should have a long spell. If the farmers will but realise this, and if other wheat countries reduce their acreage, the price will materially improve. But what are the wheat producers going to do in the meantime; what else can they produce? We must produce what we can and sell it in the markets of the world. The producers of Western Australia are rapidly overtaking the local market. With potatoes and vegetables of all descriptions we are still depending on the local market, but there are certain other products we can raise and find for them both a home market and a market overseas. To-day we have a surplus of butter on hand. We must look to the English market for the disposal of that. Then we are finding that there is an overseas market for our surplus eggs, and quite a good market for bacon and pigs. Dairying in Western Australia is thriving and the people in that industry are beginning to realise that they have returns coming in every week, whereas if they were growing wheat or wool they would have to wait 12 months for their returns. Then we have the fat lamb industry. We can produce lambs of the right quality and the right weight, suitable for the English market.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We have to find a method of marketing.

Mr. BROWN: As soon as we can get dependable supplies they will be quite suit-

able for the English market, for our lambs compare favourably with those of New Zealand.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Lambs raised by amateurs.

Mr. BROWN: Well we all have to make a start and must start in a small way. All that is required is co-operation. We have freezing works erected by a previous Government, but unfortunately for a considerable time past they have not been in use. According to all accounts those that have experimented by sending fat lambs to the English market have secured a very satisfactory price. Yet those who purchased the lambs were speculators, operating in the Midland Junction market, and did not send the lambs overseas straight way. However, they are on the water now, and let us hope the results will be very good. I do not wish to allude any more to the party system, but I am looking forward to the day when there will be an alteration. We ought to take the best brains in the House and put them in the Ministry, where they could all work in harmony for the welfare of the State. The secessionists tell us that if we had secession we could go on the London market again and borrow all the money we want.

Mr. Sleeman: Who said that; Sir James Mitchell?

Mr. BROWN: No, so far as I know he has never said that. The secessionists say we can do it. I sometimes wonder if the past prosperity of Western Australia was solely built up on borrowed money. It seems to me we were prosperous when we could borrow money, but that immediately that stopped we were in difficulties. Now we have no work for our men. There are hundreds on the dole, and there is no money to get on with public works that should be put in hand. I sincerely hope there will be prosperity again. Another question to which I have been giving considerable thought is whether Western Australia can get back to prosperity without the rest of the States of Australia and without the rest of the world getting back to prosperity. I do not think we can. Suppose we were to be prosperous, with work for all and farmers getting good prices for their products. What would happen? Why, all the unemployed of the Eastern States and of other parts of the world would come over here.

Hon. P. Collier: That is what I said 18 months ago.

Mr. BROWN: It would happen, because this would be the only prosperous State in Australia or indeed in the world. No doubt the secessionists think it would be to our advantage if we were a separate State. I was one of those who voted for the Loan Council.

Hon. P. Collier: You did quite right there.

Mr. BROWN: Yes, I still think so, although perhaps the Premier does not think so.

Hon. P. Collier: It is you and I against the Premier.

Mr. BROWN: The Loan Council is a check against excessive borrowing. Of course when we have excessive borrowing there must come a day of reckoning. Here in Western Australia we have had that day. Now we have the Loan Council controlled, not by the Federal Government, but by the States themselves, who sit in consultation and consider each other's requirements. It is only a short time since the loan requirements of Western Australia were set down at £4,500,000. Had things continued normal perhaps we would have got that amount. But it was borrowed money after all. If borrowed money is not put into reproductive work, what is going to be the result? Have we ever put borrowed money into non-productive work, works that are not producing interest? Have we such works in Western Australia?

Hon. P. Collier: We have, but they will produce interest later on.

Mr. BROWN: That sounds all right. I hold that a statesman is a man who looks ahead. A man who can see only as far as his nose I do not consider a statesman.

Mr. Marshall: Then you cannot see anyone in front of you at all.

Mr. BROWN: No, not when I am looking at you. However, that is the position as I see it.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. BROWN: Before tea I was referring to the money expended on public works.

Mr. Marshall: You were speaking about me.

Mr. BROWN: I will, however, deal further with that when we reach the Vote. I wish now to refer to the Treasury. The burning question in this State has lately been the amalgamation of the Commonwealth and State Savings Banks. There has been a

good deal of controversy over the matter. We must look at it clearly and calmly and as practical men. Weeks ago the man in the street was talking about the position of the State Savings Bank. I was told that, if there was a run on the bank, the liquid assets were insufficient to last more than one or two days. Take a general at the war, when a critical position arises. Would he proclaim from the housetops what he intended to do, and would he take the rank and file of his army into his confidence? No! He would act quickly and wisely and of his own initiative. The Premier was in a position to know exactly how the bank stood. We know what happened in New South Wales where a run on the bank caused that institution to close its doors. I take it that the savings bank in New South Wales was in a sounder position than our own. The Premier could see that should there be a rush on our bank the money would not be there to meet it. Why was it not there? When a depositor puts his money into a bank he receives interest upon it. The trustees have no alternative but to invest that money to the best advantage. In this case they invested it principally in Commonwealth bonds. This is what I deplore. The bank contained principally the savings of the workers of the State. That money ought to have been invested for the development of the State, and should not have gone into the Commonwealth Treasury.

The Minister for Lands: That would not have made it any easier to release.

Mr. BROWN: Perhaps not. I hold that the action of the Premier was a wise one. Suppose he had not taken it, and there had been a run on the bank! What would have been the position of the depositors? When will the depositors in the New South Wales Savings Bank get their principal? Perhaps they will not get it as long as they live. By means of the amalgamation, we shall have the Commonwealth Bank behind us. That is the soundest bank in Australia. If it fails then the whole of Australia must fail. I believe that the time will come when the local depositors will thank Sir James Mitchell for what he did. It was a wise course to take, although I do not approve of it. He had no alternative but to take this action. By taking counsel with himself, without letting the people of this State know what he was about, he also acted wisely. With regard to his not having consulted Cabinet, that is a domestic affair, and members of Cabinet can settle it amongst themselves. I deplore the

loss from Cabinet of the ex-Chief Secretary. I do not think that hon. member sent in his resignation because he was not consulted over this question. I think there were other motives behind his action.

Mr. Coverley: Are you giving out State secrets?

Mr. BROWN: Perhaps he had ideas and schemes of his own with which Cabinet was not in accord. I certainly deplore some of his utterances. I do not think it right for a man of his standing to tell a large audience that Western Australia was going to be a defaulter. It is not right that a man holding the high position of Leader of the Opposition, a man also who held the high office of Premier, should tell the House and the world that we were on the verge of a revolution, that the time must come when we would have to default. No man ought to say that.

Mr. Coverley: You object to people telling the truth.

Mr. BROWN: Wherever one goes in this country, whether to the Royal Show or to country shows, one finds on view displays of those things which this State can produce so well. With our wonderful resources is it likely that Western Australia will default: when we have people able to produce as they are doing, is it to be imagined that the State will ever fail to meet its obligations?

Mr. Panton: The produce is all right, but it is a matter of price.

Mr. BROWN: We certainly have to find markets for our produce but we shall undoubtedly do that. At present the law of supply and demand does temporarily affect the position, but I think the day is coming when we shall have our markets restored to us.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: W. M. Hughes cancelled the law of supply and demand.

The Attorney General: I thought it was Tom Hughes who said that.

Mr. BROWN: A little while ago I was reading in the newspaper an article dealing with the calibre of our politicians. The writer said one could not expect to find a man who had been turning a merry-go-round one day, and became a member of Parliament the next day, to be very stable in his ideas.

Mr. Panton: Who said that?

Mr. BROWN: The hon. member knows.

Mr. Panton: I do not.

Mr. BROWN: Consider the various schemes that have been advanced from time to time in this State. In many cases they

did not originate in the mind of the man who had held the handles of the plough, the straightforward, practical man, but emanated from the man who held only theories. He worked only on those theories, and the result was that they did not materialise. We have therefore been mulcted in millions through expenditure on non-productive works. It is not the man who has been at the handle of the plough who has done these things. If the affairs of the country had been in the hands of sane, practical men of common-sense, we would not find ourselves in the position we occupy to-day. One may read articles by professors. They are only professors of one thing. Their minds are biassed. They look at things through one pair of spectacles, but they often write good articles. The most unbiased judgment we can get is from the pen of the practical journalist. Take the leading articles of some of our responsible newspapers. The writers hold no brief for any party.

Mr. Panton: Oh no.

Mr. BROWN: They marshal their facts, and like a judge sum up the evidence and write their articles upon it.

Mr. Panton: Much depends upon the colour of their glasses.

Mr. BROWN: I do not agree. I have gained more practical knowledge of what has been going on in the world by reading some of the leading articles than I have gained from any other source.

The Minister for Railways: A journalist had the cheek to say the other day that I was not convincing.

Mr. Panton: That was a biassed view.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Are you trying to prove that journalists are sometimes right?

Mr. BROWN: The leading articles in our newspapers are practically all sensible and well written. The man in the street, the farmer or the member of Parliament, has a great deal to learn from reading these leading articles.

Mr. Panton: I have not read the "Primary Producer" lately.

Mr. BROWN: The hon. member will find it an unbiased paper, one that is always willing to consider both sides of the question, and to leave the reader to judge for himself.

Mr. Panton: I am glad to hear that.

Mr. BROWN: I have great faith in Western Australia. It has wonderful prospects,

and with good management and sound judgment on the part of those responsible for its welfare, we cannot fail to pull through. I would not be one to preach repudiation, revolution or default. That is the last thing I would countenance. The present Government have done really good work. Many men will have reason to thank them for the measures they have brought down. Some people in Perth are desperately short of money, so we are told, and yet I read in the paper the other day that hundreds of would-be listeners were turned away from the Dawson-Hambourg concerts, although the tickets were as low as 3s. Anyone who walks through the streets at night will see hundreds of motor cars.

Mr. Coverley: They are the farmers' cars.

Mr. Panton: Not yet returned from the show.

Mr. BROWN: Most of them belong to men in good salaried positions. There are others who have laid out their money in speculations and other ventures in the hope of progressing in life, and in consequence have very little to go on with. The man who has a good salaried position is the best off to-day.

Mr. Panton: He takes a bit of finding nowadays.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

Mr. BROWN: I now wish to deal with taxation. We should congratulate ourselves upon the circumstance that there is to be little fresh taxation. Stamp duties, it is estimated, will return an increase of £10,000; but I am not so optimistic as to credit that. Thousands of men on the land have been in the habit of paying even small amounts by cheque. Now the tendency will be to draw out a large amount and pay various debts in cash. Personally I have written out many a cheque for less than £1, because I prefer to pay by cheque; but in future I shall not pursue that course. The reduction in income tax is to be lowered from 33 1/3rd per cent. to 20 per cent. It is problematical whether much gain will result from that, for who is receiving an income except the man who makes it from personal exertion? There is not much income from property. Again, can we add a deficit of about £1,250,000 to the total of the deficits already accumulated? I do not know what the Treasurer has in mind—whether the State is to right itself, or

whether this year's revenue will be larger. The Lands Department represents one of the most important departments of the State; but unfortunately the farmer, the primary producer in general, is in a deplorable position, so deplorable that I fail to see how the Minister for Lands can give him sufficient relief. I know the hon. gentleman wishes to afford all the relief he can. However, the man on the land at present is not able to pay rent or Agricultural Bank interest. Further, the Agricultural Bank requires additional funds—a matter that is under the indirect jurisdiction of the Minister for Lands.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Unfortunately.

Mr. BROWN: I do not think for a moment that the Minister for Lands would endeavour to dictate to the Agricultural Bank trustees.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You do not know him.

Mr. BROWN: Whereas the bank's clients ought to be self-supporting, they are not in a position to pay anything; and the result is that the bank is millions behind, and thus cannot find funds for new development. Assuredly that is not in the best interests of Western Australia. If the bank's clients had been prosperous, there would be funds to grant new loans and thus help the man struggling on the land. Like other Country Party members, I have had letter after letter from constituents asking what can be done. On going to the Agricultural Bank to investigate a case, we are told that the man has had sufficient money, and that it is no use allowing him to pile up an additional burden of debt. I do not know that the settler has real security of tenure. Naturally I do not suggest that the Government would say to a settler in difficulties, "If you cannot meet your liabilities, out you go." But we know there are cases in which the settler will never make good. Unfortunately our policy of land settlement has been too liberal. At the initiation of settlement in Victoria a man had to hold his land for three years before getting even a lease. During the first three years he could not borrow sixpence. Here, however, the settler can pile up a debt of hundreds of pounds within the first 12 months of settlement. The tendency has been for the settler, instead of going slowly and doing the work himself, to put on men to do the clearing, with the result that crops were put in under bad conditions and the returns

were poor. Thus liabilities were piled up. Our system of land settlement has been the most liberal in the world. I know of no other State which will assist a man immediately he goes on the land. That has been our policy. In my electorate, I am sorry to say, as regards the settlement in the eastern portion a scientist who inspected the country condemned the largest part of that district, saying that the land was too salt and could never be farmed at a profit. The salt, he says, is working its way to the surface, and it will be impossible to grow crops on the land. I imagine that fully half-a-million of Government money has been spent there, and now the removal of all those settlers to a new area is in contemplation.

The Minister for Lands: Not the whole of the settlers.

Mr. BROWN: All the settlers in the area I speak of want to leave. One of them said to me, "Do you think I am going to leave my wife and children isolated 50 miles from a railway? No. I will go too." Again, there is the great area of Forrestania, the settlement of which, with railway communication, I have long advocated. For the present there is no prospect of that district being settled, although the rainfall is assured and excellent crops can be grown there. I have been told on reliable authority that crops grown on land which has been condemned there, will go eight bags to the acre. Despite that fact, the land is condemned on account of excessive salinity. Beyond Forrestania there is an enormous territory which was to have been settled with cheap British money. However, when news of the condemnation of the district on account of salinity reached the Old Country, the British Government, I understand, withdrew their offer. The people settled on the area in question, although 50 miles from railway communication, were satisfied that they could make a living there. Now it seems that a lot of Government money and a lot of the settlers' money will be lost, and that the district will return to a state of wilderness. The Agricultural Bank authorities are willing to place those settlers on abandoned holdings; but if a holding is abandoned, why has it been abandoned? Because of the ground being too poor, or because of some fault on the part of the original settler? Is it right to put a man on a holding upon which the original settler could not make a living?

Hon. M. F. Troy: Why is the bank abandoning holdings which have grown good crops?

Mr. BROWN: Because of excessive salt in the soil. The bank refuses to grant more money. About 70 per cent. of the blocks have been condemned, and the remaining few settlers do not wish to stay behind in isolation.

The Minister for Railways: You would not expect 70 per cent. to remain on unsuitable land because of the other 30 who wish to stay?

Hon. M. F. Troy: Who is it says that this land which grows good crops is unsuitable for cultivation?

Mr. Wells: The specialist, the scientist says so.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Who is the better expert—the scientist, or the man who grows the crop?

Mr. BROWN: The position is most alarming. I regret it exceedingly, because I have advocated the speedy construction of a railway to the district. The scientist in question is Dr. Teakle, and I do not question his ability to test the qualities of soils.

The Minister for Railways: He says the crops will not grow continuously, because the salt will come to the surface.

Mr. BROWN: I consider that the Government made a grievous mistake in not establishing experimental plots in the district before placing settlers there. The country in question lies between Kondinin and the Esperance railway. Along the Esperance line payable crops are now being grown. The rainfall in this locality is assured, and even now I urge the Government to establish an experimental plot in the Forrestania area.

The Minister for Railways: What would we do with the settlers there in the meantime?

Mr. BROWN: Those settlers are prepared to stay there, provided the Agricultural Bank will fulfil its promises. This, however, the institution has refused to do.

The Minister for Lands: Would the Government be justified in making further advances against the advice of their expert officers?

Mr. BROWN: But the settlers are producing crops. What more do the Government want?

The Minister for Railways: Will the settlers be able to go on producing crops? That is the point.

Mr. BROWN: It is possible that the salt will eventually rise to the surface and that thus the settlers will find themselves unable to produce anything. Therefore it might be as well to get them out of there. However, all that remains to be proved. It may be said that there is salt all over Western Australia. Even in the Great Southern districts great patches of salt are found. I find them on my own farm. Further, I have been informed on the best of authority that cleared land in the district I refer to produces natural grasses which are much superior to those found in the Great Southern district. I am told these grasses grow very dense. It is said that sheep born and bred in that locality are much larger-framed than those along the Great Southern railway. The district carries a little salt bush here and there. A man from the neighbourhood of Bridgetown, who is a Merino breeder, told me that east of Kulin he had purchased sheep which were the largest-framed Merinos he had ever seen. I would suggest to the Government that, when utilising the £500,000, they should make some money available for the settlers and enable them to have grazing propositions comprising 3,000 or 4,000 acres. I asked the Agricultural Bank authorities if they were prepared to make advances for fencing, and I was informed that they were not. The country there must be fenced against rabbits and wild dogs. Without fencing, grazing will be impossible. I commend the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) for drawing attention to the possibilities of small holdings. It is astonishing what a man can produce on a holding of even one acre in extent, provided he puts in the necessary work. If a scheme of that sort were adopted, then men who were out of employment could devote their time to developing their small holdings and, while they might not be able to grow sufficient to enable them to sell their goods, they could at least produce sufficient to provide food for themselves and their families. I do not suggest that they should work like the Chinese or Central Europeans, or live under similar conditions, but it is indeed wonderful what a hard-working man can produce off a small suburban block. I commend the member for Swan for bringing the proposition under the notice of the Government.

The Minister for Railways: What about those who are on such blocks now?

Mr. BROWN: The Minister might go to those blocks and see if the occupiers are producing anything.

The Minister for Railways: They ought to be producing.

Mr. BROWN: But they are not.

The Minister for Railways: Then what are you going to do with them?

Mr. BROWN: It is astonishing what can be produced on even half an acre. I believe we shall have to get down to something like that. Instead of many of the unemployed crowding together in one room, they would be better placed on suburban blocks where they could grow something for food. We have always prided ourselves in Western Australia upon having virgin land upon which to settle our people. The reports that have been published indicating that we have had to take some people off land on which we have placed them, does not make good reading. Now I will deal with the Works Department.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It does not exist; it has gone!

Mr. BROWN: It has been customary, when speaking on the Estimates or during the Address-in-reply debate, to place before the Government the requirements of our respective constituencies. What is the good of talking along those lines in these times? We know there is no money. There are railways that should be proceeded with in my electorate, and Parliament has authorised the construction of other railways that have not yet been started.

Mr. Panton: What do you want railways for?

Mr. BROWN: To develop the country.

The Minister for Railways: You have your roads.

Mr. BROWN: Whose fault is it that so many splendid roads have been built alongside our railways? I am sorry the Minister for Works has not cash at his disposal to enable him to proceed with the construction of some railways already authorised. I commend the Government for taking men away from Blackboy and putting them on reproductive works.

Mr. Sleeman: On 25s. a week?

Mr. BROWN: That is better than nothing! Men on the farms—the farmers themselves—have to be content with about 10s. a week, and they have to work from morning till night. The Government are providing sustenance money but, having no

actual cash at their disposal, have to borrow money in order to make the sustenance available. Are they not to be commended for that? Could any Government do better than the present Government are doing? Could any Minister do better than the present Minister for Railways? However, I want to deal with one or two requirements of my constituency. Although I realise it is futile to advocate work being carried out, I wish to remind the Minister that we have a poor water scheme at Pingelly. For 20 years we have been paying 3s. in the pound for salt water, and fortunately the Minister in charge of country water supplies reduced that rate by 50 per cent. Still the scheme is not paying, and the Government are losing money on it every year. There is a rock catchment in the district that could supply Pingelly and Brookton as well. Would it not be better to put some of the unemployed men on work at that catchment, so as to provide a good water supply, rather than send them out into the bush in the Darling Ranges and doing goodness knows what sort of work there. I have seen them making bough sheds and little miniature waterfalls. Every time I have passed in the train I have seen men leaning on their shovels, although they are supposed to be working in the National Park. I do not say that there are no good workers among the men, but there is no incentive for them to do hard work. The proposal announced by the Minister for Works to put men on reproductive works, such as irrigation and drainage operations in the South-West, is infinitely preferable. I admit that the married man will have a hard row to hoe, in that he will have to go into the country and leave his wife and family in town. They will have to try to make ends meet on a very small wage. Even so, it is better to have something coming in than nothing at all. The comparison of sustenance rates paid by the different States was published in the Press, and they showed that Western Australia is paying more than the other States.

Mr. Panton: But this is the larger State!

Mr. BROWN: That has nothing to do with it.

Mr. Marshall: That is because of the promises made by the Premier at the last election.

Mr. BROWN: As to that, I have already pointed out that no one anticipated the

position that has risen since then. With regard to the railways of the State, I believe that too much responsibility is placed on the shoulders of the Commissioner. I do not hold with the present policy.

Mr. Panton: Then it must be wrong.

Mr. BROWN: I have received some letters complaining about excessive charges imposed by the railways. It would be better to reduce the freight on the higher classification of goods, and slightly increase the freight on the lower classes. If that were done, in no time we would run the trucks off the road. The opposition to the railways was to be expected, seeing that beautiful roads were constructed parallel with the railways over which trucks could proceed at high rates of speed.

Member: Who was responsible for that?

Mr. BROWN: Not the man who was turning America round last week; not the man who handles the plough, but a theorist. Mr. Bruce was one of those who were responsible for inaugurating such a scheme, and now we are suffering because of his work.

The Minister for Railways: You do not seriously suggest that we should increase the rate on super.

Mr. BROWN: I said you should reduce the freight on first-class articles and increase the lower freights.

Mr. Kenneally: That is, put up the freights on super and wheat.

Mr. BROWN: I do not think the Railway Department's policy during Show week was satisfactory. Fares to Claremont were increased by 6d.

The Minister for Railways: Around the metropolitan area.

Mr. BROWN: The buses were overloaded because their charges were much lower.

Mr. Sleeman: The railways would not give you a ticket to Claremont on Show Day unless you returned by rail.

Mr. BROWN: Another complaint I have against the railways concerns the unfortunate people at Karlgarin. They appreciate the railway that has been constructed to their district, but it is not completed. It is not ballasted and the line has not been handed over to the Working Railways. The result is that local charges still apply. One man informed me that he sent five tons of oats to Albany and the freight charges were £7 10s. over 50 miles of railway and £2 8s. over the small section of the new line. That was because of the local charges. I do not

know when the line is to be handed over to the Working Railways, or when it will be ballasted. The present position is most unsatisfactory, and I know that one man has said he will not patronise the railway but will send his wool down by road.

The Minister for Works: Which road does he take?

Mr. BROWN: I do not know. Those who send their wool down by road must be content to pay the excessive license fee, but the fact remains that the freight is lost to the railways.

The Minister for Works: Evidently the license fee is not heavy enough.

Mr. BROWN: I do not agree with the Minister, because I do not think that is the way to encourage the men on the land. I would alter the freights even if the alteration were to result in losses for a little while.

The Minister for Railways: And how will you pay for those losses?

Mr. J. I. Mann: How do you pay for them now?

The Minister for Railways: Perhaps you can tell me.

Mr. BROWN: The Commissioner of Railways is expected to make all lines pay. We know that developmental railways will not pay for a number of years, yet developmental railways are handed over to the Commissioner, and he is supposed to make them provide working expenses and sinking fund charges. That is altogether too much to expect. In my opinion the cost of the developmental railways should be met out of Consolidated Revenue for some years.

The Minister for Railways: Where will Consolidated Revenue come from?

Mr. BROWN: In Western Australia we have a greater mileage in proportion to population than any other country. Why were all those railways built? It was for the purpose of developing our natural resources. Cannot we give some encouragement to those who had sufficient backbone to go into the backblocks and develop the hinterland? We should encourage those people by making the use of our railways more profitable to the farmers. I know the Minister for Works is willing to do what he can, but unfortunately he has to compete with the traffic on the roads. I do not agree with his suggestion to increase the license fees for motor trucks because I do not think that is fair play.

Mr. Marshall: Who should pay for the maintenance of the roads?

Mr. BROWN: We got on very well before when the road boards constructed and maintained the roads in the country areas. There may be a few national roads such as the Albany-road, but that is used largely for pleasure, though the motor trucks have been introduced to compete with the railways. The State is in its infancy and possesses great potentialities. During the last 12 months people have realised that there is money in dairying and in the pig industry. I am pleased that dairying is going ahead by leaps and bounds. The people engaged in it appreciate the fact that they can get a cheque for their cream every week or every month, whereas when they engaged in wool growing they got their cheque only once a year. The question arises whether there is a market for the produce being raised. A start has been made to export butter. I am informed that a new butter factory, which started in the South-West recently, has reached the stage of producing 12 tons of butter per week. The Minister is proceeding on right lines when he insists on securing a good class of pig and cow. He should be encouraged in every way. I have been informed on the best authority that this State could produce good quality tobacco. A considerable quantity of tobacco is consumed everywhere. I suppose 90 per cent. of the men smoke, and I should not like to say what percentage of the women. Smoking is certainly not a dying habit. There is a heavy duty on imported tobacco, and that should give encouragement to people to engage in tobacco production. I was under the impression that the richest land was required for tobacco culture. I can remember tobacco growing on the Murray Flats and at Wangaratta in the Benalla district and the richest soil was selected for the purpose, but I am informed that high quality tobacco does not require heavy soil. We have a variety of soils in this State and the tobacco industry is one that should be encouraged. A rather alarming statement was recently made by the Prime Minister, who pointed out that if the tobacco industry expanded considerably under the shelter of high protection, the revenue would fall and there would be no alternative to imposing direct taxation to make up the deficiency. That is not a pleasing prospect.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: When did he say that?

Mr. BROWN: It was published in the Press a few days ago.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Could not they impose a high excise duty to get the revenue?

Mr. BROWN: Yes, just as excise is imposed on beer. Another industry in which one man has interested himself is the growing of flax. In the Beverley district an area of 140 acres has been planted, and it is believed that an excellent quality of flax can be produced and that a yield of 12 bushels an acre can be obtained. Linseed is now worth 10s. to 15s. a bushel. Linseed meal is useful for fattening stock. The fibre need not be taken into account because it requires special treatment, but linseed oil and meal are needed and can be produced here. The Minister for Agriculture should give the matter his attention. We must do our best to win markets for our products overseas. Potatoes and vegetables are entirely dependent on the local market, and it is possible that we shall have to be content to supply the local market, but if we can produce commodities required by other countries of the world, we should strive to gain a market for them. I think it is possible to do this. The cost of production is altogether too high. This is a matter for which the Federal authorities are largely responsible. Local manufacturers would have the benefit of the freight charges from the Eastern States to Fremantle, but the high tariff imposed on farming machinery is merely building up huge monopolies like that of H. V. McKay. If we had local factories manufacturing farming implements we would not have the population to justify mass production, and mass production is essential in these days. It would be impossible to find a market for the surplus. The education vote has been reduced by £100,000. I regret the necessity for this reduction. We must endeavour to give our children the best possible education. I commend the ex-Minister for his suggestion that on no account must the children in the bush be neglected; they must be provided with schools wherever possible. I am pleased that the department are doing their best. The Premier has agreed to provide a school at the Karlgarin townsite.

Mr. Pantou: He agreed to one 18 months ago, and has not built it yet.

Mr. BROWN: The abolition of the Teachers' Training College and of some of the secondary schools may be very hard on the students. We have given many of our coun-

try children the best possible education, and they have felt that it would be wasted if they undertook work on the land. They felt that they were fitted to seek appointments in the Government service and at clerical work. We do not want that to happen; we want the young people to go into the country and produce as much as they can. I understand that the tax on improved agricultural land is to be abolished. The land tax was producing £218,000 a year, and I do not know how the Premier is going to make up the deficiency. This relief will give encouragement to the men on the land, though many of them are unable to pay their land tax at present. I consider it wrong to indulge in destructive criticism at a time like this. The people throughout the State are looking to us for constructive ideas. With all the possibilities before us, what can we suggest? People are asking what members can suggest to get the State out of its difficulties. I doubt whether we can suggest anything. I think we can only trust to providence that something will turn up. Anyone who inspected the exhibits at the Royal Show and at the country shows and noted the range and quality of the commodities must have felt assured that Western Australia would overcome its difficulties and that the day would not be far distant when the outlook would improve and when this State would be amongst the first to return to prosperity.

[Mr. Richardson took the Chair.]

MR. PANTON (Leederville) [8.27]: Like the member for Pingelly, I realise that it is of little use submitting propositions for the building of schools. I wish to make a brief appeal to the Government and perhaps to the House, though I hope the latter will not be necessary. The appeal is on behalf of a section of the community who are least able to help themselves namely those who are deprived of their sight. According to the Estimates the 20 per cent. reduction is being applied to the subsidy to the Institute for the Blind and the Braille Society, making a difference of £560 per annum. The amount of the subsidy paid to date has been on a pound for pound basis up to £2,800. I make this appeal because Western Australia, in one respect, is very fortunate. It has reason to be proud of the fact that its capital is one of the few cities in which not one blind person is found begging in the streets. The reason for this lies in the fact that a band of willing workers have made it their business to look

after those unfortunate people. I make no apology for appealing on their behalf. I have been associated with the work for the blind for 10 or 12 years, and I have the honour of being the President of the Braille Society. There are 247 blind people in Western Australia.

Mr. Marshall: Is the Premier included in that lot?

Mr. PANTON: I am not speaking of political blindness. One of the great needs in dealing with the blind is to find suitable work so that they can be kept as contented as possible. It is pretty hard for anyone in possession of sight to place himself in the position of a blind person. It is difficult to realise just what the blind are going through, unless one is fairly well associated with the work they are performing. Immediately they cease working, unless something else is provided to enable them to keep their minds occupied, they become moody and discontented and are then difficult to deal with. At the institute at Maylands we have endeavoured, by building up a factory, to give those capable of working an occupation that will keep their minds occupied. Unfortunately the whole of the output of that institution comes into competition with similar articles made by outside factories. We, as an institution, get no concession by way of the tariff, taxes or anything else. At the same time we can produce as good an article, which we have to put on the market at a price that must compete with that of other factories. Naturally that is impossible. There is no person in the institute who can possibly earn the full amount that is paid; it is one of the few factories that finds itself in the unique position of facing the fact that the greater the output the greater the loss. That is brought about by its having to compete with outside factories. About 68 men and women are working in that institution and they have all been hard hit by the Federal Government through their pensions. The majority of them receive the invalid pension, but it has been reduced by 2s. 6d. a week. There is not one person in the institution who has worked full time for a considerable period. This is due to want of funds. It may be said that we conducted a sweep a little while back, and by its means raised £2,000. That is so, and sweeps have also been run in previous years. But if it were not for the fact that the bank

is carrying the substantial overdraft of £5,000 it would not be possible for the institution to continue the work it is doing. As I said, there are 68 working there, and there are also five children attending the school. Others are spread over the country. There are 19 in the Old Men's Home, and at the Rest Home for Old People in Victoria Park there are 28. As one passes out from the Rest Home we take another in from the Old Men's Home. With regard to the rest home at Victoria Park, I only wish more members would go there and see what is being done for these people. For the want of funds we are not able to build sufficient cubicles to accommodate more. The average age at the Rest Home is 81, men and women, and they are a happy and contented lot. Many have been in the State a great number of years and some have done a lot of pioneering work. Some have lost their sight as the result of accident, but a majority have become blind through old age. That class of person is more difficult to deal with. It is obvious to anyone that a person who was born blind does not miss the daylight so much as a person who has lost his sight suddenly or as the result of an accident. The consequence is that we have some difficulty in teaching the old people to read and to occupy their minds. The systems of reading are the Braille and Moon type. The Braille is the more difficult to learn owing to the need for sensitiveness of touch. The Moon type must be imported from overseas, and is expensive to purchase. The consequence is that instead of having a considerable number of Moon type boxes, we have been able to secure only 150. We have built up a library of 2,000 Braille volumes, which are spread all over Western Australia, and have been the means of keeping people well employed in reading. At this stage I should pay a tribute to those men and women who have studied Braille for the purpose of transcribing various books into Braille for the benefit of the blind. At present no fewer than 36 women are doing this work, and the result of their efforts is the production of quite a number of volumes for the benefit of the blind. There are 19 blind people in the Old Men's Home, three in the Home of Peace, and, as I have already said, 28 in the rest home. There are also 30 in the country and 100 in the metropolitan area. All these people have to be looked after in some way or other. It might be

said that those in the Old Men's Home are all right, but it should be remembered that a blind person in that institution is not in the same position as a man who possesses his sight. A visitor calls there, and everything that the blind require is obtained for them. The same thing applies to the blind in the hospital. A visitor calls there as well. The blind who are in their own homes are also visited, and we employ what we term a home teacher, a young girl who herself is almost blind. She visits these people, finds out their requirements and endeavours to teach them Braille or Moon type. All this involves money, and if the grant is to be reduced by £560, it simply means that the work that has been done cannot go on.

The Minister for Railways: Are these people citizens of the Commonwealth as well as of the State?

Mr. PANTON: Of course they are; they receive invalid pensions up to 17s. 6d.

The Minister for Railways: You do not appear to have been too successful in your appeal to the Federal Government.

Mr. PANTON: That is not the way to shoulder the position. The reduction of the grant by £560 will mean all the difference between contentment and discontent amongst these people.

The Minister for Railways: What about their pensions?

Mr. PANTON: I have already pointed out that the pensions have been reduced and that the unfortunate people are being hit both ways. I am not in the Federal House; I am appealing to the people of this State. The Minister knows as well as I do that if he goes to Melbourne, Adelaide or Sydney he will find many blind people in the streets. In Victoria, when an appeal was made on behalf of the blind, no less a sum than £30,000 was collected. In Western Australia we are lucky to be able to receive £2,000, and we have to conduct a sweep to raise it. It is worth more than the £560 a year to the people of Western Australia and the Government to be able to say that this is the one State of the Commonwealth in which blind people will not be seen begging in the streets. The position now is that things as they are cannot go on. Surely it is the responsibility of the State to look after its blind. Surely the Government cannot logically ask a few people to continue to do the work they have been doing for the welfare of the blind and to accept a reduced grant.

It has been a hard row to hoe and the Minister knows that.

The Minister for Railways: I know what happened a few years ago.

Mr. PANTON: That was not the fault of the blind.

The Minister for Railways: It was to some extent their fault.

Mr. PANTON: It did not go very far; it lasted about a month or six weeks. I was a member of the council. As a matter of fact there has been another since, but that did not last many minutes. Those things will happen. The more recent one was caused by one or two men. On that occasion a man came out from England with his wife and family and the next thing we heard about him was that he was in the Institute for the Blind.

The Minister for Railways: He was turned down in England because of his lack of sight.

Mr. PANTON: Anyhow, he managed to come out.

The Minister for Railways: Instructions were issued from this end to allow him to come.

Mr. PANTON: That man caused a little bit of trouble, but it did not last more than a week. But that is no reason why the other inmates of the institute should be penalised.

The Minister for Railways: The trouble lasted for a considerable period.

Mr. PANTON: No; I was one of those who resigned over it. The same gentleman is in the chair who was chairman at the time. I refer to the Rabbi who has been associated with the institute for many years. It was merely a squabble, and the probability is that if the inmates had had more work to do, it would never have occurred. What the Minister is complaining about will be accentuated if we do not provide the inmates with work. We are in this unfortunate position, that it is becoming almost impossible to collect funds. We are paid a subsidy of £2,800 on a pound for pound basis. The Minister knows that even down at the Show for three days a number of women conducted a booth on behalf of the Braille Society.

The Minister for Railways: They have also been collecting outside the football grounds.

Mr. PANTON: The institute is endeavouring to get its overdraft paid off. It is

found necessary to raise funds in every possible way, but to do so is becoming more difficult every day. This is so because people are not closely in touch with the institute and the work that is being done there. If the blind were to parade the streets with their hats in their hands, the people would realise what the position was. But because we keep them away, the public do not know what is being done. The Government have no occasion to reduce the grant; the institute does not come under the financial emergency legislation and the Attorney General made that position very clear. On that occasion I put up a protest against it, and I was definitely informed that the Financial Emergency Bill made no difference to this grant. But the Treasurer, with one sweep, has cut out quite a lot of them. I am not concerned with any other for the moment. If there is one section of the community deserving of the sympathy and assistance of the Government, it is that section least able to help themselves. Just imagine! We have three married couples, husbands and wives alike being blind, and trying to rear families. Their invalid pension has been cut down, and now they are on half-time. How are they going to get on? It is impossible for them to carry on, and equally impossible for the committee doing the work to carry on. After all, it is the charge of the Government, not of the committee trying to control the welfare of those people; it is the Government's responsibility on behalf of the State.

The Minister for Mines: That applies to all charitable relief.

Mr. PANTON: Yes, but even more so in this section than in any other section. I think the Minister must agree with that. I hope the Government will consider this; I am certainly going to make another appeal to the House if they do not. I am not using that as a threat, but I do not feel disposed to allow an injustice like this to go through, for I am sure the people of Western Australia would not be in favour of it. The amount of £560 is not large from a State point of view, but it means everything to those two committees. I trust the Government will give the matter consideration before the Estimates are concluded and will reinstate the amount up to £2,800 on a pound for pound basis.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Legislative Assembly £2,399, Joint House Committee £4,009, Joint Printing Committee £3,869—agreed to.

Vote—Joint Library Committee, £296:

Hon. M. F. TROY: Where does "Hansard" come in?

The CHAIRMAN: Under "Joint Printing Committee." We have just passed that.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Premier, £10,268:

Progress reported.

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

1. Interstate Destitute Persons Relief Act Amendment.
2. Firearms and Guns Amendment.
Without amendment.
3. Dried Fruits Act Continuance.
With amendments.

BILL—RESERVES (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [8.55] in moving the second reading said: This is the usual Reserves Bill, introduced towards the end of the session. This year it deals with only two reserves, one being set aside for a show-ground at Guildford. The Crown grant was issued to certain trustees with the trust that they should hold this land for the purpose of a show ground. But the land was down on a river flat, and so it was impossible to use it. By this Bill it is being transferred to the Guildford Municipal Council for the purposes of a recreation ground and a garden. The matter has been discussed from time to time between the local authority and the Lands Department, and the department has agreed to this reserve. The next one is an exchange of land at Mt. Lawley. In Mr. Angwin's time, a certain piece of land was transferred to the Perth Road Board for the purposes of recreation, including a golf course. But on the north-west corner the land ran out to a very fine peak, which made it unsuitable for golf. It is now proposed to exchange another area on the south side

for this. The piece of land they are giving us contains 43 acres, whereas the piece we exchange contains 53 acres. The provisions of the original grant to those people empowers them to lease the land for a period of 50 years, subject to the Governor's approval. We do not propose to make any alterations in the conditions of the original grant. Those are the only two reserves dealt with in the Bill. I propose to lay this lithograph on the Table so that members may see at a glance what is proposed. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. M. F. Troy, debate adjourned.

BILL—ROADS CLOSURE (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [8.58] in moving the second reading said: This is the usual Roads Closure Bill and this time it provides for only two closures. The Fremantle City Council has acquired certain lands for recreation purposes just outside the city proper. There are two roads running through the block and they ask that those roads be closed so as to make the grounds more compact. The land in the closed roads will be handed over to the council for recreation purposes, together with the rest of the land. The other one is for the closure of a road at York. There are certain Crown lands which were at one time set aside as a cemetery. These have again reverted to the Crown, and the land has been subdivided. There is a road there which is too steep for ordinary use, and as the main road from York to the racecourse passes the land, and provides a frontage to the subdivisional lots, it is proposed to ask for the right to close this road. The municipality of York has agreed to this being done. The road has been closed in the interests of the Crown, but I do not anticipate any trouble in connection with it. I also lay upon the Table the notes of these two reserves. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

BILL—TENANTS PROTECTION.*Second Reading.*

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [9.2] in moving the second reading said: One of the reasons which prompted me in bringing forward this Bill is the fact that the Government have had two tries at the rent business, and in neither case have they been successful or conferred any benefit upon the majority of the citizens of the State. They have left the average tenant very little better off than if they had never started out to deal with the question. They started out by bringing down the Tenants, Purchasers, and Mortgagees' Relief Bill. This was designed to relieve the tenant or anyone else who was paying rent. The usual procedure followed by the tenant in distress under that Act is that he must first apply to the Commissioner for relief. The Commissioner is empowered to grant up to three months' relief if he so desires. If at the end of three months the tenant is still in distress, he may again apply to the Commissioner, who may grant him a further period of relief. My experience of the Tenants' Relief Court is that on very rare occasions has there been a full extension of the second term. Under the present conditions very few people get exactly two full terms of relief granted to them. Sometimes the Commissioner will give three months' relief, and sometimes only about half that period, say up to eight weeks. If the tenant is still in distress he will go back to the Commissioner, and the general practice then is to give him one month, or five or six weeks at the most. After that, the Commissioner decides he is unable to give any further relief. The tenant then has to get out of the house, or stand the chance of being evicted, as has occurred on many occasions in the metropolitan area. Owing to the times through which we are passing the rent question is a very serious one. On various occasions Mr. Moseley on the bench has expressed the opinion that he had not the power under the Act to give relief to tenants in general. He has, generally speaking, been very considerate towards unfortunate tenants, but his scope is very limited. He has not, I consider, the power he should have to enable him to give the necessary relief to tenants in distress. The Government then made a second attempt to deal with the question. They told us they

were bringing down another rent Bill. I hoped when it did come down it would be much better than the first and afford extra relief to the persons concerned. Unfortunately for the average tenant, the working man, and the person who is renting a place to-day, that Act gave no relief. It applied only to persons having a monthly tenancy or longer. The second Act was, if anything, of less benefit to the workers than the first. Very few of what may be termed ordinary tenants, who are renting the ordinary dwelling house, obtained any relief under that legislation. It did give some relief to business places where there was a lease of the premises, and in the case of large dwelling houses, where the occupier had the premises on a monthly lease or a longer one than that. The average tenant received no relief at all. The Act merely legislated for a selected class of the community. In view of the distress that is abroad to-day, I would be failing in my duty if I did not make some attempt to remedy the rent question. I am not foolish enough to believe that this Bill will not create some hardship amongst a certain number of landlords. I know there are some landlords who are as hard up as some of the tenants. There are some who are actually drawing sustenance and relief from the Government, because they have put their savings either into one big house or one or two small ones and have in the past been living upon the income derived from that source. As so many tenants are unable to pay rent to-day those landlords are practically in the same position as many tenants—down and out. That, however, does not justify the eviction from their homes of tenants who, through force of circumstances, are unable to pay rent. In many instances relief has been given to landlords. If a landlord is down and out, and is the owner of small dwellings or one large place in which families are residing but cannot afford to pay the rent, and yet cannot be evicted, some relief has to be given to him. That, however, does not apply to the great majority of landlords. There is nothing more heart-rending than to see families thrown out into the street bag and baggage without anywhere to lay their heads. During the past few months there have been many evictions. If something is not done soon there will, I am afraid, be many more. Parliament must pass legislation to protect these unfortunate people, and see that they are not thrown

out into the street, or there is likely to be a serious clash. Every member will agree that that is the position. In the various suburbs of the metropolitan area anti-eviction committees have been formed. If something is not done to stop these evictions, sooner or later the committees will come into conflict with the powers that be. I do not think any member wishes that to happen. With the help of the Parliamentary Draftsman I have framed this Bill to the best of my ability, to protect tenants throughout the State while we are passing through these bad times. The Bill provides for the same definition for Commissioner, dwelling house and landlord as is contained in the Tenants, Purchasers, and Mortgagors' Relief Act. The difference from that Act is that the Bill debars the tenant from contracting outside the Act—a very desirable amendment. The Act does not debar a man from contracting outside it. What is happening to-day is that when a man is about to be thrown out into the street, because he cannot pay rent, he will sign anything to retain his occupation of the house. If a man gets into a house and the landlord wishes to collect his rent, the man is then forced to apply to the Commissioner. If he goes to the Commissioner, the hands of that official are tied because the tenant has contracted himself outside the Act and debarred himself from getting any relief under it. In the Bill I have taken the precaution to prevent anything in the way of contracting outside the Act. Landlords will, therefore, be unable to produce any document signed by a prospective tenant before he takes possession. If the landlord lets a house in such circumstances, any action he takes will be of no avail. The Bill provides that certain persons shall not be evicted without an order from the Commissioner. People should not be liable to eviction without an order from the Commissioner. These particular persons are those who are drawing less than the equivalent of the basic wage. Anyone who is drawing less than the basic wage cannot be evicted except by an order of the Commissioner. Certain formalities have to be gone through, and proved to the satisfaction of the Commissioner before he grants such an order. Any person in receipt of an equivalent to the basic wage will not come under the Bill. The earnings of the husband and wife will be taken into

consideration. If a man is earning half the basic wage, and the wife is earning equivalent to the other half, these people will not come under the Bill, because their combined earnings will be equivalent to the basic wage.

The Minister for Railways: What if a man is working under conditions where no arbitration award applies. He may agree to work for 1s. a week below the basic wage and thus get out of paying any rent.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The basic wage is defined. If it is not provided for then the wage shall be the ordinary wage worked for in the district.

The Minister for Railways: But a man may work for less than the basic wage in the circumstances I have related.

Mr. SLEEMAN: A man must get the basic wage before he can be evicted.

The Minister for Railways: Not necessarily.

Mr. SLEEMAN: What industries would not be paying the basic wage?

The Minister for Railways: There are quite a number.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Bill provides that anyone who is getting less than the basic wage shall not be evicted without an order of the Commissioner. The Bill is comprehensive and covers most of the ground that need be covered in the dealings between landlord and tenant. I am, of course, prepared to admit that the Bill can be improved. I have, however, framed it in a way that is most likely to get through this Chamber. I have made it so mild that I do not think anyone can take exception to it. If the Minister can show me any way to improve it, I shall be only too glad of his assistance.

The Minister for Railways: If it is not according to your personal convictions, you should not have brought it down.

Mr. SLEEMAN: These are my convictions.

The Minister for Railways: You say they are very mild.

Mr. SLEEMAN: They are mild. The Bill is one that should suit the occasion. It could have been made very drastic if I had thought the House would agree to it. I should be very glad of the help of the Minister in making it more drastic.

Mr. Kenneally: If the Minister wants to make it more drastic.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I will give the Minister every opportunity to do so.

The Minister for Railways: This is your Bill.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I will accept any amendment that I think will improve the Bill. I am afraid, however, the Minister would not have the audacity to do anything to improve it.

The Minister for Railways: It may be improved without being made more drastic.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Minister will have the opportunity to speak on the second reading and in Committee. I will welcome any suggestions from him that will tend to improve the Bill. Penalties are provided which are not found in the previous Act. There were certain things men could do and could not do, but no penalties were provided. I have put in a provision for penalties for breaches of the Act. I hope members will raise no serious objection to the Bill. If they do not pass it the responsibility will be theirs. Every member will agree that the position is getting serious, and that something ought to be done to see that people are not forced out into the street. It is no wonder people are getting desperate when, on returning home after searching for work, they find their wives, families and furniture, out in the street. I advise every member to think seriously before voting against the Bill. It is one of the most vitally important Bills that could be brought down at a time like this when so many members of the community are suffering hardship. There is one clause in the Bill for which I have to apologise, namely, that relating to regulations. I have on various occasions raised my voice against the provision for regulations, but in this case I have embodied a number of reservations. The whole thing is toned down as far as the Parliamentary Draftsman could tone it down. He pointed out it was necessary in new legislation like this to have a clause dealing with what may be done under the Bill, what forms to provide, etc. The regulations under this Bill will be the mildest that have ever been brought before the House in a Bill.

The Minister for Railways: Surely he did not advise you that you could not put forms into the schedule.

Mr. SLEEMAN: No. He advised that it was necessary to put in the reserve clause as to regulations, and this has been embodied in the Bill.

The Minister for Railways: You are losing your reputation.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am not losing any reputation at all. I am doing my best for the people whom I represent; and I hope that the Minister, if he can see his way clear to wipe out regulations altogether, will move in that direction. In that case, I shall do my utmost to assist him. Let me say once again that I do not believe in government by regulation. However, this Bill represents a new form of legislation; and after consultation with the Parliamentary Draftsman I was satisfied of the need for introducing this highly limited clause giving power to make regulations. I commend the measure to the House. I hope it will pass this and another Chamber and be placed on the Statute Book quickly. If it is not placed there soon, I foresee grave trouble arising among the people, which I am sure members of this House do not desire. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 4).

Second Reading.

MR. H. W. MANN (Perth) [9.20] in moving the second reading said: This short Bill seeks to amend the Licensing Act so as to cover a matter which affects more particularly the Freemasons' Club. For 30 years it has been the custom of that institution to supply to members liquor to be consumed at lodge meetings held on the same premises, but not within the licensed portion of the premises. That is to say, the club portion of the premises is situated downstairs, and the liquor is sold downstairs by the club to members of the club and then conveyed upstairs and consumed at lodge meetings. That practice, as I say, has existed for 30 years, the club authorities not being aware that they were in any way infringing the Licensing Act. Recently a new secretary was appointed, and that official investigated the system of controlling the liquor and, feeling some doubt about the matter, consulted a legal authority. Eventually the Crown Law Department was referred to, and they agreed that there was a slight infringement of the Act. The club does

not desire that there should be any infringement whatever. It does seem reasonable that the club should supply liquor that is required on the premises. There has never been any outrageous breach of the Act by the club, and the authorities and the public thought the Act was being conformed to throughout the 30 years. The lodge authorities were also under that belief. I think the Bill will affect one other club, the Buffaloes, whose lodge room is off the licensed premises. In the case of that club too, I understand, refreshments are taken from the club to lodge meetings. However, the Bill has been introduced for the purpose of making regular the position at the Freemasons' Club.

Mr. Marshall: Explain what is meant by the reference to "necessary qualification for membership in a particular society."

The Minister for Railways: You cannot be a member of the Freemasons' Club without being a member of a masonic lodge.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The Bill has been submitted to several legal gentlemen and to the licensing authorities, and has been finalised by Dr. Stow. I do not think I need say more as to the merits of the Bill.

Mr. Marshall: The Bill permits liquor to be taken off the licensed premises and consumed.

Mr. H. W. MANN: No. The Bill permits liquor to be taken from the licensed portion of the premises to the unlicensed portion.

Mr. Corboy: It permits consumption on the unlicensed portion of the premises.

Mr. H. W. MANN: That is so.

Hon. P. Collier: It permits liquor to be bought on the licensed portion and consumed on the unlicensed portion.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Yes. It might be suggested that a way out would be to license the whole of the premises; but the constitution of a masonic lodge does not permit of its meetings being held on licensed premises. For that reason the top portion of the club premises is unlicensed. Only the ground floor of the premises is licensed as a club.

Mr. Marshall: Why not be like the Salvation Army and hold meetings in the open air?

Mr. H. W. MANN: An excellent suggestion, but I cannot at present adopt it. I have outlined the objects of the Bill, and

trust it will receive the support of hon. members. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.25 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 14th October, 1931.

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

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.34] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short Bill and practically explains itself. The existing provision under Section 70 of the Electoral Act is as follows:—

The date fixed for the polling shall not be less than seven days nor more than 30 after the date of nomination.

That is to say that in any election for this House or another place, whether it be an ordinary election or an extraordinary one, the polling day may be fixed for seven days after nominations close. Another place is not circumscribed by the Constitution, inasmuch as all its members retire simultaneously and their elections can be spread over a period of eight or nine weeks from the issue of the writ to the close of nominations and to the date of the poll, and after the date of the poll. According to the Elec-