

I do not know what the Leader of the House proposes to do—whether to sit on to-night and await the arrival of the Bill from another place. Is that the intention?

The Chief Secretary: I understand that the Bill will be in our hands very shortly.

The PRESIDENT: The motion before the House is in order. If any hon. member considers that it is not in order, or that it is improper, he can object to it and it will not be carried.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If this action were going to get us anywhere, I would not have anything to say. We cannot meet until Tuesday and the suspension of the Standing Orders is a departure from the usual procedure; we are breaking new ground for no purpose whatever. I am as certain as I am sitting here that we cannot get any further to-night, and that we shall not have the Bill before us until Tuesday. Then why break away from recognised rules? I have told the Leader of the House that I am not concerned about the question of urgency; I am not prepared to sit after 10 o'clock at night. I start my work at 5 o'clock in the morning and when I go on until 10 o'clock at night I have finished for the day. If the business is going to be rushed through, as is usually done towards the end of the session, it will not be rushed through with my assistance, because I shall not be here. We have been hanging round all the evening and now we are asked to wait still longer on the off-chance of another place passing the Bill so that we might deal with it to-night. We shall be establishing a precedent which I think is dangerous.

Hon. J. Cornell: I should like to ask the Chief Secretary whether anyone will suffer in the event of the Supply Bill not being passed before next Tuesday.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Even on Tuesday next we shall still require a statutory majority unless I give notice of the motion to-night. In view of the objection on the part of several members to the suggested procedure, I will, with the permission of the House, withdraw the motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders, and give notice of my intention to move it at the next sitting of the House.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I now give notice that it is my intention to submit the motion at the next sitting of the House.

House adjourned at 10.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 18th August, 1932.

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

QUESTION—DISTRRAINT AUCTION.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Attorney General: 1, In the matter of Theresa Hunt v. Edwards, on what date was the property of Mrs. Hunt put up for auction by the bailiff at Fremantle? 2, What was the amount of the bid received? 3, On a subsequent date was the property again submitted for auction by the bailiff? 4, What was the bid on that occasion? 5, Did the bailiff receive the cash on the fall of the hammer? 6, If not, when did he receive payment? 7, What amount did the bailiff pay into court? 8, Will the Attorney General have a full investigation made into this case?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: (for the Attorney General) replied: 1, On the 26th November, 1931. 2, No bid. 3, Yes. 4, Bid, £87 10s.; paid, £52. 5, No. 6, £52 paid on 18th January, 1932. 7, £52, the full amount collected. 8, No. Mrs. Hunt brought proceedings against the bailiff under Sections 21 and 24 of the Local Courts Act for dereliction of duty. These proceedings were brought before the magistrate of the Local Court, Fremantle, and were dismissed by him. The matter has therefore already been adjudicated on.

QUESTIONS (2)—UNEMPLOYMENT.

Foreigners on Sustenance.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Railways—1, What is the number of foreign recipients of State sustenance, juveniles as well as adults? 2, What is the number of naturalised foreigners in receipt of sustenance under the State sustenance scheme?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, 749, 2, 137.

Numbers picked up for work.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the total number of persons picked up for work since the Premier's return from his last visit East? 2, The number picked up from each centre? 3, As the amounts payable to individual men differ, what are the numbers and various weekly amounts to be paid to each class of men, and to what districts were they sent?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: The reply being of the nature of a return, I will lay it on the Table.

QUESTION—EDUCATION, SICK LEAVE.

Miss HOLMAN asked the Minister for Education: 1, What number of school teachers had sick leave for periods of a week or more during 1931? 2, What number of school teachers had sick leave for periods of a week or more from January to the end of July, 1932?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Education) replied: 1, 255, 2, 171.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,225,000.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Richardson in the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on the motion of the Premier, "That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the services of the year ending 30th June, 1932, a sum not exceeding £2,225,000."

MR. WILSON (Collie) [4.37]: In order that there might be no misunderstanding, I think it my duty to say a few words regarding unemployment in the South-West, and especially in my own electorate. A good deal of comment has been heard about the Collie district as having been favoured in relation to other districts. I am going to say it has not fared too well, but I am not going to bring in other districts by way of comparison. I believe the Collie township and electorate have suffered more from the

depression than have any other town and district in the State. A very large number of men down there have been unemployed for two or three years. A number of mines have been closed, timber mills have ceased operations, and sleeper cutting is practically finished. To-day no sleepers are being cut, and I understand from what the Minister for Railways stated some months ago that he has about 12 years' supply of sleepers already cut for the railways. Many of the sleeper cutters would thank the Minister for the privilege of work for some of their number, even if they had to be rationed. I have no comments to make on the conduct of the Unemployment Board, for I feel they do the best they can with the money they have got; but it is a faulty system altogether. Some time ago I, in common with the members for Forrest, for Bunbury, for Sussex, for Murray-Wellington, and for Nelson, together with the Legislative Council members for the South-West, waited on the Minister and drew attention to the difficulty that persons in those districts have in getting sustenance. There is altogether too much centralisation, which is one of the chief evils. Men in the metropolitan area can get on to sustenance much more quickly than can men in the country; for a man in the metropolitan area is on the spot, and the officers of the department will procure sustenance for him as soon as possible, whereas men in the South-West have not that advantage. There a man has to go to the police, and when he has fulfilled all the conditions of the inquisition, the matter is sent up to Perth, and it is three or four weeks before that man, starving all the time, can get sustenance. It should be made possible to transact the whole business in the South-West and not have to send it up here. There are in my electorate more persons on sustenance than on relief work; in fact the latest move is that the people on sustenance are to be put on to relief work, some of them getting £1 per week extra. But sometimes people cannot get the relief to which they are entitled. I have here some letters which bear out that contention. Buckingham's mill has been closed for two years, in consequence of which a man named Carroll, who has six children, has been working on sustenance and receiving 42s. per week. During the time he was working on the mill he picked out a block of land from the virgin bush with a view to making a home for him-

self and his children. By spare time efforts he cleared a few acres and erected a small fence of split posts. Actually the farm would not feed a bandicoot, and indeed there is no chance of making it into a farm for many years. As I say, he has been on sustenance, receiving 42s. per week for himself and five children, all of whom are under 14 years of age. Now he has been served with the following letter from the department:—

Dear Sir,—I have to notify you that sustenance at the rate of 20s. per week for 20 weeks has been approved you. Payments will be made by the Agricultural Bank inspector, and sustenance work will discontinue immediately. You are required to effect improvements on your holding to the value of the amount advanced, and in this respect it is necessary for you to report monthly to the bank inspector, stating the work performed. You are also required to complete the security for the advance when called upon to do so by the Agricultural Bank.

The man wrote to the department as follows:—

I am a timber worker employed by Messrs. Buckingham Bros. for very many years past and now have a family of six boys and girls dependent upon my exertions. This mill has been closed now for nearly two years. I have been employed on the forestry sustenance scheme earning 42s. weekly since it started. My idea in applying for and obtaining the block in question was to give me an opportunity for the employment of spare time and at the same time provide work and interest, etc., for my growing family. Unfortunately the slump came along, I lost my job, and have therefore had no money to expend on improvements. I have cleared some of it and have put up about 150 bush split posts. The amount you mention (20s. per week) would not enable us to exist at all, so it is absolutely compulsory that I surrender all interest or title to the land and thus gain the right still to remain on the sustenance scheme.

The man has left his block. We have spent millions of pounds on group settlement, but I guarantee that this man, if similarly assisted, would have proved better than the average group settler. Up to the present time he has involved the Government in no expense. He tried to make a home in his spare time and he proved himself to be a man worthy of assistance. I could quote other cases, but I think this one is sufficient. I believe the department is moving in the matter. If the department send an inspector down, I hope they send one who knows the difference between couch and buffalo grass. Carroll should be given a chance to make a living on his block, but not on starvation

rates. It is rather strange that the railway department should have been using imported coal while coal miners at Collie were out of employment. I am not referring to the time of the strike. For two months the Railway Department used 1,000 tons of Newcastle coal per week. That coal was subsidised by the New South Wales Government. I thought that any action of the kind was unconstitutional, but the companies who supplied it received a subsidy of about 1s. 6d. per ton. This was paid by the New South Wales Government to help the Newcastle companies to recapture their lost trade. The effect of the subsidy, however, is to keep the men at Collie out of work. There are hundreds of men in the district who are idle. There are 250 or 300 coal miners out of work, besides timber workers, sleeper cutters, and men who were formerly employed on the roads. Those people who allege that the residents of Collie are getting a better deal than the residents of other parts of the State do not know what they are talking about. There are men in my district who had saved a few pounds, but during the last 18 months their money has gone. Consequently they have to seek relief. Yet people who have been keeping themselves for the last 18 months out of their savings are now to be denied assistance. I wish the Government had more money at their disposal, but it is possible that better use could have been made of the money available to them. There is no dog-in-the-manger spirit about the people of Collie; all they want is a fair deal. Hundreds of men in that part of the State would be only too pleased to accept work to-morrow, but unfortunately they are unable to get it.

HON. S. W. MUNSIE (Hannans) [4.51]: We are asked to authorise Supply to an amount not exceeding £2,225,000. I admit that £1,300,000 of it is to be provided from Consolidated Revenue, which of course represents the ordinary expenditure of Government for the payment of the Public Service, etc. The amount to be provided from loan funds is £600,000 and from the Government Property Sales Fund, £25,000 and from the Public Account £300,000. When the Leader of the Opposition stated that this was practically the only opportunity afforded members to discuss the manner of spending the £600,000, the Premier interjected, "No, you will have an opportunity to discuss it on

the Estimates." That statement was not altogether correct. The Government are asking for this amount of Supply for three months. More than six weeks of the period have already gone, and in seven weeks the total amount will have been expended. Consequently, if we do not now discuss the manner in which the money is to be expended, it will be useless to discuss it when the Estimates are presented because the money will then have been expended. I think the "West Australian" newspaper would have some justification for complaining if we deferred expressing our opinion until the Estimates were introduced, seeing that the money would then have been spent. The newspaper would be justified in saying, "You missed your opportunity; why don't you keep quiet?" I do not intend to miss my opportunity. I realise the difficult position confronting the Government, not only as regards loan money, but in the matter of finding funds with which to carry on the affairs of the State, but I protest against the loan money that is available being expended in the manner proposed by the Government. Recently there was a controversy in the Press between the Premiers of Western Australia and South Australia as to which of the two was adhering the more closely to the Premiers' Plan. Mr. Hill claimed to be entitled to a larger disabilities grant from the Commonwealth on the ground that he had observed the Premiers' Plan to a greater extent than had the Premier of Western Australia. Our Premier, in reply, said he did not object to the amount granted to Mr. Hill, but he did object to the comparisons drawn by him. He said Mr. Hill could take credit for the fact that the wages paid in his State were the lowest in the Commonwealth, while his taxation was the highest. When that statement was made I was not aware of the method under which the Government of this State proposed to spend the loan money, but if the method now in vogue was in operation then, the Premier's statement was not correct. I admit that South Australia is one of the most highly taxed States of the Commonwealth, but it is not the lowest in point of wages paid. So far as I am aware, no other State that has endeavoured to observe the Premiers' Plan to the letter has attempted to interfere with private employers and the wages paid by them. The lowest wages that can possibly be paid in South Australia by a private firm is £3 3s. per week and the lowest rate fixed in Western Australia is £3 11s. 8d. Those rates have been fixed in

the two States by legally constituted tribunals. But the Government of this State are defying the law and are disregarding the basic rates fixed by the Arbitration Court. Not only do they themselves not pay the basic rate, but they are demanding that private employers shall not pay it either. The Government do not fix the minimum rate, as does the Arbitration Court. The court fixes a basic rate and no employer is entitled to pay less. He may pay more to a good man. The Government, however, have definitely fixed a maximum rate not exceeding £3 per week, irrespective of the ability of the man employed, while the minimum rate is 25s. 2d. Further, they have fixed those rates for private employers as well as for themselves. There is a firm who manufacture pipes. They tendered for the supply of pipes for sewerage works. If they employ a single man they are compelled to pay him 25s. 2d. per week and not allow him to earn more. If they employ a married man, no matter how many children he has to maintain, the maximum rate they can pay him is £3 per week.

Mr. Sampson: You are referring to relief work.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: No, I am referring to a private employer who has tendered for the supply of pipes for relief work. The Minister for Railways asked the other night whether it would be fair to allow a man who was producing the article that the men on relief work had to use to earn more than the man who was actually on the relief work. I cannot understand the Minister's logic.

The Minister for Railways: I could not have understood either if I had said that.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The Minister in an interjection on Tuesday last made use of these exact words.

The Minister for Railways: It was not I.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I was sitting in my seat at the time. I know the Minister's voice, and I say he did use those words. The statement was published in the "West Australian" some time ago in the report of a deputation that waited upon him. I do not say that the statement was true because it appeared in the "West Australian" but, having heard the Minister, I say he did make the statement.

The Minister for Railways: It is usual to accept the denial on the part of a member, you know.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I cannot understand the Minister attempting to force this sort of thing.

The Minister for Railways: Suppose the Government were making the material for these relief works. Would they engage some of the men at full time and the balance on part-time?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I believe if the Government were manufacturing the pipes themselves, they would employ men who knew something about the industry, and keep them on full time. Within the last three weeks a department under the control of the Minister has taken on between 70 and 80 men at the Midland Junction workshops. The Commissioner of Railways did not put them on part time, but employed them full time. He ignored the Government regulation, for he knows he could not secure economy otherwise. These are men who were retrenched some time ago. They are good men and know their work. He has put them back in the workshops at full time. If the Minister was making the pipes and men were available who had been doing the work before, he would certainly put them on full time rather than employ sustenance men who knew nothing about the work. That is not the case with the private employer. A firm which tendered for a Government job put off 37 men within the last 15 months. The majority of these men are still unemployed. That firm secured the contract from the Government, but cannot employ one of the hands that were dismissed. Is that a fair thing? The men that were put off are not on sustenance. If a job occurs in the city or the country, these men are debarred from getting any work. The Government say, "Not only shall we not employ you, but we will debar you from being engaged by any other employer." The Leader of the Opposition wanted to know what works were to be put into operation as a result of the expenditure of the money. All we have heard about is the proposal to continue works previously authorised by Parliament, with the exception of forestry and the Causeway.

The Minister for Works: The Wicherina water supply.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: We were told it was merely intended to carry out works already authorised or in hand. I do not mind that so long as it is useful work and has received the authority of Parliament.

The Leader of the Opposition wanted to know what money had been reserved for water supplies on the goldfields, particularly at Ora Banda. A deputation recently waited on the Premier and the Minister in Kalgoorlie in regard to Ora Banda. The Minister stated that Providence had supplied the water. The rain had come and filled the dam which had already been built there. According to the Press, a new dam was provided, but that was not so. The old one had become empty but was refilled by the rainfall. The Minister also said that the supply would last four months. When I was Minister for Mines I received a deputation at Ora Banda. The only customer of the State battery there did not warrant the battery working for more than two months in the year. We allowed that company to use a fairly big percentage of the water in the 42-mile dam. It was arranged that a certain amount should be reserved for the State battery. To-day things are very different. With the exception of the time when it is stopped for repairs, the State battery is at work continuously. In fact, crushings have had to be diverted elsewhere. A four months' supply of water will not meet the case for Ora Banda. There are approximately 150 men prospecting in the vicinity. Some of them have reasonably good shows. If the men were in any other district where permanent water is available, their shows would be taken up by syndicates or companies, but there is no inducement for any company to purchase a property at Ora Banda.

Mr. Angelo: How much would the water supply cost?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The estimate given to us was that it would cost about £16,000 to connect Ora Banda by pipe line with Kurrawang. The prospectors will certainly return some wealth to the country, but not half as much as companies would do if they had an adequate water supply. I hope the Minister will make inquiries into the matter.

The Minister for Works: Officers of the Mines and Public Works Departments are already going into the matter on the spot.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: When I was Minister for Mines I agreed to assist the Water Supply Department from the special grant made by the Commonwealth Government for mining development, provided the Minister for Water Supply could come to

reasonable terms with the users. I believe he did ask for a guarantee from the mining company, but none was forthcoming and no grant was made. The activities in the district have now put quite a different complexion on the situation.

Mr. Angelo: Will the guarantee be forthcoming now?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I do not think one would be necessary owing to the amount of work the battery is called upon to do. I wish to protest against the action of the Government in over-riding the Industrial Arbitration Court by taking upon themselves, without the authority of Parliament, to reduce the basic wage fixed by that tribunal from £3 11s. 8d. to £3 per week. The Minister for Works has said repeatedly during the debate that his department is paying the basic wage.

The Minister for Works: So it is.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Single men are drawing at the rate of the basic wage for two days in the week; that is all. I do not see how that can be construed into the statement that the men are receiving the basic wage. The Government cannot be expected to find work for every man tomorrow and pay him continuously not less than £3 11s. 8d. per week. Under existing conditions that cannot be done. But I do say the Government have no right to do what they are doing—putting a limit on the men employed with regard to the time they are to be employed. The Minister recently quoted figures regarding the allowances granted by other Australian States and New Zealand. He has the advantage of me as regards New Zealand, as I have not had records from that Dominion. He did, however, mention New South Wales; and I have gone to the trouble of looking up the New South Wales figures. From all the information available to me, it appears that the money—specifically provided for sustenance in New South Wales is less than the actual money provided for sustenance in Western Australia. Western Australia, from that aspect, is treating its unemployed better than New South Wales is doing for those who are out of work in that State.

The Minister for Railways: Or any other State in Australia.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Or any other State in the Commonwealth. But why did not the Minister give the full facts? When

New South Wales fixed its sustenance rate, that was done with the knowledge that child endowment was in operation there. The money granted for child endowment is additional to the sustenance rates. But the Minister did not mention that fact.

The Minister for Works: In New South Wales men are also taxed 1s. in the pound for unemployment relief.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Even with that tax, the man with a wife and three children in New South Wales is considerably better off, allowing for child endowment, than the man with a wife and three children in Western Australia. Though the Minister was correct in his statements regarding sustenance allowances, he omitted any reference to New South Wales child endowment. While the Minister was speaking, there was an interjection from this side of the Chamber, "But there is child endowment in New South Wales."

The Minister for Works: Child endowment does not apply only to men on relief work.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: But it does apply to those men, and increases their receipts. If there were child endowment in this State, there would be nothing in the way of relief.

The Minister for Works: Shall we do like New South Wales and impose a tax of 1s. in the pound?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I am giving in that tax. I repeat, with child endowment the man in New South Wales with a wife and three children who is on relief work is considerably better off than the man with a wife and three children in Western Australia. I make that statement definitely. The Minister can work out the figures for himself. I believe my statement will be found to be correct. I do hope the Government will again seriously consider the attitude they are adopting as regards outside employment. I make that request not altogether because the attitude represents the thin end of the wedge for introducing a general reduction of wages outside. There is another reason, which, to my mind at all events, is just as important, if not more important. I am speaking with reference to the private employer who is having a bad time. I admit that most employers are having a bad time. But the employer I have in mind, now that the Government have £600,000 of loan money to spend and have

called tenders, finds himself unable to re-employ his old hands. It is deplorable that men who have been working in the past in factories and other establishments of the kind should be met with a refusal of re-employment. Such men have said to me, "The boss wants to give me a job. I have been to see him, and he said that if it were possible he would put me on, but that under the conditions of contract all extra men engaged must be men on sustenance, men taken over from the Government and paid at sustenance rates." Men who have been working for private employers but are not on sustenance cannot get a job anywhere. The Government will not give them a job because they are not on sustenance, and the former private employers cannot re-employ them because they have not gone on sustenance during the time they were away. I urge upon the Government the necessity for reconsidering the matter. They should go this far, if they will not go any further: they should inform every private employer whose tender for a job has been accepted that no exception will be taken to the extra men he engages if he can satisfy the Government that he is merely re-employing men whom he had to dismiss owing to the depression. The Government should allow the private employer to do that irrespective of whether the men are on sustenance or not. I contend that the present system is entirely wrong, but if the Government will not go the whole way, they should at least give the private employer the right to re-employ men whom he had to put off owing to the depression and who have not been on sustenance.

The Minister for Railways: That means putting off men on sustenance.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: These men are not yet on sustenance. I want to impress upon the Government that even now there are cases where firms have tendered for and secured Government jobs and have not yet employed any extra men, but are going to do so within the next week or two: therefore sustenance men have not yet been put on. If the Government do not go the whole hog and cut out the regulation in question altogether, as they ought to do, surely they should permit the private employer to re-employ a former employee, a trusted servant, if the man is out of work. If the employer says, "I want the right to give that man a job, because I have extra work," the

Government ought not to step in and say, "You must not employ him." Such a procedure is absolutely cruel. Unemployed men in that position have come to my house to tell me of these things. They have applied to their former employers, but they cannot get a job from those employers to-day. I urge upon the Government the necessity for reconsidering that feature of their policy, with a view to affording genuine unemployed men a chance to get a living, at all events.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [5.23]: On an occasion such as this, when the Government are asking for money to be spent in various directions, a member feels impelled to rise for the purpose of obtaining particulars as to those directions. Although this debate has occupied more time than most debates on Supply Bills, the occasion is one when prolonged discussion is more justifiable than otherwise it would be. Last July 12 months this Chamber discussed a similar Bill. The Opposition then warned the Government of the effects of what they were going to do. A year has gone by, and no improvement has resulted from the expenditure of that money. Certain suggestions were made 12 months ago by members on this side of the Chamber, not suggestions of an obstructive character, but suggestions intended to help the Government. Those suggestions went unheeded. I consider that remedial suggestions from the Opposition ought to receive consideration from the Government. The suggestion made to-day by the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) for the appointment of Government relief officers in various districts was made by me last year. My suggestion bore no fruit. It had reference more particularly to unemployed outside the metropolitan area. The suggestion was not made to the department concerned, but to the Government direct. I have made it a practice to pay a weekly visit to unemployed who cannot get directly in touch with the Unemployment Board in Perth. As the member for Collie pointed out, an application for relief is made to the police and then passed on to the local governing body. It is a case of the horse starving while the grass grows. There is a certain amount of scepticism in the minds of those who control unemployment relief. If any suspicion arises, the case is not decided in favour of the unemployed. This

means that a fortnight goes by without sustenance. Another week elapses while inquiries are being made as to why sustenance has not been granted. These delays are due not to those controlling unemployment relief, but to the instructions they have to observe in granting relief. I have received the utmost courtesy from the department, and have succeeded in obtaining sustenance for a number of cases in my own district. It is not a matter of exercising political influence, but merely a matter of stating the facts in each case. I do not think members of Parliament should have to come to Perth from outlying districts in order to make representations in such cases. My suggestion of last year, that an appointee of the Government should be stationed at Bunbury, Collie, and Busselton, was not made for the purpose of causing heavier expenditure. A representative of the Unemployment Board is in my district now investigating unemployment on the wharves. The question has become acute. In my district there is a considerable number of unemployed, and that number will increase on account of the lack of shipping at Bunbury. At a meeting which I attended in Bunbury quite recently, there was a larger number of unemployed than there has been for some time. The departmental officer who is now investigating the position at Bunbury may quite possibly be urgently required to investigate the position at Geraldton or at some other centre. Immediately he returns to Perth from Bunbury, he may be required to go somewhere else for the purpose of investigation. The fact of that officer touring the whole State, taking the whole responsibility for each district, and keeping in touch with each individual case, means that he has not the necessary opportunities for dealing with the question adequately. Moreover, the department are at the expense of sending that man from the metropolitan area to the various outlying districts. There should be an appointee in each district to take the responsibility. I would go so far as to suggest that the mayor of the town, or the local governing body, might be allowed to take the responsibility. The local governing body distributes the funds granted to it. However, there might be a little local preference or favour in connection with the system, and perhaps it would not operate to the benefit of the department, or possibly the department might

not wholly trust the local body. In my district, for the time being at least, the officers of the controlling bodies have done wonderfully well. In fact, that remark applies to the full period of two years; and I believe they could be trusted to make recommendations as to whether cases submitted by applicants for relief were genuine or not, or whether an applicant for relief should be granted a quota of the amount he has lost. I can give an instance showing what has been done in regard to encouraging men to remain on sustenance. The case in question is that of a man who was receiving 28s. per week by way of sustenance. Being an active man, although up in years, and having a family, he did not like the idea of being on sustenance. He had, in fact, led a fairly independent life. His sustenance allowance, as I have mentioned, was 28s. per week; and he took a little contract. This contract returned him the huge amount of 16s. 9d. per week. He was living on 61 acres of sand that would not keep more than one milking cow. If he had had at his disposal the necessary means of developing the block, it would no doubt, have assisted him to make a living for himself and his family. That man has been informed that having gone off sustenance and earned 16s. 9d. per week, he is not entitled to receive any sustenance at all now. He is not put back on sustenance, partly because it is said that the 61 acres of land he has should assist him to make a living, with the 16s. 9d. per week coming in. He has, in fact, a little more than that amount coming in; but the cost of oil and petrol brings his receipts down to that figure. What inducement is there for that man to continue his contract work? Having had such an experience with the contract, he will perhaps be foolish if he does not stop it and get back to the sustenance basis, which will return him 28s. a week. If local officers were established in country districts, they would be able to take the position of such men into consideration and probably would grant them assistance. I can give many instances of a like description. So far, speakers on the Opposition side of the House have referred to the maximum as £3 a week. The maximum in the Bunbury district has never been that amount. More than one deputation has waited upon the Minister controlling unemployment requesting that the maximum in the district should be raised to £2 9s., but

we have not been successful yet. So concerned have the Bunbury people become regarding this phase, that not only have small and large deputations been arranged to endeavour to rectify the position, but a petition was signed by most of the prominent local business people and others, urging an alteration in the existing rates, because it was realised that Bunbury had been unjustly treated through being kept on the 35s. maximum. I would have been lacking in my duty to my constituents had I awaited for an opportunity during the Address-in-reply debate to deal with the subject of unemployment. On the other hand, I felt bound to take advantage of the present debate to ask the Government to grant to the Bunbury people the same measure of sustenance relief as is accorded people elsewhere. One explanation of the differentiation is said to be that the cost of living at Bunbury is less than in Perth, Fremantle and elsewhere. In contravention of that assertion, the Bunbury traders wrote a letter that I read to the Minister to indicate that the cost of living in Bunbury was higher than in the metropolitan area. In those circumstances, it will be seen that the Bunbury people, who are compelled to accept a maximum of 35s. a week, have a distinct grievance. Then there is the position of single men who live with their parents. I had to make a special journey to Perth on behalf of one such individual. Perhaps it was an instance of the prodigal's return; but this man was about 41 years of age and immediately he placed his knees under his father's table, he was not allowed to draw sustenance. He was living at home and therefore the responsibility of maintaining his existence had to be accepted by his aged parents. That is to say, the parents were expected to keep an additional member of the family out of 14s. a week, the unit per member being 7s. When I placed the facts before the officials in Perth, they saw that an injustice had been done, and granted the man's application, although it had been before the department for about two months. Why should members of Parliament be forced to take up such cases on behalf of their constituents, and go into them with the department? In many instances I have secured satisfaction from the department, but it should not be necessary to go to that extent. I fully appreciate the fact that the officials cannot go beyond their instructions, but steps should

be taken to overcome these difficulties more readily. There is another instance of a single man about 40 years of age who returned to his home. His parents are both pensioners. That man, who is a returned soldier, cannot secure sustenance because he is living at home, and so the old people have to help to keep him out of their meagre pensions. The Leader of the Opposition commented on the cost of excavation work at Harvey and when he was discussing the position, the Minister for Works shook his head and said that the cost was no higher than if the work had been done by mechanical excavators. To one possessing even a small knowledge of such undertakings, it must be apparent that the methods adopted at Myalup and Stonehouse are neither the best nor the cheapest. If the work is to cost extra money, I should like to know whether the added expense is to be passed on to the men who eventually select land that the irrigation scheme will affect, or whether the community generally is to shoulder the increased burden. The financial phase must be considered. It is not merely a matter of taking men from the towns and placing them in a camp in the country to carry out work at 25s. a week, nor is it simply a matter of making them work. The member for Geraldton (Hon. J. C. Willcock) spoke about men sweeping the footpath in front of his house two or three times in a week. The same position arises in the neighbourhood of the home of the Minister for Railways. I object to money being spent in such directions. On a former occasion, because I instanced something of the sort in my own town, the Bunbury press said that I had made a personal attack on the mayor. That was quite untrue. I still say that if the Government spend a large amount in making a town the most beautiful in the State or in the world, and that town returns nothing to the State as a result of the expenditure, I can see no good in the undertaking. If men are to work, let them know that they are doing something of benefit.

The Minister for Works: That is what we are doing.

Mr. WITHERS: Merely because the men know they have got to work, they are working, but, in the circumstances, who can blame them for not wanting to work? Something has been said about no suggestions being made. I will suggest the re-grading of the railways. Work of that description

was undertaken when the member for Geraldton was Minister for Railways, and it was found beneficial because heavier loads could be carried. That is work that would fully justify expenditure of money and employment of men at full time rates. If idleness begets idleness, surely work begets work.

The Minister for Works: Tell me one job we are doing that is not reproductive and that you want stopped.

Mr. WITHERS: What about the local governing bodies who are putting men on work such as I have referred to? That is where the money has been spent. I know men must live, but it is the function of Government to govern, not to require local governing bodies to do it for them.

The Minister for Railways: The Labour Government set the example.

Mr. WITHERS: The Government have been degrading themselves by refraining from governing and getting local governing bodies to do it for them.

The Minister for Railways: You set the example.

Mr. WITHERS: The Collier Government governed and administered the affairs of the State.

The Minister for Railways: They got the local authorities to do some of the work.

Mr. WITHERS: They did not. The local governing bodies have done more for the country than Governments---

The Minister for Lands: Your own local governing body wanted more money from the Government.

Mr. WITHERS: And the Government asked the local authority to assume their responsibility.

The Minister for Works: We are not doing that at all. We are merely allowing them to make use of sustenance funds.

Mr. Kenneally: You are giving them the money and are permitting them to pay under sustenance rates.

Mr. WITHERS: The local governing bodies are benefiting by the system and they are helping the Government. It would be better for the Government to send out officials to the country districts and to attend to their own business, rather than place the responsibility upon local governing authorities. I can quote instances of men who are considerably in arrears with payments of amounts due by them. Some

of those people have been, as they thought, fortunate in getting a little permanent work only, to find that at the end of a couple of months the job terminated. The Government say to such men that they cannot revert to sustenance conditions until such time as the money they earned during those two months or so, has been cut out at sustenance rates. They do not take into consideration the fact that some of those men have been out of work for upwards of 18 months. Under the system laid down, landlords, grocers and everyone else have to suffer equally with the unemployed. For some considerable time. I have been urging that drainage work should be undertaken in the Glen Iris district, where floodings have occurred from time to time. An estimate for the work is about £6,000.

The Minister for Lands: Do you suggest the drainage work can be undertaken for £6,000?

Mr. WITHERS: That is the road board's estimate.

The Minister for Works: It will cost nearer £20,000.

Mr. Panton: But it is a road board estimate, not a Government one.

Mr. WITHERS: Many people have been established in that area for years. It may be suggested that they should not have taken up blocks there, but at the time of selection the area was quite safe. Since then, the area has been developed and the river has been snagged with the result that silt has come down and filled up the water course until at this stage the water cannot find its way down the stream. In consequence, flooding has taken place for years past.

The Minister for Lands: Would it not be cheaper to buy the land if we have to spend £20,000?

Mr. WITHERS: That is quite possible, and some of the settlers might be glad to sell out. At the same time, the area has been productive and the poultry and other farms to be seen there have justified settlement. The plan is worthy of consideration. It is constantly said that there is no money for new works. I desire to add my quota of protest to that of the Leader of the Opposition and others against the action of the Federal authorities in establishing a body to say how not only their money but ours shall be spent. I realise that our

speaking here to-night will not perhaps have any effect on the Supply Bill.

Mr. Panton: Don't be pessimistic.

Mr. WITHERS: Nor any effect on the Government's adopted policy, because we understand that the Premier has been told by the authorities in the Eastern States that we have to do certain things with certain money in a certain way. So apparently we are bound to continue the policy which has been in existence for so long. The question is, how long can we do this without getting deeper in the mire. If the Government are going to continue the methods of expenditure they have carried out for the last two years, I am satisfied that by the close of the term of this Parliament we shall be in such a morass that it will be difficult to say what the people of Western Australia will be able to do. The Government should be advised that when they ask for money to spend under a Supply Bill, they ought not to have it earmarked and controlled by the Federal Parliament, and ought not to accept dictation as to how they are to spend it.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.48]: I realise the great difficulties the Government are facing in regard to unemployment, and I do not think the time inopportune to say a word in favour of the efforts that have been put forth. I have given some thought to the subject and read a great deal, particularly in the newspapers of the Eastern States and New Zealand, and my conviction tallies with the statement already made in the House that those in distress because of unemployment are treated more liberally in this State than elsewhere. It is the duty of the Government to give the best consideration possible to those people, and I hope that whatever Government may be in power, that consideration will always be extended. Some months ago I was interested in a meeting of the unemployed at Mundaring. They adopted an attitude which is not uncommon when they made it clear that they were disinclined to receive sustenance unless permitted to work. That vindicates the efforts of the Minister, who I believe was responsible for the policy that work should be provided so that those who got it should not suffer any loss of the spirit of independence. In this matter there can be little cause for objection; indeed I doubt if there is much real objection. The majority of those who re-

ceive sustenance are anxious to be permitted to work for it. Time after time we have been told that the provision of the dole, as it is termed in the Old Country, has done a great deal of harm to those receiving it. At the outset it is accepted only with keen regret that circumstances should have necessitated it; but it is not very long before that feeling disappears. The most surprising thing—had we been told of it a few years ago we would not have believed it—is that in this young country of Australia it should have been found necessary at this stage to provide help for so many people. But it is gratifying to know that the help provided by the Government of Western Australia has been given sympathetically and after due consideration. I have a point to which I would draw attention, namely in regard to those people—and there is a fair percentage of them—who, during the course of years, by the practice of thrift and economy have got together a few pounds. Those are the people for whom I should like to say a word in regard to the adoption by the Government of the policy that unless sustenance is approved, no Government work can be provided. I suggest that in certain instances consideration might be given, and that each case should be treated on its merits. Where a family have succeeded in saving a few pounds, they should not be deprived of work until their last penny has gone. There are many people who have a definite disinclination to apply for sustenance, and it might mean that when those people are compelled to accept sustenance a contradictory act has been performed: they are compelled to ask for sustenance, and in the provision of it the Government may take away from them that feeling of independence which has supported them in battling on as long as they can without that help. I suggest the policy might be varied to the extent of giving consideration to each case on its merits.

Mr. Panton: Consideration by whom?

Mr. SAMPSON: Consideration by the officials, of whom I have no complaints whatever to make. I have found the officials very considerate, but unfortunately the money available has not been adequate to the necessities. However, following on the analogy drawn by the Attorney General last night, if there be only a limited quantity of water it should be handed out fairly. I ask that the policy of strict limitation of Government work to those on sustenance be modi-

fied. That is really the request I have to put up and one which I think might justly receive the consideration of the Government. This afternoon I gave notice that I will move in the House that allotments of land be provided for approved unemployed in order to enable them to produce some of their own requirements. I spoke on this last session, and I still believe it would be a great help. It may be said by those opposed to it that there are many people with land who nevertheless have to depend on the Government for assistance, although not of course to the same extent as those without land have to do. If those with land are not making an effort, the fault is at least partly theirs. I do not suggest that sustenance should be immediately withdrawn on the allocation of an allotment of land, but as progress is made on the block, so gradually sustenance could be decreased.

The CHAIRMAN: Is not the hon. member anticipating his motion?

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not propose to speak any further on that matter. I merely wished to indicate that I think consideration on those lines would be helpful. I should like to pay a tribute to the Minister, who I submit has shown not only human sympathy, but also a knowledge of human nature. And while the greatest consideration is given before sustenance is granted, when bona fides are proved, the Government come to the aid of those in distress. More than that, even those in distress would not ask. The whole proposition is most difficult, and can best be handled by dealing with it sympathetically, and with private enterprise assisting to the best of its ability to bring about an improvement of affairs as soon as possible. There has been perhaps a too ready disposition on the part of the public to depend on the Government, and the Government in turn perhaps have been too much inclined to interfere with private enterprise. In this way they have helped to bring about the disastrous condition of affairs which exists to-day.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [5.55]: I desire to enter a protest against the conditions that have been laid down when employment is being made available. Protests have been made here time and again against the condition imposed in respect of work that is to be done by private employers, namely, that the men must be on sustenance

before they can get employment. The hon. member who has just sat down laid most of our difficulties at the door of Government interference with private employment. Why did he not condemn the Government and roundly criticise them for that attitude? He did not do that, but instead he endeavoured to extol their work and confirm their attitude. At a time like this practically everybody in the country is appealing to the Government, yet we have the hon. member stating that because of Government interference in private enterprise we have the existing economic conditions. We know that is an economic fallacy. As to the condition laid down in the tender form that private employers must accept men working on sustenance, it belies the Government's avowed principle that private enterprise should be left alone. Having regard to the fact that many private employers do conform to the Arbitration Court's awards and pay their employees the prescribed wages, it is extraordinary that the Government should say that the private employers must accept sustenance men and must not be permitted to engage experienced employees who are not on sustenance. Unemployment is a paramount question in all communities to-day, and therefore Parliament can give consideration to no more important a subject than that we have been discussing for the past two evenings. The workers of this country have had a very difficult period in the past two or three years. Take the single men in Blackboy Camp. I saw men there who were practically without shirts to their backs. Their condition was deplorable. There is an abundance of clothing in the world, but those men had to go short because of the breakdown of the monetary system, the medium of exchange. The Minister should not have reduced the allowance paid to the men in camp, because that prevented them from getting clothing. The amount paid to them was reduced from 5s. to 1s. a week, and those who smoke or spend money for postage stamps have no chance of saving up to buy clothing. I urge the Minister to consider increasing the amount so that the inmates of the camp may get clothing. A proposition was made to the Unemployment Board that more work should be given to the men in Blackboy Camp in order that they might be able to earn the money to buy clothing, but the board replied that they could not see any

prospect of the men getting any work at all. I understand there are about 280 men still in Blackboy Camp. Many of them are getting on in years, and some are not now capable of doing the hard navvying work that is being undertaken in the country. The Minister should consider granting a little extra assistance to them, at least, in order that they might buy clothing. There is no doubt that the problem of unemployment will be with us for many years. It is part and parcel of the economic system. So long as the capitalistic system is retained, so long will unemployment prevail. We are doing our utmost to improve the conditions of the workers, but I complain that the Government have strenuously opposed proposals made from time to time for the reorganisation of the economic system. Many of the principles they opposed 12 months or two years ago are now being enunciated by some of their leaders. Mr. Bruce, the Leader of the Federal Nationalist Party, who is representing Australia at Ottawa, now says it would be disastrous to the country if the living and wage standards were further reduced. The Government have gone far enough in the direction of making reductions. I am opposed to the suggestion made by the leading paper that a wage of £3 per week should be fixed for all relief work. When the wages of the employees of that newspaper were reduced, the company did not reduce the price of the paper to the public. Yet they still advocate a reduction of wages for Government employees and still further economies in Government expenditure. The dividends paid by the company in recent years have been fairly substantial, but still the price of the paper is not reduced. The difficulties now prevailing in Australia are due to the adoption of the plan enunciated by Sir Otto Niemeyer two years ago. We are in a state of economic confusion, and it is impossible to determine from month to month what is likely to happen. The Attorney General last evening spoke of his solicitude for the under-dog, but I have yet to learn that the Attorney General or the party to which he belongs has done anything to improve the condition of the workers. The workers have had to fight for reduced hours, improved conditions and a fair share of the products of industry, but the party to which the Attorney General belongs has not assisted them.

The Minister for Works: Give us a definition of "worker."

Mr. HEGNEY: At one time it was a crime to form a trade union, and the strongest opposition to the movement came from the party from which the Nationalist Party is descended. Considering the large number of unemployed, it is remarkable, in view of the deplorable condition to which they have been reduced, that they remain as quiet as they are, especially as they know that there is an abundance of the necessities of life of which they stand in need. There has been an agitation to get the Arbitration Act amended in order that the Federal basic wage might be made applicable to all the States. That would mean a substantial reduction of the wage fixed by the State court. It seems to be the policy of Governments to get the wage fixed at not more than £3 per week. That is the aim of the Employers' Federation and of their representatives in the Arbitration Court. If the workers are deprived of their purchasing power and of the necessities of life, stagnation of industry is inevitable. Until the large army of workless can be restored to full-time employment and enabled to purchase the necessities of life, the existing difficulties will continue. Workers are being harassed in respect to homes being purchased. Many men still owe £100 or £200 of the purchase price of their homes, and although they are meeting interest payments by depriving themselves of food, they are being threatened with eviction. This sort of thing is fairly general. Last night the Minister for Works, in replying to criticism of his attitude towards the proposed amendment of the Main Roads Act, stated that I was present at a conference of road boards when the amendment was agreed to. The matter was discussed at a meeting of the Belmont Road Board, and they invited representatives of other road boards interested in the construction of a bridge across the Swan to meet them. Various proposals were made. It was proposed that portion of the traffic fees should be capitalised and that a toll should be levied upon traffic using the bridge. I was not invited to the conference, but subsequently I was asked to arrange for a deputation to the Minister. I wrote to the Minister and on the following day, the Press announced that the Minister intended to meet representatives of the road boards. Previous to that he had said it was intended

to construct a bridge and had propounded the method of financing it. I had nothing to do with the question, nor was I present when the matter was discussed. It is true I was in the Minister's office when he invited the road board representatives to discuss the site, but on the question of financing the scheme, I had no say. When criticism was levelled against the Minister on the ground that he was irregularly spending the money, it was not fair of him to connect me with the matter.

The Minister for Works: You were a member of the deputation.

Mr. HEGNEY: Yes.

The Minister for Works: That is what I said in the Chamber. Do you deny it?

Mr. HEGNEY: I was a member of the deputation to discuss the question of the bridge site.

The Minister for Works: I explained how the money was to be raised.

Mr. HEGNEY: I had no say in that matter; I took no part in the discussion. When the Bill is introduced I shall support an amendment along those lines. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) raised the question of providing allotments for men. That might be a feasible proposition, but it would take a long time to solve our present difficulties by such means. I know many workers who have taken up small areas adjacent to the towns in which they live in the hope of improving their status and supplementing their income, but I am afraid they have not been successful.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. HEGNEY: I know of many workers on small allotments in the metropolitan area, but because of the difficulties under which they have to live they are not able to develop the blocks. Most of them dwell in improvised huts or camps as they cannot pay the town rents. Their position is precarious. Those who have small families and have accepted part-time employment in the country have great difficulty in making ends meet. They have to leave their families in tents and huts with scarcely any protection. They have protested against being singled out and forced to go away on less than the basic wage. The mandate has gone forth that they have to accept that employment or be deprived of sustenance. That is not a solution of the problem. The

workers and the farmers have borne the brunt of the situation. The banks have not performed their part as it was alleged they would do under the amending legislation. The wages of the workers have been forced down almost to the lowest ebb, but the interest rates through which the banks derive their large profits have not been reduced. The Premiers, many of them, were not satisfied with the efforts put forth by the banks, and wanted an inquiry made to see how far the banks had carried out their portion of the Plan. The unemployed meanwhile have been forced to accept sustenance, and such conditions as are offering. We find the farmers at the Primary Producers' Conference discussing ways and means of abolishing present-day conditions with a view to improving their own lot. Reference has been made to those men who have been out of work for long periods. Unfortunately for those people they cannot participate in any Government work that is available if there are in the family people bringing in sufficient revenue to put them on the 7s. a week basis. They are likely to remain out of work for a long time yet. No doubt the Government are anxious to relieve the expenditure on unemployment. They want to get the men off sustenance and on to any kind of work. Unemployment is a world-wide problem. Much is expected from the Ottawa conference and the other conference recently held in Lausanne, but to date not much has emanated from either. The outlook is not a hopeful one. Because the monetary system is at fault, those who are producing the wealth of the country, the workers, are condemned to a bare existence. Recently in Canada the farmers and the labour organisations came together to consider the problems confronting them. They came to the conclusion that until there was production for use and not for profit there would be no equitable distribution of this world's goods. If that could be brought about, conditions generally would be immeasurably improved. We are a long way, however, from that ideal. Our farmers and workers are on much the same level. They are part and parcel of the system and are experiencing great difficulties. I hope when the next Premiers' Conference and the next meeting of the Loan Council are held, the Leader of the Government will do the utmost he can for the relief of the unemployed in this State.

MISS HOLMAN (Forrest) [7.40]: I owe a duty to my constituents to touch briefly upon the question of unemployment. Throughout this debate we have been seeking information. Some of us have sought it for weeks past in connection with various phases of the matter. All that we get from the daily press is the remark that the debate is full of abuse and signifies nothing but an enormous waste of time. In this morning's leading article it is stated that not one constructive thought had been advanced during the debate from this side of the House. We are doing our best to give constructive thought to the question, to do what we can for our people. Much has been said in the newspapers about the number of persons who are being taken into employment. I am sure that the unemployed themselves are wondering whether they are dreaming they are employed when they read all this about getting back to work. The Government seem to think that because these people are getting a small amount of money or rations, they are being employed. I call that denying them the right to live decently in this wonderful State. Some people have a hard task to get any money at all. At the best it is only a miserable allowance that is given to them, and most of them are sick at heart before it is granted. The timber industry is suffering more than any other. The Forrest electorate used to be a thriving one, with mills here and mills there employing hundreds of people. It is now almost down and out. To-day I received a letter from Nanga Brook saying that the mill had again closed down. It was closed down on the 10th February after a few weeks, opened again in the middle of June, and is now again closed. The Mornington mill worked for a few weeks but is now shortening hands. Last week 19 men were put off and the bush is not being worked to its full capacity. The only mills that are continuing are the State mills where the men are working part time. This proves that the South-West is suffering great disabilities. We have nothing to thank anyone for. The relief rates that are being paid in connection with forestry work are not sufficient to employ everyone. Many people can get nothing at all. I refer particularly to units over the age of 14. Recently an allowance was made in some cases for one unit over that age. But in

the great majority of cases where there are children over the age of 14 years, those children eat up the food that has been allowed, on the lowest possible margin of 7s. per unit per week, for the younger members and the parents of the family. We know that there are in this State a few camps where single men are getting 25s. 2d. per week for their work. There is not a man in the South-West who does not want work. There is not a man in the South-West who is not willing to work for anything he gets, who would not rather work than take what he considers charity—I do not consider it charity. In the good times these people did their best to keep the State going; they did their work, and met their obligations. In these bad times, when they can no longer do that, it is not charity for the State to allow them 7s. or thereabouts per week to feed them. I consider that we are entitled to a little more expedition in dealing with cases. I have heard other members say here to-day and yesterday and the day before that they were quite satisfied with the courtesy they received from the departments concerned. I, too, am quite satisfied with their courtesy. I am sure the departmental officials do everything they possibly can to help; but in many cases what they can do to help is not nearly enough, and moreover is too long delayed.

Mr. Raphael: Courtesy does not fill stomachs.

Mr. Panton: It is the only thing the officials have to give.

Miss HOLMAN: Courtesy does not feed. I said I was quite satisfied with the courtesy of the two departments. Now, there is the office in Barrack-street, and there is the Minister in the old post office building, and there is the office in Marquis-street, and in addition there is the Messengers' Bureau; and between the lot of them we meet with terrific delays in obtaining what the people ask for. Even when we get what we apply for, the people for whom we apply meet with additional delays in receiving their notice. I mention the delays particularly again. The Minister is as much to blame in connection with these delays as anyone else is. We had a deputation to the Minister for Unemployment Relief yesterday three weeks, on the 27th July—a very large deputation, including the member for Colli-

(Mr. A. Wilson), the member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers), the member for Sussex (Mr. Barnard), the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty), a union organiser, a consul for a foreign country, and a union secretary; and with it all we have not yet received an answer. I do not know whether the Minister concerned intends to follow the example of another Minister and answer us from the floor of the House, but I would like the Government to know that we do not take deputations just for the sake of taking them, or just for the sake of seeing our names in print. We want an answer some time or other. We go to the Minister and ask him about certain things. We have letters from our constituents, and interviews with our constituents. We are approached by people who are hungry, who want satisfaction, want allowances or consideration in some form or other; and we want an answer to give to those people. It is three weeks yesterday since we had that deputation to the Minister, and there has been no reply yet. I submit that we are entitled to an answer. I for one would like the Minister to give us an answer in regard to that deputation as soon as possible. Amongst the things we asked for was that there should be less centralisation. An hon. member to-day mentioned that people in the country are at a distinct disadvantage when asking for relief. That is the fact. I mentioned the Nanga Brook mill, which closed on the 10th February, having had a long Christmas holiday, and having worked for only a couple of weeks or so when it did start. Now, men who work on timber mills in this country are not overpaid. Generally they have large families. In the case of Nanga Brook, there had been single men on that mill out of work for months and months, kept and fed by their families at the expense of the other members of the families. For those single men no sustenance could be obtained, because certain members of the family were working. When the mill closed down those single men had nothing, and the families that had been keeping them up to then had nothing. Although the mill closed on the 10th February and applications for assistance were made as speedily as possible, it was not until practically the middle of May that those men got the sustenance to which they were entitled. When the Minister for Lands and I visited Nanga Brook in the beginning of April, our attention was drawn to the case of one family—man and

wife, and three children under the age of eight years, one of them only a few months old. For this little one special food, Lactogen or some such food, had to be bought at a cost varying from 6s. 3d. to 6s. 9d. per week. And that family was receiving the munificent sum of 21s. per week for five of them! Out of the 21s. just about one-third had to be spent on patent food for the baby. That was one case. On the 5th April I visited the office of the Unemployment Board and pointed out that this family, like others, was not getting ordinary, proper sustenance. I visited the department several times in connection with this particular case, and was told some time afterwards that an amount of 30s. per week had been approved of as from the 7th April. Naturally I wrote down and told the people. Indeed, I think I telegraphed, because the case was so important, that the extra money had been approved. To my wire I received a reply that they knew nothing about it, and that the money was not being paid. It was not until the middle of May that this family got the proper amount of sustenance. And other families at Nanga Brook were in a similar position. It was months and months after the single men were first mentioned to the Minister that they received any assistance. I asked the Minister myself whether he wanted the people in the bush to come to town to get faster treatment.

Mr. Withers: The Government started when the men came down.

Miss HOLMAN: Some of them came down, but the majority stayed on the mills. In return for their staying in their own places, the Minister has been sending too large a proportion of unemployed city dwellers into the country to take away the jobs. On some work between Perth and Pinjarra, where nearly 100 men were employed, only two men from the district found jobs. Other cases almost as bad could be mentioned. We do not want anything unreasonable, nor do we want our remarks, in this terrible position of unemployment that is striking at the very roots of our country, to be characterised as hot air and waste of money. They might represent waste of money to those who are not interested, but this discussion does not appear as waste of time or money to us. We feel that the single men could be treated better. The position as regards the single man is this:

If he goes into a camp, he of course gets his 25s. per week. If he stays at home with his family, his father may be allowed 7s. for one unit over 14 years of age, or he may not be allowed anything. Certainly not more than one such unit is allowed for. If the single man getting a little bit of sustenance finds a job, say two days' work in one week, returning him £1, he has to report that fact to the police and declare himself off sustenance. Then he is lucky if he can get on sustenance again in another six weeks. He has to live on that earned money until the department make all their investigations all over again. Take my own district for an example. There is a police constable in Dwellingup. I have no road boards in my district with the exception of Donnybrook. The Pinjarra and Drakesbrook Road Boards cover part of my electorate, and the Harvey and Marradong Road Boards cover other little bits. At this end of my electorate I have no road boards, and no head offices of road boards. As I mentioned, I have one police officer in Dwellingup. Now, this police officer has to inquire into every application for assistance made in the whole of the surrounding district. Warraming, for instance, is 17 miles from Dwellingup. People do not apply for sustenance until they have nothing; they know they have to become paupers before they can receive any assistance. They know that as long as they have anything at all they cannot get sustenance. So they wait until they are absolutely down and out before applying. Then they have to apply to the police officer at Dwellingup. From Nanga Brook there is no railway service and not even a car service to Dwellingup. The distance is nine miles over the hills. The people of Nanga Brook, to put in their applications for assistance, had to walk to Dwellingup, nine miles over the hills and nine miles back. At first they had to make that journey in order to get their ration orders. When we had the deputation to the Minister I mentioned this fact, and he said, "Oh, I believe people go hiking nine miles." Yes, hiking for pleasure, after having perhaps had work all the week, and having had good food, being able to buy good food. A man who is applying for assistance, and waiting for assistance, very often has not sufficient food to carry him over two days a week. There is no credit in the bush, I would have Ministers know. When there is no work, there is no

credit, or very little credit. Now the Nanga Brook men are out of work again, and I want no delay on this occasion. Those people have worked only seven weeks this year, and they have had to put in applications for sustenance again. On their application forms they have had to state how much they earned. In view of the small amounts given for sustenance and relief, it may seem a lot when a man says that he has earned £21 in the last seven weeks. But £21 does not go very far when people have been out of work, when they have to keep themselves and to buy a little clothing. Last year the people of Western Australia assisted the distressed people in the country districts in a great many directions. But this year there is not so much assistance available. Everyone is feeling the pinch now. All second-hand clothing and that which is of no further use to the owner, has been given away, and there are not the same resources this year from which supplies can be drawn. Even the sewing circles are not able to give as much assistance as formerly. People living in the bush require clothing, shoes and bedding. Children cannot go to school, in many instances, because they have not sufficient clothing. I have seen them sleeping under bags. Some people may say that bags are warmer than newspapers to sleep under, but personally I prefer bedding to bags. The member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) and others mentioned that people on the land were suffering considerably, and I can endorse the statements. I know of instances of people who have been allowed £1 a week, being in absolute poverty, and not able to feed themselves. Some of them own a little land and, with £1 a week only at their disposal, cannot do anything with it. They cannot do any fencing, nor can they purchase manures or seed. They can neither feed nor clothe themselves. If the Government were really desirous of helping them, they would make available such assistance as would enable them to develop their properties and feed and clothe themselves. I know of one man in the bush who is a registered bee-keeper. He has a number of hives but he has not secured any return from them for over 12 months. His position is partly due to the fact that the Forests Department have allowed to be taken out gums, the flowers of which were necessary for the bees to feed on. That man cannot secure any assistance because the department claim he is in receipt of an income from his bees. He has not had

any income from them. Until that man gets rid of his bees and makes himself absolutely destitute by throwing away what he has worked up over a period of years, he will be without any assistance from the department.

Mr. Kenneally: That is characteristic of the whole B business.

Hon. P. Collier: Not "bee."

Miss HOLMAN: The deputation I previously mentioned discussed the position of single men who were given 7s. a week; we appealed for sustenance for children over 14 years of age, and drew attention to the position of 23 men who were unemployed at Holyoake. We also suggested a definite plan regarding firewood supplies. We have nothing to tell our people, because we have received no reply whatever to our representations. The people in the country districts suffer many disadvantages compared with those in the city.

The Minister for Lands: We will have to form a country party to look after country interests only.

Miss HOLMAN: The Labour Party will do for the country.

Mr. Millington: It is all a matter of geography.

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister's Country Party are organising against the Nationalists.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. P. Collier: They will be fighting each other next election.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask hon. members to keep order.

Miss HOLMAN: To indicate another disadvantage of life in the country districts, I know of children in my electorate who have won scholarships entitling them to attend the Bunbury High School. A good education is a great asset for a child, and the State has always gone to some pains to provide adequate educational facilities for those able to take advantage of them. As a result of examinations, children attending country schools have gained scholarships entitling them to a high school education, but have not been able to avail themselves of the privilege. Their parents have not been able to afford to send them to the High School at Bunbury. I will quote another instance and I will admit that it is an extreme one. It will indicate to what extent departmental delays affect people in the country districts. I asked the department to provide pre-natal assistance for a mother. I under-

stood that, in certain instances, allowances were provided for mothers to enable them to purchase milk to gain extra nourishment. I was told that such a course was not adopted, but when I gave a number of instances in which it had been done, I was told that the assistance might be made available. I pressed for the payment of the money. A month elapsed. I was still pressing for the money to be paid. Then I received a letter from the department asking for a medical certificate as to the woman's condition. By that time the new baby was a fortnight old. Yet the department was still considering an application for pre-natal assistance! I was annoyed, but I thought that the mother would receive an extra allowance of at least 7s. a week, but that was not to be. The baby was born on the 14th April; and on or about the 23rd April I was asked to procure the medical certificate. Ultimately the extra 7s. allowance was made available as from the 30th May! That was not so bad for the department, which is usually good at delaying matters.

Mr. Panton: Perhaps they were waiting for the child to cut its teeth.

Miss HOLMAN: More likely they were waiting for it to come to Perth to tell them it had been born. I will not labour the position, but I want to make it clear that we desire replies to our requests and where our applications are to be agreed to, we want effect given straight away. Until recently, at any rate, people would receive notices that certain amounts would be made available. I would wire to the constituents concerned accordingly, and then I would receive letters saying that they had not been able to get the money. Then I would have to go and see the department and get the matters fixed up. There is another annoying phase. If the payment of an amount is approved as from a certain date and the money is not received by the person to whom it was to be made available, that payment goes by the board. It is not paid retrospectively. There seems to be this delay in Perth to enable the Department to save a few shillings. We do not want that sort of treatment. The Minister for Works told us last night how much money had been spent by his department and how many engineers and men were working. What he disclosed may have been all right from the Minister's point of view, but I have had some experience of

the working of his departmental officials that is not very favourable to them.

Mr. Raphael: He did not convince even himself.

Miss. HOLMAN: The "West Australian" seemed to think that he convinced everyone.

Mr. Marshall: I think some reporters are very much overpaid at £3 a week.

Hon. P. Collier: Don't blame the reporters; blame the paper!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are not discussing reporters.

Miss HOLMAN: In the matter I wish to ventilate, I do not blame the Government because, immediately the facts were brought under the notice of the Acting Premier, he had the matter rectified. In the meantime, however, people had been living in a pool of water for more than a week. The whole of the occupants of a camp had been shifted from Ludlow to this side of Brunswick. Last night the Minister read a list of engineers and officers engaged on work in his department, and I have no hesitation in saying that whoever was responsible for the camp this side of Brunswick, cannot in my opinion, justify his claim to the title of either engineer or officer. The whole of the people in the camp had 24 hours' notice to move from Ludlow to Brunswick. They were piled into a train and arrived at Brunswick late in the afternoon. When they reached their destination, nothing was ready for them. A large number of them had to sleep in an open hall on a cement floor. It was raining heavily at the time. Men were still waiting at 9.30 p.m. to get bedding and clothing sorted out for their wives and children so that the latter could go to sleep. There were 41 children altogether in the camp. There was one family of nine and the father took possession of a house and placed his family there. I do not blame him. The remaining 32 children had to sleep in the open hall on the cement floor. On the following day—it was a Friday—the people were ordered to move, and they had to spend the day in building camps. Then they had to sit up all night waiting for the tents and camps to blow down. By Sunday most of them had been blown down, and they had to be rebuilt or re-set up. On the Monday, the men asked that the camp should be shifted from that site. It was a clay plain and was full of water. At every step, water oozed up through the

ground. To give the Committee some indication of how bad the conditions were in that field, I will inform them that it was a block shown to the Minister for Lands as good summer land, and as furnishing evidence of how the area retained moisture in summer. Yet the departmental officials put those people on that field in the depth of winter.

Mr. Kenneally: Perhaps that was where the Attorney General launched his boat.

Miss HOLMAN: The reason the men were put there was that the water was laid on. I will admit that the water was there. It was everywhere that one could see. They had a 5-ft. drain there, and it was carrying 4 feet of water after two days of rain. Yet the people had to walk a quarter of a mile and carry buckets across to where the water was laid on. They asked to be removed, but they did not get any satisfaction. I may say that the first load of furniture to go into the place was bogged, so there was no excuse; everyone knew what the place was like. On the Tuesday I went down, and I spent the whole of Wednesday in the camp. I found there a big bare field with a few old ring-barked trees. The conveniences were of the most primitive. The very sewage could not be buried deep enough, but would come floating up again in the water. The floors of the tents were so wet that gravel with which to cover them was carted six miles. There were no bushes handy, so branches of trees were brought from miles away in order to make breakwinds. The women had to use bits of wire and ropes to strengthen the tents and keep them in position. While I was there the cattle were eating the breakwinds. I am not blaming the cattle for that, but I do wish to show the way the money was wasted in bringing truck loads of gum branches from miles away to make breakwinds for the camp. In the same way the money was wasted in bringing gravel for six miles in order to cover the floors of the tents. That gravel was piled up in heaps in front of each tent, and the men had to carry it in in buckets. Think of what could have been done with the money thus wasted if only some inquiry had been made before the people were put there. I took photographs of the camp, showing the water around and inside the tents. For even after the gravel was put down the water seeped up through it. The women were wetfooted all day, and

children had to be kept in bed in order to remain dry. Indeed some of the children had to sleep with their parents because not the whole of the tent could be kept dry. New flies were asked for and hessian was brought along and used as flies over the tents, but it was so thin as to be useless, and the rain ran right through it. In the end they shifted that camp. I came back to town and complained to the Deputy Premier, who saw the Minister for Works, and, as I say, the camp was shifted. Now they have taken the children to a site five miles away from the nearest school, and so they cannot attend school. The tents were all old, yet each family had to pay 6d. for the bedroom tent and 1s. each for the other tents. Men without wives had a single tent each, but the water was through and all around them. I never saw such a place. It would be a good field in which to keep frogs or grow water lilies, but I do not know of any other use for it. It shows how some money has been wasted by the Public Works Department. The people in that camp had been living in other camps for about 18 months, so they did not complain easily. They did not want anything extraordinary. Because of the wet weather when they went to this camp they were not able to work, and those with insufficient money to cover their allowance for the week had to go short. About three of them had enough to their credit for the week, but the rest had not. Piece work has been referred to, but I say it is not altogether piece work. In many cases it is task work. People in the Forests Department ballot for blocks. In some cases there is no ballot, and the block is just given to a person. I am informed that whereas in some cases 12 acres were given to two men to cut in a fortnight, in other cases 88 acres of the same class of country were given to two men to cut in a month, and the block has to be cut for the allowance, no matter how long it takes. Some men are not used to axe work, and allowance should be made for them. In one mill centre all except four or five are on the relief amount of pay. I do not know why those four or five are not given an opportunity to earn money. Some of them have worked for their living all their lives, and why they should be barred from getting the extra relief, I do not know. As I said before, the mills have had a very hard time. At Jarrahdale, for instance, the mill has not been opened for a couple of years. During the time the mill has been closed the

men have been on relief rates for only a very short period. In another part of the South-West, down in the Sussex electorate, the men have had three months' relief rate in 28 months. Those men are working hard and wearing out their clothes and boots. When they get their money and have to replenish their stocks, they are taking the food out of their children's mouths by doing so. Yet in this wintry weather they cannot be expected to go out there in the same old rags, for obviously after a couple of years their wardrobes are becoming very slender indeed. I strongly resent the statement that we on this side are talking hot air and rubbish, and wasting time and money. This matter is most important to us. All we want is consideration and information. We are entitled to that. I do not propose to delay the House any longer, although there is a great deal more I could say, and I have hundreds of letters which I could read. Of the several cases I have mentioned only one is an isolated case. I hope that before the debate closes Ministers will give us more information, that they will not try to set themselves up as tin gods and merely throw to us lists of figures showing how many persons are employed. We know, of course, that they are not employed at all, but are merely working out their sustenance. A lot more could be done than is being done. We do not wish to criticise unfairly. All that we want is justice, and if it will do any good I am prepared to talk until we get it.

Mr. RAPHAEL (Victoria Park) [8.27]: After listening to the Attorney General and the Minister for Works putting quotations before the House, I feel that they call for repudiation in the strongest terms by those who know the conditions as they are, and who represent the people being downtrodden by the present Government. The funny little story the Attorney General used as an analogy last evening calls for the strongest criticism. It was utterly ridiculous for the Attorney General to suggest that the unemployed were merely a few castaways drifting in a boat in want of water. It must be realised that this country is producing many times the quantity of commodities necessary to the keeping together of the human body, so it is absurd for the Attorney General to suggest that a drop of water is all that is wanted. Western Australia to-day is exporting many times her requirements, and to suggest that we are reduced to half a

dozen cupfuls of water is ridiculous. The Minister for Works offered a reply to the various deputations that have waited upon him and upon the Premier. The Labour Party, who took those deputations along, carefully ascertained the facts before going to the Minister. The Minister was afraid to reply to those people, but he came here and made a statement which I claim to have been false. He gave the lie direct to the men who had stated their conditions there. But it would have been more manly if the Minister had replied to the deputation when they waited on him. Frequently have I gone to different works and investigated the conditions under which the men are living. The men in the Harvey camps are provided with cooking places, but for the men on the roads and on part time no such provision is made. We have the assurance from the Premier, through the agency of the Press, when so persistently booms and enlogises him, that the hospital tax will be raised to 6d. in the near future. Perhaps the payment of £1 over sustenance is a scheme introduced by the Government to raise money for themselves. I am not going to join with other members of the Opposition in criticism of the Federal Government for their action in imposing a check upon the State Government. I would rather praise the Federal Government for their foresight in realising that, but for their precautions, the State Government might make a bigger mess of spending the money than they have done in the past. There is no doubt that the lesson was learned by the Federal Government from Mr. Hill, of South Australia, who once belonged to our ranks, but has now gone to another party. Mr. Hill has been under the guidance of a board and has not been allowed to think for himself. The Federal Government have realised that the minds of our Ministers run along somewhat similar lines and have appointed Sir Charles Nathan and Mr. Law to prevent a repetition of the mistakes made in the past. I have had to deal with many of the men who have come from the group settlements, men broken-hearted and in distressing circumstances. I have had to represent their cases to the Unemployment Board and have even gone to the Minister. Yet members of the Country Party say that settlers who have left their holdings should not be entitled to consideration. I have seen details of the returns obtained from some of those hold-

ings. Evidently the Government expected the settlers to keep a wife and family on £1 a week. I should like Ministers to try to keep their families on £1 a week. They would starve on it. The Government, in effect, say that if the men will not accept the £1 a week over sustenance, they will not be directly penalised. The Minister for Works told us last evening that the men were satisfied. A demonstration of 7,000 men on the Esplanade unanimously condemned the proposal, and yet the Minister tells us that the unemployed are accepting the conditions laid down without protest.

The Minister for Works: Five hundred accepted on the following day.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Only because the Government have threatened to starve the women and children; otherwise the men would not have accepted the conditions. In Victoria Park about 850 men are registered and they have asked me whether, in the event of their refusing to accept the conditions, the Government would be likely to carry out their threat and leave the women and children to starve. Anyone who would treat the women and children in that way is no man at all. Many of the unemployed are objecting to country work which involves living in a tent because they are not physically fit to do it. Last week the Minister was informed of an old man who had been forced to go to the country and had died from the effects of being compelled by the ganger to do more than he was capable of doing. The Minister does not deny that. The Government have adopted the policy that all men, no matter what their trade or calling, must accept work in the country. Yet they expect to get efficient work from them. They are certainly taking steps to try to get results. They have put into operation the piecework system—as rotten a system as ever was adopted. They get the men to go to the country for £1 over sustenance. When the men arrive on the job they are told that there is certain work to be done and that they will get a certain price for doing it. The Minister said that all the men were satisfied and were getting more than a fair deal from the Government. A man of 63, who is receiving 7s. a week, was forced to go to the country and he has written me as follows:—

I do not wish to dishearten you, but this is about the worst undertaking I have tried. There is no possible hope of buying clothes or anything else out of this job. The ganger

has given us certain work to do and we have been on it five days and about half of it is done. When the whole of it is done, we will be entitled to £1.

That man of 63 is going to get £1 for ten days' work. He went to the country under the scheme for single men at 25s. 2d. a week, less the many deductions that the Minister ensures are made. The Minister told us that the statements of deputations and the speeches from this side of the House were so much hot air. I for one will not stand by without protesting when the unemployed are victimised. He told us that the whole of the men in the Myalup and Stonehouse camps are satisfied, and that a lot of the dissatisfaction arose when the Leader of the Opposition inspected those camps. Let the Minister recall the different reforms that have been introduced since the Leader of the Opposition visited the camps. A few weeks ago the Minister told us that everything in the garden was lovely. Then a strike occurred and the Government began to take notice. I assure the Government that the unemployed are definitely opposed to the system of part-time work now operating. Still, we hope that in about seven months the present rotten Government will be deposed and will be succeeded by a Government who will give humane treatment to downtrodden people. I appeal to the Minister to try to adopt a more humane attitude. If he understood the position he would not vest such wide powers in the gangers. He has made the gangers absolute taskmasters and the unemployed cannot protect themselves. The men go to the country with the idea that they will receive £1 a week over sustenance. When they arrive the ganger takes up a pick and marks out a job in ground that is not too hard saying "That is worth so much." When the men have carried on for a week or two and find that they cannot make anything out of it, the ganger offers an extra 2s. 6d. I ask the Minister to exercise stricter supervision. He should visit the jobs and see that the men are given a fair deal. I wish to mention one bad case that has come under my notice. It should arouse the sympathy of returned soldiers on the Government side. An old Mons soldier who, according to the report from the Record Office in England, had suffered severe gun-shot wounds in both sides, has a semi-permanent job. He has two sons as big as I am and a daughter aged about

22. The man is able to work about two-thirds of the year and I believe he receives £3 11s. 8d. a week. I have applied to the department for work for the sons and daughter, but unsuccessfully. The man, who has been in Australia for about 14 years, is almost an invalid and receives no Army pension. Yet he is compelled to work to keep his sons and daughter, who are much better able to work than he is. The Government should consider the unemployed on their merits. The Minister for Works quoted New South Wales. I was disappointed that he did not also quote Fiji and Siam. In New South Wales a child is entitled to relief until it reaches the age of 21 years, but the humane Government in the State, about whom the Attorney General spoke last night, denies assistance to a child on reaching the age of 14 years. I hope the Government will realise that even if a child does reach the age of 14, he is entitled to be fed. The Minister for Railways has a queer idea of his responsibilities. The Railway and Tramway Unions are being cited before the Arbitration Court to show cause why they should not revert to the 48-hour week. If the application succeeds, the Minister will be able to transfer about 30 tramwaymen and 150 railwaymen who are now on the dole into the two departments, and thus throw more men out of work. We also find the Government applying their policy to private enterprise. They have reduced wages themselves and have flouted the awards of the court. The cement workers at Rivervale are to be discharged and re-employed again at £1 a week above the sustenance rates.

The Minister for Works: That is not correct.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The member for Caning has not yet voiced any disapproval of the suggestion that money should be spent in the country districts rather than in certain necessary works in the metropolitan area. I refer particularly to the lower Victoria Park school. The Attorney General had the decency to inspect it recently, and found that it was a foot deep in water. It was probably from that school he got the idea of the boat and cups of water. He agreed that the school was in bad order, and that something must be done.

The Attorney General: You do not keep up to date. Provision has already been made for the work to be done. Why did

you not make a law about it three years ago?

MR. RAPHAEL: The condition of the school has been getting worse ever since the Minister came into office. It is like pouring water on a duck's back to bring matters under the notice of the Government. There are men of mature age who are precluded from doing a day's work because some members of their family are already in employment. The first intimation these people have of the attitude of the Government towards them is that they are put into gaol because of their efforts to get work. I trust the Government will allow everyone the right to live and the right to work.

MR. PANTON (Leederville) [8.50]: In the course of his outburst last night the Attorney General asked whether members on this side of the House desired preference to be given to those who were in a state of destitution. I am sorry he was so excited that he did not give us an interpretation of the word "destitution." As president of the relief committee in the biggest electorate, numerically, in the State, as a member of the Perth Hospital committee, and chairman of the institution which is looking after the blind, I get a good idea of the meaning of "destitution." When the Attorney General threw that jibe across the floor, I should have been glad of his views concerning destitution. The present system has brought about some remarkable anomalies. In the eyes of the department, once a man obtains sustenance he is no longer destitute. Destitution is a question of degree and there are numerous anomalies concerning it. Those who in the view of the department or the Minister are in a state of destitution, and are not getting sustenance, are in a position to obtain work of some description, and there are those who are unable to get either work or sustenance, but who are in a still greater state of destitution. Anyone who takes a practical interest in the effort to relieve distress must know of scores of families in every industrial centre who, owing to the regulations, are in a real state of destitution and are unable to obtain any relief except through the relief committees. I could quote numerous anomalies that have occurred as a result of the present system. Of all the incidents the following struck me as the most humorous: Last week an able-bodied man of 63 years of age and weighing about 14 stone came to my door. He looked the picture of

health and was tall and broad-shouldered. He had three hefty young fellows with him aged 22, 25 and 27. He wanted to know if I considered that after he had reared three hulking sons of the description of the three young fellows, he was entitled to be sent to Wanneroo in order to continue keeping them. I replied they ought to be doing their share. This position has been brought about because he and his wife were receiving 14s. a week in sustenance. The three sons were willing to work, and were ashamed to have to loaf on their father. They were unable to get sustenance because the mother and father were already in receipt of it, and, because they were not getting sustenance, they were unable to do the job their father was obliged to do. I believe the officers of the department saw the joke, and sent the young fellows to Wanneroo instead of the old man.

The Minister for Lands: Mistakes like that can happen.

Hon. P. Collier: But it is the policy.

MR. PANTON: I looked upon it as a huge joke. I am trying to show the anomalies that continually occur. The pathetic side of the question is demonstrated by a young fellow who came to my place from the other side of Charles-street. He had been at Wanneroo and was willing to work anywhere. But he had a wife, and three children under the age of 11. His wife became mentally affected and had to go to the Claremont Asylum. Quite naturally, this young man wanted to get a job in the metropolitan area so that he could look after his children. Everything possible was done to get him a job there. I interviewed the officers of the department, the Minister, and members of the board. The Minister said he could not deal with individual cases. The officers said that they had already afforded help to the member for East Perth in connection with a bad case, that a deputation had since come from the East Perth unemployed, and that they were not going to do that sort of thing any more. Because of that happening, they were willing to force this young man back to Wanneroo, just as if they did not care what happened to the children. When I told the man there was no job available in Perth and that he would have to go to Wanneroo, he said the only thing for him to do was to notify the Child Welfare Department that there were three uncared-for children for them to look after. He was prepared to keep them wherever they were, but could not look after them from

Wanneroo. I could quote innumerable cases showing the absurdity of the anomalies that are constantly cropping up. A single man came here this afternoon and sent in for me. He told me that he had been prospecting. I am, of course, giving his side of the case; Mr. Macartney may have quite another side.

The Minister for Lands: Very frequently there is another side.

Mr. PANTON: Certainly; but the cases I have already quoted are absolutely genuine. This young man has been on the fields prospecting, and has taken out three crushings, none of which paid. He came back, jumping the rattler, as he put it, to Geraldton. Unable to find work there, he again jumped the rattler back to Perth. He has been here nine days, and because he left the remarkably rich district of Yilgarn-Coolgardie, as he puts it, he is not allowed to get sustenance here. He came to see me about the matter. I do not know what Mr. Macartney will say about it to-morrow. I am spending practically every hour of the day in dealing with such cases and trying to secure some relief for them.

The Minister for Lands: Who was the officer that dealt with the case of the man who had three grown-up sons?

Mr. PANTON: That case, like the others, was dealt with according to regulation. I have nothing to say against the officers. I have received nothing but courtesy from officers who are carrying out a very difficult job indeed.

The Minister for Lands: The treatment of that case was not usual. I should like to know the name of the officer who dealt with it.

Mr. PANTON: There are only three officers in the department—Smith, Brownlie and Macartney.

The Minister for Lands: Then it was one of the three?

Mr. PANTON: I am not making any complaint whatever against the officers. I am complaining about the Government's stupid regulations.

The Minister for Lands: There was a want of common sense in dealing with that case.

Mr. PANTON: That is just the question I am coming to now. the question of common sense. On every deputation I have attended, the Minister has repeatedly refused to deal with individual cases. I do

not blame him for that, as he has a big job; but every argument that has been put up here during the last three nights has been an argument in favour of a responsible Minister being appointed to do the job by itself. We have been asking that for weeks past. The Minister has the responsibility of dealing with all such cases to-day. Neither Mr. Macartney, nor Mr. Brownlie, is responsible to this House. The Minister sitting here is responsible. He may be in a position to do the job, but he is certainly delegating his duties. He is at the same time Minister for Railways and Tramways, for Mines, for Forests, and goodness knows what else. That fact shows that there is plenty of room for a Minister to deal with the unemployed position alone. We find anomalies. Then we go to the department, which is faced with regulations. I have never once asked the department to break a regulation, if its officers are unable to put me through to the Minister, or unable to get him to depart from the regulations. No member of Parliament has the right to ask a civil servant to break regulations. The Minister informs us that he has appointed a board. Where is this board? Perhaps I should say I am not now speaking of the two gentlemen appointed to represent the Commonwealth. I am speaking of the State board, of which I understand Mr. Bennett was appointed chairman. I further understand that Mr. Bennett is out of the State, and has been for some time. Further, I see by the Press that a member of the board, Mr. Pullen, has been appointed to the very important position of Chief Inspector of the Agricultural Bank for the South-West.

Hon. P. Collier: A very lucky man.

Mr. PANTON: I want to know whether it is proposed, in view of that appointment, to continue Mr. Pullen as a member of this board. There remains Mr. Brockman. Is Mr. Brockman going to be the board? Or is a representative board to be appointed? I am not particular whether we have the Minister or a board; but if we are going to have a board, let us have a board with some authority, with some power to do things, and not simply a board to accept regulations from Cabinet or from the Minister, because a member of such a board would simply say, "There is the regulation, and I cannot step outside it." If the present system is to continue, there

must be someone with sufficient authority, if necessary, to say, "We will deal with this case or that case on its merits." That is not the position now. Judging by my not inconsiderable experience of the department, there is a tendency on the part of the officers to be fearful of doing something which will set up a precedent and bring criticism about their ears, or perhaps obtain for them a rap over the knuckles from somebody higher up. Officers employed on such a difficult job should have available to them somebody to whom they can appeal for immediate and definite rulings what to do with this case or that. We have had a trial of the present system, and people with experience of it know exactly where it is leading to. We shall be continually up against these troubles. I do not wish to be always running down to the department after making an appointment with some man or woman to meet him or her in the afternoon or the next day and say, "I have done my best, but the department will not do anything." If some definite policy were laid down, we should say in such cases, "There is the definite regulation, you cannot get past it, and it is no use my going down to the department for you." But under present conditions the department shift from that position, and so the representatives of the people do not know where they are in the matter. Now I wish to deal with another section of the community, and I hope I shall not be told that I am putting up sob stuff. There is to-day a section of the community who, owing to the regulations governing destitution, are being sadly penalised—the returned soldiers in receipt of a small pension. To-day the returned soldier who is married but without children, and is receiving a pension of 14s. or 15s. per week, is not entitled to sustenance. That has been definitely decided. The Minister clearly stated to a deputation which I attended that sustenance was for cases of distress, and that where a man's income, by way of soldier's pension or otherwise, was equal to or more than the sustenance to which he would be entitled, he was not to get any sustenance. We bowed to that ruling, but the unfortunate part is that the returned soldier, because he is getting a small pension for disability suffered during the war—and for going to the war he received loud cheers from many quarters—is not only debarred from obtaining sustenance to assist him, but also debarred from

getting a job, not being on sustenance. Could there be anything more absurd? The man and his wife are penalised because he was disabled while doing his duty to his country, and now he is further debarred from getting a job at all. The Attorney General said that what we propose would amount to giving the man a preference over others in a state of destitution. As one who knows something about soldier pensions, I say the man in most cases would not be getting a pension if it did not cost him the bulk of that pension to ameliorate his disability. There are to-day 1,500 men on the unemployment register at the R.S.L. I know this because I am a member of the Amelioration Board, which meets twice a week to try to relieve the distress of these men and their families. Those 1,500 men are not entitled to be registered for Government work. I say there is nothing to prevent the Government from doing justice to those men. I am not asking for sustenance on their behalf, but I do claim for them the right to be registered for work, so that they will have the same chance of being picked up as other men have. Surely that is not an unfair or unreasonable request to make. It has been made time after time. We have had deputations to the Minister, and have thrashed the matter out in various committees. We have approached responsible authorities without getting anywhere. To-night I appeal to the Government to give consideration to some of these questions. Let Ministers ask themselves is it fair that these men should be penalised simply because they have done something which they believed to be their duty. A good many figures have been thrown about the Chamber during the last two or three nights. I shall not continue that process, but I assert unhesitatingly that if the number of unemployed in Western Australia to-day is estimated on the number of men drawing sustenance, the figures are very far short of the true number of unemployed. There are families all over Leederville, at any rate, with a father unemployed and drawing sustenance, and very few of such families but have a son or two, or perhaps three sons, unemployed as well. But those sons, because they are not drawing sustenance, are not registered as unable to obtain employment. The Ministerial statistics do not accept those cases as unemployed, but they are well and truly unemployed. I go further than that. I will

give one case typical of cases that are numerous to-day. A little girl is employed and receives 25s. per week. Her father and her brother are both unemployed. Her brother is a man of about 27. He came to my place the other evening almost crying at the thought that he was unable either to be registered for employment or to obtain sustenance. He did not want sustenance, he wanted a job. As a single man he was prepared to go anywhere for work. But because his sister was bringing into the house more than the equivalent of the sustenance to which the family would have been entitled if she was not working, 21s., he was debarred from either. His position is the same as that of the returned soldier I have just quoted. And that is typical of scores of cases in Leederville, and what is typical of Leederville is typical of the State. These anomalies should be rectified, and a Minister giving the whole of his time to the job, and accepting the responsibility to this Parliament, could give a decision quick and lively on such a case when we took it along. A great deal has been said about the effect which the Government's scheme is having on industrial conditions. It goes without saying, I believe, that every day industrial conditions are being broken down. To-night's "Daily News" almost pictures the President of the Arbitration Court as in tears while trying to do his job. He was given an Act of Parliament which, a few years ago, everybody in this State said was the finest Arbitration Act in the world. Here we are with the court tied up in every direction, unable to move one way or the other because of the legislation introduced by the present Government. Apart from that, under the new scheme that has been advanced, with the agreement including that wonderful clause in which private employers are dictated to as to when and how they are to employ men, another undesirable position has been created. In branches of industry not governed by any industrial agreement or Arbitration Court award, the employers can do just what they like. In other directions, industry is covered by awards and agreements. I will cite three—the cement workers, the Hume pipe manufacturers and the filter workers. The men employed in those sections of industry belong to the Australian Workers' Union, of which I am a State President. I know something about the position. The Government say that the men must work under those

agreements in the manner Ministers desire, and I find the Government have been clever enough to find a way out. Instead of the men working for four or five months or for such period as the job lasts, they are required to work for two weeks, and then stand off for a week. Thus the Government have complied technically with the Arbitration Court award. They have done that by permitting a man to work for a week, and then the employer gives him notice that at the end of the next week he will be dismissed. That enables the employer to work the man for two weeks and then stand him down for another week. Wonderful work! After all the years that it has taken to build up the conditions that formerly applied, the Government have been able to find a way of setting them aside. Why are not the Government honest?

The Minister for Works: It was quite legal.

Mr. PANTON: It was miserably legal. Thousands of things that are done are legal, but they are immoral. Why are not the Government honest? Why do they not suspend the Arbitration Act instead of mutilating it?

The Minister for Works: Do you want us to do that?

Mr. PANTON: The Government can do it to-morrow if they choose. If they did so, it would be far more honest than their present attitude of mutilating and chopping the Act about. In my opinion, the industrialists of this State—and I know them pretty well—would agree that the Government were honest if they did suspend the Arbitration Act. That is more than the industrialists can say of the Government to-day. By means of technicalities, the Government have overcome awards and agreements. The Government could not attack industrial conditions much more if they did suspend the Arbitration Act. The workers would then at least know where they were. We would not be confronted with the necessity to fight technicalities in the Arbitration Court as we have to do now. But the Government do not contemplate such an attitude, because they know an election is looming. To adopt a drastic action such as I suggest, even though it would be the more honourable course, might achieve a result they do not desire next year. The Government must have a very poor opinion of the intelligence of the workers and of the people generally if they think they can go on fooling them all the time in the manner they are doing to-day. If the people

will show themselves content to be fooled after this latest episode, I will give them up as a bad job. I will say no more beyond making a final appeal to the Government to appoint a responsible Minister to take over the work relating to unemployment and allow the departmental officials an opportunity to carry out their duties as they should do; to give returned soldiers, who to-day are suffering disabilities because of their war service, which prevent them from even applying for a job, an opportunity to do so, and thus have those disabilities rectified; to afford the right to work to hundreds of young, strong, willing, single men, at present deprived of the opportunity to get sustenance or work because a sister may be earning a little more than the sustenance rate. Some people say the unemployed do not want work. We have the newspapers, and orators at swell dinners declaring that the dole system is building up a race of wasters. What are the facts to-day? There are thousands of young men eager to go into the country even at a miserable pittance of 25s. a week and yet they cannot get work. In all sincerity, I appeal to the Government to rectify some of the anomalies created by absurd regulations.

MR. F. C. L. SMITH (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [9.20]: Although a newly elected member of this House, I trust I have a true sense of the responsibility that rests upon representatives of the people at all times and more particularly at a time such as the present, when the population of the State appears to have out-run its actual population capacity. Particularly, too, at a time when thousands of wage earners cannot secure a job, in which the return for work will be a wage that will secure for them a decent standard of sustenance and a frugal standard of comfort. I was much surprised to learn that it is possible for the Government to introduce a Supply Bill covering a period of three months at a time when already six weeks of that period had expired. I was surprised to learn, too, that the Bill could make provision inclusive of a large sum of money from loan funds to be expended on works that the elected representatives of the people, apparently, will have no opportunity to discuss either regarding the amount to be spent, or the manner in which the works shall be carried out. I recollect the members of the Perth Chamber of Com-

merce on one occasion waiting upon the Premier and suggesting to him that when a Loan Bill was being discussed in this Chamber, the schedule of the Bill and the works contained therein should be discussed at the same time. I am in accord with the attitude adopted by the Chamber of Commerce. It may not be a very practical proposition. I lack experience in Parliamentary procedure, but I think members of the Perth Chamber of Commerce should know something about it. Particularly at such a time as the present, when loan money is being spent to relieve unemployment and the distress prevailing in our midst, when such funds are being spent for the purpose of endeavouring to alleviate the depression and is being spent ostensibly for the purpose of restoring public confidence and to create employment generally, the elected representatives of the people should have some opportunity to discuss those works and the manner in which they are to be carried out. Naturally, those of us who are making maiden speeches in this House, face the position with some trepidation and diffidence. I was much encouraged by the statement of the Attorney General last night in reply to some criticism. I had not anticipated hearing in this Chamber such a feeble, illogical utterance. I hardly expected to hear such a statement from a private member, much less from a Minister of the Crown. He attempted to draw an analogy between conditions existing at a time of famine and those obtaining through destitution existent in the midst of plenty. He claimed there was an analogy between the two positions, but, of course, there is none. I remember an English statesman once saying, "You can tax the last rag off a man's back and the last bite out of his mouth, without his knowing where it was coming from. His complaint would be not against high taxation but against bad times." I gained the impression from the Attorney General's utterance that apparently he is in the same category as those who would blame the bad times for present-day conditions. He spoke of having to pray to the Almighty for rain. If there was anything to be inferred from that statement, and in the analogy he endeavoured to draw, it is that we are forced—I cannot say to a logical conclusion—to the conclusion that he meant the widespread depression existing throughout the world to-day is the result, not of Government policy

or mismanagement, but of a dispensation of Providence. He also referred to the fact that members on the Opposition side of the House did not have a monopoly regarding interest in humanity. I know that the members on this side of the House have not a monopoly of that interest. All Governments have an interest in humanity according to their lights. No matter where you find them, they would all claim and all feel that their activities and the policy they were pursuing were in the best interests of humanity. But I would draw the attention of the Attorney General to the fact that there are on the earth to-day places that are carrying only one person to the square mile where in former times, with wiser policies and wiser administration, they were carrying 150 persons to the square mile. There are many places on the globe that at one time were carrying only one person to the square mile, but as the result of Government policy and administration they are now carrying 100 and even 150 persons to the square mile. I contend that the chief function of a Government is to so direct their policy that there will be an ever-increasing actual population capacity. When the population exceeds that actual population capacity, as it has done to-day in a period of depression, then it is the duty of the Government to try to lift the actual population capacity by public works that will increase that capacity of the country. I wish to cite an instance to illustrate my point. Egypt for many centuries was under the domination of a foreign Government. Up till 1857 the actual population capacity of that country never exceeded 2,000,000. But after the British went there and secured domination of the country, by wise administration, by a wise policy of building and the introduction of public utilities such as roads and railways, and the building of the Assuan Dam they within 30 years increased the actual population capacity of that country to 8,000,000. That is why I suggest that at a time like this if works are going to be carried out they should be undertaken with a view to creating value that can readily be put to use and will speedily be enhanced in the direction of creating employment in the various districts where they are carried out. I notice the Government are going to spend £33,000 in reforestation. I am not opposed to reforestation as a prin-

ciple. I think it is a very fine thing, and work that should be carried out at some time or other. But in this country and in many others men have become cranks in their advocacy of the necessity for reforestation in times when there was plenty of money available for that purpose and they could not get the Governments of the day to apply themselves to it. But to-day this Government evidently have a forestry sense, for they are going to spend £33,000 on this scheme out of which no value, no benefit, can arise for 40 or 50 years.

The Minister for Forests: I recall that my predecessor had a forest policy, too.

[*Mr. Panton took the Chair.*]

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I think that work is entirely unwarranted in a period of depression. We want work, such as the Harvey drainage scheme, that will make land available the value of which can be derived within a few years, and increase the population capacity of the country and make work much sooner than would any scheme of reforestation. What I am opposed to in respect of that scheme is its being carried out on a principle of sustenance work. In Great Britain we have had an Unemployed Workers' Relief Act since 1904, and these schemes of sustenance work have been dumped long ago. All the unemployed there for whom jobs cannot be found are on the dole. I am in favour of the principle of giving a dole to unemployed workers and endeavouring to use the money that is available for the purpose of finding full time employment at full wages for as many workers as can possibly be employed with that money. Sustenance work, in my opinion, is more degrading than is the dole. From any aspect in which it is viewed it is unsound: unsound economically and unsound generally from any point of view regarding the best interests of the country. It involves the expenditure of money for which no adequate return can possibly be expected. It impels the employment of men on works for which they are neither suited nor fitted. On such jobs it is impossible to exercise that discipline which would ordinarily prevail. It expects men without any incentive to give a good return in their labour. It carries a remuneration that is degrading and demoralising, and it denies the workers the ordinary

comforts of existence. And if they secure for themselves sufficient clothing with their remuneration, it denies them sufficient food to give them the strength to work. Further, it contributes nothing to the remedying of the depression or to the restoring of confidence generally, but ultimately will tend to accentuate the difficulties under which we are labouring to-day. On this point of sustenance work I wish to read an extract from a book entitled "The Growth of Nations," by W. Rose Smith, a man famed throughout the world as a writer on economics, and who expresses my view on this question of sustenance work in words that I could not myself employ. He says—

Naturally the man whose poverty and lack of bread are being exploited in the presumption that he will not work for ordinary rates of pay will do his best to justify that opinion where he sees no likelihood of redress. The grudging dole of municipal charity is notoriously pauperising in its effects on the recipient, and if for no other reason relief works should never be organised on an insufficient or charitable basis. The only possible relief lies in a full measure of employment at full pay, and for this purpose, as well as for the prevention of all real loss to the nation, the organisation must have a wider purpose than that of providing temporary relief works. It should deal with the whole field of employment.

That expresses my views on the subject. We have heard something about the Government providing work for all. I do not know that it is the function of a Government to provide work for all, but it is certainly the function of a Government so to order their policy that there shall be as much work available as possible, and that the work shall be of a reproductive nature and of a nature that is likely to afford facilities that will make for work in private enterprise. I want to say a few words in regard to the goldmining industry. Here is the best of the departments in the concern the Government are managing. It is the only industry in the State to-day that can really be said to be thriving: the only industry that can sell its product at a higher price than that prevailing prior to the depression; the only industry, also, that carries with it inherent possibilities for lifting the clouds of depression that have settled upon the community. But we find in the statement of financial returns published in the

"West Australian" recently that the Minister for Mines has spent £2,000 less this year in that department than was spent in 1929-30. I do not know whether the Minister prides himself on that achievement, but personally I think it connotes a policy that is the very antithesis of wise administration. When you have an industry that has such potentialities as has the goldmining industry, everything should be done by the Government for the purpose of encouraging and expanding that industry. Several years ago the Government of the day appointed a Royal Commissioner to inquire into the industry and make recommendations. That commissioner recommended the grouping of the mines and the building of new plants. In pursuance of that policy the mines are being grouped along the Golden Mile, and vast expenditure is being undertaken for the purpose of constructing new plants for the treatment of the ore. But right in the middle of this transit period we find the Government imposing increased burdens in the shape of increased water charges, just when the mines were carrying out a policy of endeavouring—despite the uncertainty of the exchange and gold bonus—to place the industry on a footing that would be payable if the price of gold should ever revert to £4 4s. 11d. per fine ounce. That was a very foolish move on the part of the Government, seeing that the companies were spending practically all their profits on the mines. Out of about £3,000,000 profit earned last year, only £53,000 was paid in dividends. All the rest went back into development and for the construction of new plant. In another direction, too, the Government have done things detrimental to the industry. I refer to the burdens that have been thrown on prospectors by the cutting out of rebates and concessions that were previously enjoyed. They were cut out because it was said there was a loss on State batteries, but apparently they were cut out without any consideration of the possibility of making good that loss by charging a little more for the crushing of parcels of high grade ore that were going through the batteries and retaining the rebates and concessions for the prospectors on lower grade propositions. That aspect of the State battery system should have been investigated before the men on low-grade propositions were deprived of the concessions previously given them. We have to realise that all the out-crops and all the

reefs showing in this State have been well prospected and well turned over. No possibility exists for another Golden Mile or another good mine, except by digging for it. The possibilities lie in the working of low-grade propositions—propositions that are low grade on the surface—and it is foolish policy to remove the incentive that the prospectors had to dig deeper in the hope that, after going down, better values might be found that will probably be lost for ever as a result of cutting out the concessions. I know a man who recently had a crushing from a place about 30 miles beyond Bulong. The Government formerly paid 1s. per ton per mile for every mile the ore was carted over the first five miles, but that payment has been reduced to 6d. It is not available to the man who crushes his ore at a private battery. The prospector in question took his ore to the Government battery at Kalgoorlie and found that he would be unable to get into the battery for five months. Consequently he had to go to a private battery; he could not afford to wait for five months to have his ore crushed. By going to the private battery, he was denied the rebate, which amounted to 12s. 6d. per ton. Had he got the rebate, he would have gone on with his prospecting show, but through being deprived of it, he gave the game up. There are many instances of a similar kind. We have to realise that no matter what outside influences may operate, such as the gold premium, exchange, the gold bonus, etc., the production of gold will always be limited by the mill capacity available. There is not a mine on the Golden Mile that can afford to raise and break more ore than it has crushing facilities to treat. Out in the open fields none of the prospectors can afford to break and raise more ore than there are facilities to treat. I say there are not adequate facilities for prospectors in this State. Although there was a marked increase in the gold production last year, the potential output of gold in this State, given adequate crushing facilities, is at least one third as much again. It would be to the advantage of the Government to spend money to increase the crushing facilities, in order to increase the production of gold. The State batteries have crushed more during last year than they crushed the year before, but still there are not adequate facilities. The Government hired or leased a private battery at Kalgoorlie. They are paying £1,000 per annum for a period of five years.

A goldfields man wrote to the newspapers recently, stating that he could have bought the whole battery, lock, stock and barrel, for £1,500, and his statement has never been denied. Yet the Government are paying £1,000 per annum for a period of five years. When the battery was put into operation, the foundations under the boxes gave way, the stems of the battery were crystallised, and many of them broke. The engine is old enough to vote. If it were articulate, it would say, "I should have been retired long ago." It would point out that it was second-hand when it was installed at Burbanks in 1911, that it had rendered hard service there, that it afterwards went to Westonia and also rendered hard service there, and that afterwards it was moved to Cavalier's battery in Kalgoorlie and rendered hard service there also. Now it is leased by the Government for £1,000 per annum and the whole lot is worth about £1,500. It is not affording adequate facilities. The Coolgardie battery will crush 240 tons a week. The men in charge of the Kalgoorlie battery know as much about battery work as any men in Australia. The manager and the men under him are competent, but they have not the material to work with, and the best they can turn out is about 160 tons a week. There are parcels of ore to be seen all around the lease. They are carted there, tipped on the ground, shovelled back in the dray, carted up the battery, tipped on the plat and shovelled into the battery. That gives an idea of the facilities provided at Kalgoorlie.

The Minister for Mines: That is only your story.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: What is wrong with it?

The Minister for Mines: I will tell you.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: The Minister cannot deny that parcels of ore are lying around the lease.

The Minister for Mines: They are lying around all the batteries, because they arrive in small quantities.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Not around the Coolgardie battery.

The Minister for Mines: No, because they arrive there by train.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Prospectors have to wait four or five months to get their parcels crushed. We want an up-to-date plant at Kalgoorlie, one of 20 or 30 head of stamps.

The Minister for Mines: A hundred stamps.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: The Minister could get a plant pretty cheaply off the Ivorhoe if he went the right way about it. The industry deserves encouragement. It is the best industry we have, and it is likely to be the best for many years.

The Minister for Mines: You know that Kalgoorlie has been in existence for a long time.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: And it will continue for as long again.

The Minister for Mines: This is the first time any Government has provided any battery there.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I do not say it is. The Minister for Mines: But I do.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Well, it might be, but what sort of facilities are they? What is wanted is a central battery with 20 or 20 head of stamps.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not correct to say this is the first.

The Minister for Mines: It is the first State battery provided there.

Hon. P. Collier: But it is not the first time Government assistance has been granted there.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: We want provision also for secondary grinding and a slimes plant, so that the parcel can be treated right off. Instead of having to put the sands on the dump and keep the men waiting for their exchange premium and London parity for perhaps eight or nine months, things should be so ordered that the battery could recover all the gold in the ore in one continuous process and pay the prospectors not only the value of the gold recovered over the plates and the proportion out of the sands, but also the exchange and the premium that ultimately accrue to them under the present conditions. That extra money often represents the prospector's profit. The policy pursued so far has been extremely parsimonious, and the antithesis of wise administration. I now wish to speak about the sandalwood industry. At one time the Government received £54,000 a year from that source. Now they are hardly getting anything; in fact, it is costing them money. They brought into operation a monopoly in 1923. For two or three years everything went well, and the shipments were about equal to what had been made before the monopoly.

The Minister for Mines: Subsequent to that date you had six years of the Gov-

ernment which opposed it, and you did not object. You got £323,000 out of that so-called rotten deal.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: That may be so. The shipments then began to fall away. The monopoly in this State led to the creation of another in China. People there were not satisfied with the price they were getting from the general dealers as a result of our monopoly, and they formed another to squeeze a little more out of the Chinese consumer. There were eight big buyers in Hong Kong and Shanghai, but only three would join the monopoly there. The five who stood out wanted sandalwood. They were firms of repute and strong financial standing. They sent agents to look for sandalwood elsewhere. They sent Mr. Skuthorpe to South Australia. He soon found that the adjoining State had as much sandalwood as we had, and that the quality was as good as ours. Export then began from that State. The go-downs in China have been full to capacity ever since, and thousands of tons of sandalwood have been lying at Fremantle. Apparently these monopolies are to be allowed to go on, and Western Australia will have to continue to share with South Australia the output of 6,000 tons a year. The local monopoly should be investigated to see whether it is conserving the interests of the State. The royalty is to be put on a sliding scale according to the price of wood in China. Are the Government going to be the only losers by the fluctuation in price? Why should they alter the royalty in the interests of oversea buyers?

The Minister for Mines: Do you want to go back to the 5s. royalty?

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: No. If instead of getting £35 a ton the price dropped to £30, is it proposed to reduce the royalty by £4 a ton? On what basis will it be altered? The interests of the State are not being properly safeguarded. The industry once offered an important avenue for employment, but to-day there is hardly any employment available in it. If it could be re-established, it would open up a good field for work.

The Minister for Mines: Who made it £54,000 a year instead of £1,500 a year?

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I suppose the Government did. I am not complaining about the monopoly, nor am I advocating that the local monopoly should be smashed up, but

I do advocate that the Chinese monopoly should be crushed.

The Minister for Mines: I would not mind giving you permission to do it.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: The monopoly in China is working in conjunction with the monopoly here. The emergency legislation was supposed to bring about all-round sacrifices. Many Government employees in Kalgoorlie have suffered considerable reductions in wages, although the cost of living is between 25 and 30 per cent. higher there than it is here.

The Minister for Mines: Because they do not support local products.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: They get goods cheaper from another State. Nothing has been done to protect the workers up there against high rentals. Several railway men have been transferred to Kalgoorlie.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Have the payments under the Miners' Phthisis Act been reduced in Kalgoorlie?

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: No. When the men reach Kalgoorlie they cannot get houses under 25s. or 30s. a week, and in some cases not under £2 a week. A man recently was paying 30s. a week for a four-roomed house with a lean-to. The man who owns the house is the principal landlord in the district, and is most rapacious.

The Minister for Mines: Most of the houses were pulled down at one time.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: The owner increased the rent to £2 a week. There are houses which cost £45 to erect, but are being let for 25s. a week. I do not know of a single house up there which is not returning 25 per cent. on the capital expenditure.

The Minister for Lands: You will have new houses going up next week.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: In other instances houses are returning more per annum than they cost.

Hon. P. Collier: In some cases 100 per cent.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Nothing is being done to protect tenants. When wages were reduced, consideration should have been given to the exorbitant rentals. One cannot get even a ramshackle residence there for less than 25s. a week. The same thing applies in the business centres. The rentals of shops have gone up 100 per cent. This all tends to increase the cost of living and adds to the burden of workers.

The Minister for Mines: I did not know the goldfields people were rapacious.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The private companies have not put the financial emergency legislation into operation, whereas the Government have done so.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: The Government employees there are receiving £3 11s. 8d. a week, whereas it costs them 30 per cent. more to live than it does in Perth.

The Minister for Mines: But they get cheaper goods from the Eastern States.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: That does not help those who have to buy retail, although it may be of benefit to certain business houses who are making an increased profit. Retailers I have spoken to are anxious to sell Western Australian goods. One man told me that if the railways carried the goods for nothing they would still not arrive as cheaply as they could from the Eastern States. Eggs, for instance, are better packed than the local eggs?

The Minister for Mines: Do they eat better?

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Yes, they are graded and guaranteed. They are excellent eggs. But the packing has a lot to do with the matter. The merchant buying the eggs, if he finds 20 or 30 dozen broken in a crate from the metropolitan area and only a couple of dozen broken in a South Australian crate, appreciates the difference. There is not much in eggs, of course.

The Minister for Mines: What about cheese?

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Where does one get cheese in Western Australia? One cannot buy Western Australian cheese.

The Minister for Mines: The man who makes that complaint against our eggs also makes a complaint against our cheese.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I know nothing about that. As a matter of fact, there is no Western Australian cheese for sale, so far as I know. All the cheese used here comes from the Eastern States.

The Minister for Mines: He says Western Australian cheese cannot be compared to Eastern States cheese.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I do not know what man you are talking about.

The Minister for Mines: The man made a comparison between Eastern States cheese and our cheese, whereas we do not make any cheese.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I do not know whether cheese has anything to do with this Supply Bill. In conclusion, I trust that some consideration will be given to the suggestion of the Chamber of Commerce. There is much to be said for close consideration of the works on which Loan moneys are to be spent. If we were about to build a water supply to the goldfields and had an estimate of £1,115,000 as the cost of the work, then instead of passing a loan Bill for £2,000,000 we should pass a loan Bill for £1,115,000; and if the work cost more, the extra money should come out of revenue. Under such conditions Governments would be careful to see that works were carried out within the amounts estimated.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [10.18]: At the outset let me enter my protest against the late calling together of Parliament for this session. Some excuses have been made, but I do not think they hold good. The fact that the Premier has had to visit the Eastern States two or three times during the present year is not sufficient reason for the late meeting of Parliament. I consider that under such conditions as the community is passing through, Parliament should not remain in recess too long. During recess Ministers can do many administrative acts which they would not care to do when Parliament is sitting. There are other Ministers besides the Premier. Surely this is not a one-man Government.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a no-man Government.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Surely Parliament could have been called together to deal with the Address-in-reply, at any rate, and perhaps go on with other business while the Premier was in the Eastern States. Further, the Premier has not been in the Eastern States for several weeks past. Then again, there are other members of the Cabinet who, I believe, could have carried on State business and called Parliament together. Among those other members of Cabinet there is an ex-Premier. Thus there was no need to keep Parliament prorogued for so long. I was both amused and amazed the other evening to hear the Attorney General, an educated man and a King's Counsel, put up that astonishing argument, or bed-time story, of the six men in a boat with a limited supply of water. The story was pure nonsense. Western Australia is one of the wealthiest

States in the world; that is, in point of real wealth. This country is producing huge quantities of wheat, and although the grower does not get the price he should, the people who want to eat the wheat cannot obtain it. Then there is talk of cutting the throats of tens of thousands of sheep because the producers cannot obtain payable prices. On the other hand, the public are going short of mutton and wool. I believe that in truth Western Australia is the wealthiest country in the whole world. The means of exchange do not matter much. If they are not suitable it is up to us to alter them. I am surprised that the Attorney General should have put up such an argument as that little bed-time story of the six men in a boat. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) to-night congratulated the Attorney General on that story, but I venture to say that the member for Swan knows more about a boat with 15 men in it. He evidently thought that the boat with 15 in it was sinking, and so he decided to transfer from the boat flying the National flag to the other lugger, the one flying the Country Party flag. There is such a thing as cruelty to dumb animals, and one is liable to be prosecuted and imprisoned for committing such an offence. I fail to see why men who are prepared to be cruel to the people of this country should not be subject to a similar penalty. I consider that the Government of Western Australia should be indicted for cruelty to the human beings residing in this country. The Government must know that there are men, women and children in this country going short of the food necessary to keep body and soul together. They must know that there is a shortage of clothes and of bedding for the people of this country. It is bad enough when dumb animals are cruelly treated, but I consider it far worse to ill-treat human beings. If a man has a horse and cannot afford to keep it, he can shoot it; but that system cannot be adopted with human beings. The Government should stand up to their job and see that the people get at least a reasonable quantity of food, and also clothing and bedding to keep them warm during the winter months. The attitude of the Government is causing people to feel that it is better not to look for work, because they find themselves financially worse off after they have worked. A man on sustenance who is fortunate enough to

get a day's or two days' work, has a corresponding amount deducted from his sustenance allowance. The Government should stand up to their proclaimed hope that the people would be able to earn a bit more than sustenance. However, the department deduct any surplus from the sustenance allowance. Thus people who work find themselves worse off in the long run. As for clothes, if a man goes to work he wears out his clothes, and also his boots, more quickly than he does by simply living on the starvation sustenance. The other day I had brought to my notice the case of a man on 28s. per week sustenance. He is a widower, having lost his wife two or three months ago, and he is left with two children. He was fortunate enough to get work to the amount of 31s. when a coal boat was in unloading coal at the gas works. Although he had earned nothing for weeks and weeks previously, the sum of 14s. was at once deducted from his sustenance allowance. Evidently the Government think a man should be able to live and keep his family on 28s. per week. He had incurred certain debts by reason of the bereavement, and yet the department were hard enough to deduct 14s. out of the 31s. he had earned. I do not know what the Minister thinks about it, but I consider that not one penny of sustenance should have been retained in the circumstances. It is not as though the man had been earning week after week, or earning often. This was a single amount of 31s. that had come into his house during a long period, and from that amount 14s. was deducted. Another case is that of a man with a wife and nine children, three of the children being over 14 years of age. The other six are under 14. The father is an invalid receiving a pension from the Federal Government. The Western Australian Government allowed the rest of the family 21s. per week to live on. On protesting to the department, I was fortunate enough to be able to get another 7s. allowed, which means that apart from the father's invalid pension there is 28s. to keep the wife and six children under 14. The three children over 14 are not recognised by the department, but are at home a good deal of the time, and are eating some of the food represented by the invalid pension and the sustenance allowance. Every member of the family is out of work. The eldest son, aged about 27, for the last year earned a total of £56 or

£58. The Government are not content to drive men into destitution; they also give consideration to the few shillings put away in the children's savings bank accounts. I know of a case where a little girl had £4 or £5 in the bank; before the father could get any sustenance, the £4 or £5 had to be drawn and expended, and the department had to be shown how the amount had been expended. A lot has been said about the numbers of men picked up for work and the amounts they are to be paid. I do not think there is a single member of the Ministry who believes that the men can live on the wages for which they are picked up to go away to the country. Wages of £1 a week over sustenance are next door to starvation for a man in the metropolitan area; and it is utterly impossible for a man sent away into the country to keep up two homes on £1 per week plus sustenance. The other evening I asked a question as to the number of men picked up. I asked the question because I doubted the accuracy of the Press reports. If a tally had been kept of those figures during the last few weeks one might easily arrive at a total of 20,000 men picked up according to Press reports. Being anxious to know exactly how many men were picked up, and where they were picked up, I asked the Minister a question, and he has tabled the report to-day. It is a departmental report. I do not know what the Minister thinks of it, but I do not regard it as creditable to the Government. It is true that a fair number of men have actually been picked up by the Government, but here are the figures together with the rates of wages:—The total number of persons picked up for work since the Premier's return from his last visit to the East is 3,036. In the metropolitan area 1,864 have been picked up, and in country districts 1,172.

Hon. P. Collier: That is for part-time.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The following are the respective numbers picked up at the various rates of wages:—

870 at 25s. 3d.

338 „ 34s.

458 „ 41s.

394 „ 48s.

358 „ 55s.

307 „ 60s.

311 picked up by local authorities for relief works in country districts, similar rates applying.

Does any hon. member think that these men who have gone to the country districts

at such rates can make ends meet? Take in the second category the married man who receives 34s. a week. Is it to be supposed that he can keep himself in the country and pay the cost of his home in the metropolitan area? It would be impossible for him to do it. Most of these men have to pay rent for their homes. Experience shows that immediately a man is picked up for work and gets £1 a week above sustenance rates, the landlord is on his doorstep to compel him to pay his rent in order to keep a shelter over the head of his wife while he is away in the country districts. Does the Minister think the amount allowed is adequate when men are sent away to the country districts under such circumstances? For my part, I would recommend men in that position not to go to the country, notwithstanding the threat of the Government that sustenance payments will be stopped. I would refuse to do so and would continue to fight until the Government provided better treatment. Not all those who went to the country districts secured the rates I have indicated, because part-time work entered into the trouble. People who were ostensibly getting 25s. 3d. a week, did not actually receive that amount. I have a letter from three young men who were sent to Quindalup on forestry work. In their letter to me they say—

We were sent there by the Forests Department on day work, two days a week, equal to 25s. 3d. When we arrived at Pindalup, we went into camp, a quarter of a mile from the station, and nothing was said about piece work. The next day we went out with the overseer to our blocks. On arriving there he said, "This is where you cut out your two days." We were given three acres of ground to cover in two days at 8s. 6d. an acre, picking up, stacking and burning off anything up to eight inches thick. We had a mile and a half to walk before we reached the job. They also said when we were picked up that blankets, cooking utensils and bags to sleep on would be up there. When we got there, all they had were two bags at 10d. each, blankets at 18s. a pair and billies at 10d. each.

These young fellows tell me that they approached some of the workers there who were accustomed to that sort of job, and were informed that the person who fixed the price was either mad or was looking for a better job. That was the opinion of experienced men, well acquainted with that type of work.

Hon. P. Collier: That is rather strange.

Mr. SLEEMAN: They evidently thought that the person who fixed the rates believed that if he could show he had cut down expenses and had got the unemployed to work for as small a payment as possible, he would secure promotion in the department.

Hon. P. Collier: That was the idea.

Mr. SLEEMAN: What was the result of these young fellows' experience? Two of them worked five hours on the first day and the next day the three of them worked for six hours. On the Monday they worked seven hours and worked for the same period on the Tuesday and the Wednesday. The next day they finished the work and did four hours. They explained that they worked seven hours a day because they had such a long distance to travel and the light failed them.

The Minister for Railways: A long distance to travel! A mile and a half!

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is dark fairly late in the morning and early in the evening.

The Minister for Railways: It is light at seven o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Marshall: But they would have to cook breakfast before they left for work.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Now let me tell the Committee what return these young fellows secured for their work. They had put in 103 hours and their store bill, notwithstanding the fact that they had taken goods with them, amounted to £2 3s. 4d. The actual return the three men received between them was 33s. 8d. I communicated with the Forests Department and I was promised that investigations would be made. I asked one of the officials how the rates were fixed for the work and he said that, generally speaking, a rate was struck and if the men could not secure a satisfactory return under the stipulated conditions, the rate was increased slightly. If the men could not make a do of it then, the rate was again increased a little.

Mr. Marshall: Something like hanging a carrot in front of a donkey's nose!

Mr. SLEEMAN: I hope the Minister will take notice of these matters, and ascertain whether the conditions that obtain, cannot be altered. I am not suggesting that the three men I have referred to are accustomed to the work they undertook, but I know them to be willing workers who were eager to get into the country and earn money rather than remain behind and draw rations. I believe

they had to "jump the rattle" to get back, but they say that some who were unfortunate enough to fail in a similar attempt, were forced to stop on in order to get some other means of returning to town. There is another phase that attention should be drawn to. The Government force people to a state of destitution before they can secure sustenance, and should a member of a family on sustenance be stricken with illness, notwithstanding the imposition of the hospital tax, the Government are shirking their responsibility and refusing to pay for hospital treatment.

The Minister for Lands: What are you referring to?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I will explain the position.

The Minister for Lands: I think you had better find out the facts.

Mr. SLEEMAN: During the last few weeks there has been a mild epidemic of diphtheria in the Fremantle district, and 12 children from the families of men on sustenance work in that district have been taken to the Infectious Diseases Hospital. The Government are evading the provisions of the Health Act and are requiring the local authorities to pay what the Government themselves should pay.

The Minister for Lands: Do you want us to increase the hospital tax?

Mr. SLEEMAN: No, but I want the Government to stand up to their obligations.

The Minister for Lands: I will have an opportunity of telling the people of Fremantle what the position is to-morrow.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Minister is evading the responsibilities of Government, and foisting them on to the local authorities.

The Minister for Lands: What you want the Government to do is to increase the burden on the workers and shift it from the property owners.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Immediately the occasion arose, the Minister saw fit to evade the sections of the Act, although when the legislation was before the House he said that no one would be penalised. He has adopted that attitude, notwithstanding the fact that the Government saved about £150,000 on the Health Estimates.

The Minister for Lands: But there were compensating factors.

Mr. SLEEMAN: When these unfortunate children were stricken down by a serious complaint and were taken to the hospital—

The Minister for Lands: They secured treatment.

Mr. SLEEMAN: But the Government say it is the funeral of the local governing authorities, and has nothing to do with the Government.

The Minister for Lands: That has always been the position.

Mr. SLEEMAN: But the hospital tax was not imposed formerly. Does the Minister claim that diphtheria is not as serious as a broken limb?

The Minister for Lands: No, and the treatment is available for the children.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Because diphtheria is a serious complaint, the Minister wants the local governing authorities to shoulder the burden.

The Minister for Lands: I will tell the people in your district to-morrow that you want to put the extra burden on the workers and take it from the property owners.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I want the Minister to stand up to his obligations to give the people free hospital treatment under the Hospitals Act.

The Minister for Lands: I will tell the people the facts.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Minister will not be the only one to tell the people. I myself will have something to say. The Minister must stand up to his obligation to the sick of this State.

The Minister for Lands: It is a contract between the local authorities and the Perth Hospital.

Mr. SLEEMAN: That was so before the imposition of the hospital tax, but the Minister has no right to collect the tax and then refuse free treatment to the indigent sick. Now we come to the cry of "You must not interfere with private enterprise." I remember when we were on that side and the present Ministers were on this side, we used to be told we must not interfere with private enterprise and the liberty of the subject. But now the Government are telling the private employer that he cannot employ the trained men he wants, but must employ sustenance men. I noticed in to-night's newspaper that the President of the Arbitration Court makes a serious attack on the Government, in view of which I think the Government must stand condemned even in the eyes of their own followers. Apparently the Government have interfered with the Arbitration Court.

The Minister for Lands: What does the president of the court say?

Mr. SLEEMAN: This is what he said, as reported in to-night's paper:—

After the delivery of this decision this Court requested the Registrar to take steps to have proceedings for appeal taken before the High Court for the purpose of deciding the question of the jurisdiction of the Court. This instruction to the Registrar was given, as the departmental file shows, after a full deliberation by the Court, and with all the weight the Court could command. The intentions of the Court were frustrated. The Government would not allow the Registrar to take the necessary proceedings. The Court, in urging an appeal on the question of jurisdiction, considered that the very root of its efficiency as an industrial tribunal was assailed. The Arbitration Act gives the Court jurisdiction in all industrial matters and disputes and also the right to interpret awards and industrial agreements, which latter, of course, includes a right to interpret an amended award, and the Court considered that the special province which the Legislature over a series of years and in many enactments had marked out for its express ruling and adjudication had been encroached upon. There is, however, a further implication involved in this refusal by the Government to allow the Registrar to carry out the wishes of the Court—and to some minds, perhaps, more important than the demarcation of the line of jurisdiction. This Court has frequently had occasion to direct the Registrar to take proceedings for offence against the Act, strikes for instance. What assurance has the Court that such instructions may not in the future be cancelled or countermanded by some other authority now that a precedent has been established? In all cases it is necessary for the Registrar to invoke the assistance of the Crown Law authorities. This is not the place nor the time to argue the legal points involved, but three propositions of fact and not of law are outstanding:—

- (1) The Court gave instructions to the Registrar on a matter deemed by it to be of utmost importance in the discharge of its functions.
- (2) The Court stated its reasons at length and instructed the Registrar to convey them to the Government, which was done.
- (3) The Government refused to allow the necessary facilities to carry out the Court's instructions.

I suppose the Minister for Lands is proud of the fact that this Government, supposed to be an impartial Government, have stepped in and blocked the Arbitration Court in this manner.

The Minister for Railways: It is a question of one court appealing against a decision of the Full Court.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The court gave instructions.

The Minister for Railways: Yes, to appeal against the Full Court's decision.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Attorney General will be interested in this, and I think he might give us a statement as to whether such a thing has ever before occurred in a court in this State. The Attorney General smiles, but there is not much to smile about.

The Attorney General: I do not think there is anything at all to smile about when the President of the Arbitration Court comes out with that statement.

Mr. SLEEMAN: We shall be pleased to hear the opinion of the Attorney General on this.

The Attorney General: You will hear it.

Mr. SLEEMAN: This is the place where the Attorney General should give us his views.

The Attorney General: They will be given in due course.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Before this debate closes?

The Minister for Railways: Why? This is only a rehearsal. We shall have it all over again on the Address-in-reply.

Mr. SLEEMAN: We are here representing our constituents and endeavouring to get a better deal for the employees. In view of the statement from the Arbitration Court president it seems that the Government are going to prevent the court from giving the employees the fair deal to which they are entitled. In the past, every little industrial trouble that came along used to evoke screams from members opposite that our Government were preventing the police from doing this or that. Yet here we have it from a high source that the Government are blocking the Arbitration Court, preventing them from giving a fair deal to the employees. In conclusion, I think the Government will be well advised to take notice of what Mr. Bruce had to say in Ottawa. He warned them that if they were going to tinker any further with wages in this country, he did not like to contemplate what might happen. When Mr. Bruce voices an opinion of that kind, it is time the State Government awoke to the fact that they cannot tinker with the wages of the worker any further. During the past two years there has been an organised attempt to smash the standards and wages of the workers. As the member for Leederville mentioned, the "West Australian" has suggested £3 a week. I advise the

Government to take notice of Mr. Bruce's remarks, and realise that the people will not tolerate further reductions. When a man like Mr. Bruce recognises the fact, it is time the State Government also recognised it.

Mr. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [10.51]: I have no intention of allowing the Bill to pass without voicing my protest on behalf of the unemployed of the North and North-West portions of the State. I intend to speak, even at the risk of gaining the displeasure of the leading newspaper, displeasure that the party on this side of the Chamber have already won. I must point out some phases of the problem as it affects the northern part of the State. One would have thought that after the ministerial visits to the North, the Government would have been prompted to do something for the people who have gone so far from the metropolitan area to eke out a living. There is no question of the Government not knowing or not understanding. During the last 12 or 13 months I have notified Ministers of the position. The dissatisfaction of the unemployed in those far-back areas can be imagined when they read the statements that thousands of men were picked up last week and the week before, statements which, of course, are all fictitious. Those people would not have gone so far from the metropolitan area to make a living if they were not genuine and sincere. They did not hang around the metropolitan area crying for sustenance and assistance. All they ask now is a little consideration when the money is being allocated so that a share of the work may be provided for them. I have a clipping from the "Daily News" stating that the Government have made available £400,000 for various works. The bulk of the work, of course, consisted of water supplies, reservoirs, dams, harbour works, goldfields water supply—for this £115,000 was provided—irrigation, drainage, channeling, cement draining, and other things at Harvey, reforestation, etc. When the unemployed in the North-West, who cannot obtain sustenance, read that, I do not know what their opinion of the Government will be, particularly after the visits of Ministers, who appreciated the necessity for immediate maintenance work on Government buildings, jetties and rolling stock. This work would be reproductive; the longer

it is neglected, the more expensive it will be. The Minister for Forests has £18,000 available for reforestation. Some 12 months ago I pointed out to him that thousands of young sandalwood suckers were being destroyed by fire in various parts of the North-West, and I suggested that he should make a small sum available to protect those trees. I do not intend to traverse all the ramifications of injustices imposed on the workers, such as have been mentioned on this side of the House, but I wish to direct the Minister's attention to the impossibility of men in the North getting sustenance for more than a week. A man is allowed a week's sustenance, and then is politely told to move on. That applies to three areas in my district. In the fourth area a man cannot get sustenance at all. I do not know what explanation can be given for that discrimination. I am satisfied that the Minister does not understand the position. Who could have been responsible for such a regulation, I do not know. I hope Ministers will try to influence the Treasurer to reallocate the money available so that a portion may be made available for the North. There is any amount of necessary and urgent work, such as water supplies on stock routes, town water supplies, and the maintenance of various public buildings, including schools. If the board appointed by the Federal Government do not know that there is such a place as the North-West, I hope the Minister will acquaint them with the fact and see that we are put on the map.

Mr. Raphael: The people of the North will be putting some of the Ministers on the mat, not on the map.

Mr. COVERLEY: I have no intention of delaying the Committee, but now that I have directed attention to the Government's inactivity as regards the North, I hope they will reallocate the money and make some available for the unemployed in the North and North-West.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

Committee of Ways and Means.

The House having resolved into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Richardson in the Chair.

The PREMIER moved—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year ending 30th June, 1933, a sum not exceeding £1,300,000 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, £600,000 from the General Loan Fund, £25,000 from the Government Property Sales Fund, and £300,000 from the Public Accounts for the purposes of temporary advances to be made by the Treasurer.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

Bill introduced.

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions, Bill introduced, and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [11.2]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. C. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [11.3]: The impression exists in my district that no more applications for sustenance will be granted. That is understood to be the case as the result of representations made to the Unemployment Board. Before this Bill is passed the Premier should give us an assurance that Geraldton will not be treated differently from any part of the State. Many statements have been made from this side of the House with regard to the inequity of debarring children over 14 years of age from receiving sustenance. I want to know whether the Government will alter the system whereby such children may receive the 7s. a week sustenance. Most members agree that the position is anomalous and should not be allowed to continue.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [11.5]: I assure the member for Geraldton (Hon. J. C. Willcock) that Geraldton will not be treated differently from any other place. Many works are being put in hand in that centre which will absorb a large number of men.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The impression is that no more applications for sustenance will be acceded to.

The PREMIER: I hope no more applications will be necessary.

Mr. Raphael: Don't beat about the bush. Get down to tin tacks.

The PREMIER: At all events they will be treated in the same way as those coming from any other district. I hope that in Geraldton there will be enough work for all.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: What about children over the age of 14?

The PREMIER: When the hon. member was in office, the conditions with respect to married people were the same as they are now.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: But the conditions were vastly different from what they are now. The Premier must know that anomalies exist.

The Minister for Railways: We do make exceptions. It depends on the number who are over 14 and the number under.

The PREMIER: In some cases where the members of the family are over 14 years of age and more than one in number, exceptions are made.

HON. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [11.7]: I want to know what is going to happen to those men who are not receiving sustenance, and who have come to the end of their resources. There are provident men who have saved money but have been obliged to live upon it. They have sold their homes and are now in debt, but they cannot get a job because they have not been receiving sustenance. What will happen to them? It is a scandal that the Government should treat provident men in that manner. It is encouraging them to be thrifty no more, and to ask themselves of what use it is to be thrifty when they are penalised in that way. These men in good times saved money, brought up their families decently, and made homes for themselves. They are now at the end of their resources, and cannot get work because they are receiving no sustenance. What will happen to the country if that is allowed to continue? Why should men save at all when they are penalised for so doing? The Government say to the people, "Do not bother to save, for you will get sustenance." Even if they own only a block of land which they cannot sell except at a sacrifice, they are prevented from receiving sustenance although they are starving. I do not know what we are coming to in this country. It is extraordinary that such things can happen. There is a man I have known for years—a very provident man. His wife is keeping a boarding house. They saved up a little money. The boarding house is not paying. The wife is five weeks behind in her rent.

Yet the husband cannot get a job, simply because his wife is keeping a boarding house, which does not pay. Thus fine citizens are penalised by the administration of the Government. The precedent which is being set will prove disastrous to this country. In the contracts which the Government are letting they insert a stipulation that these men must not be employed. Several men have seen me during the past week about the matter, and I want to know what is going to be done. Men who have been provident and careful should not be told that they must starve on that account. What has the Premier to say about it? I have a strong regard for provident, decent citizens who pay their way. Such citizens are now being told that they are no longer wanted in this country, that they cannot get jobs. Is that policy to continue, or is it going to be altered? It must be altered, having regard to the people of this country who deserve consideration.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [11.12]: I think the hon. member will agree that men who have been out of work for a long time and who have been receiving sustenance ought to be the first to be employed.

Hon. M. F. Troy: They are not the first employed.

MR. RAPHAEL (Victoria Park) [11.13]: One phase of the unemployed question which has not yet been touched on is that higher-ratio men should have a monopoly of work in the metropolitan area. I want to try to persuade the Government to alter their decision that a man who has not got three children is therefore to be debarred from any work whatever in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Railways: That is not so.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I say it is so. I have put a dozen cases of the kind before the officers of the department and in every case the officers have said that the regulations do not permit of such men being employed in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Railways: As the result of requests and even without any request, we have been making exceptions.

Mr. RAPHAEL: No exception has ever been made in any case with which I have been concerned. If the Minister will give an assurance that such men can be picked up for work in the metropolitan area I am prepared to sit down. Will the Minister give that assurance?

The Minister for Railways: I do not understand what you mean.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The Minister has stated that every member on this side of the House can get that assurance. Yet when I put up a case, he refused to continue the argument.

The Minister for Railways: At this late hour.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The case was put up at a deputation. It was the case of a young married man, of good family, and used to refined work. The Premier told him there was no work for him except work in the country at £2 1s. per week. The 14s. man forced into the country is actually worse off than the man getting £2 15s. Can we picture a man who with his wife has been purchasing a home, who has to pay 15s. per week in interest, who is called upon to go into the country and live in a tent, while the wife has to live in the metropolitan area, doing all these things on 34s. per week? The question remains unanswered because no answer can be given. The case is irrefutable. It is impossible for a husband in the country and a wife in the metropolitan area to live on a joint income of 34s. a week. I would have liked an assurance from the Minister.

The Minister for Railways: I have already told you that exceptions are made.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The Minister has not told me that if there is a case which on its merits ought to be treated as an exception, it will be so treated. Mr. Macartney and Mr. Smith say that if a man is not receiving 35s. or over, he cannot be placed in work in the metropolitan area. They have told me that a dozen times. The Minister says that it has been done, but he is not prepared to give me an assurance that it will be done.

The Minister for Railways: I object to your asking me to give an assurance when both the Premier and I have given the assurance to deputations.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I have put the case to Mr. Macartney and Mr. Smith repeatedly, and on each occasion have been refused an assurance. In one case I was told that a stay of one month had been granted in the case of a young man whose wife had just given birth to a baby. This man has been forced into the country, away from his wife and two children—the elder being only about 12 months old—at the dictate of the Minister. If ever there was a case for consideration, this is one. Yet the Minister is not

prepared to give an assurance. I do not want to speak again, and therefore merely express the hope that the Government will reconsider their decision and let any man be picked up on the merits of his case.

The Minister for Railways: I have told you we will do that.

The Minister for Lands: I thought the Premier replied just now, Mr. Speaker. The Premier spoke just now.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Premier spoke hurriedly. As Speaker, I desire that every hon. member should receive fair play. I have not yet put the question.

The Minister for Lands: I thought the Premier replied.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Premier replied to some questions put by an hon. member on the Opposition side of the House.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [11.19]: My opinion is that if the departmental officers were given a little more latitude, many anomalies would be cleared away. Personally I think the officers have not the latitude they should have. They are too much bound down by regulations. As I mentioned previously, there is the case of a man with a wife and two children living at home, and with two older daughters living away from home, in work. Because the two elder daughters were earning more than the total of 7s. per head for each member of the family remaining at home, the man is debarred from getting anything. He has appealed to the two daughters to assist the family. Because the two daughters are not prepared to assist the family, the man is told that he cannot get any assistance whatever.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Richardson in the Chair: the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Sums available for purposes voted by the Legislative Assembly:

Mr. SLEEMAN: Will the Minister give us an indication that the instances we have quoted will receive consideration? We have devoted a lot of time to the Bill, and we

should not allow the clause to be passed unless we receive an assurance along those lines.

The PREMIER: No case has been brought before me or the Minister that has not received consideration. Of course, the cases referred to will receive attention.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Is the Premier prepared to say that the clause I referred to will be withdrawn from the contract so as to provide men with an opportunity to get sustenance and work? Some men have been forced to sell their homes, and are they not to get a chance to live? Must they sink into a state of pauperism? There are hundreds in that position. They cannot get work because they are not on sustenance. Some are not able to get either sustenance or work. Does the Premier intend to remove the clause to which we have taken exception?

Mr. RAPHAEL: The Premier should give the Committee an assurance that the matters we have drawn attention to will receive consideration. It is degrading to men who have done their best to bring up their families decently that they should be required to become penniless before they can secure assistance, and that others should be debarred from securing relief because a daughter may happen to be earning. Under the conditions obtaining, the social system is collapsing.

The Minister for Lands: No wonder, when electors have such representatives as you!

Mr. RAPHAEL: It is wrong that so much suffering should exist when there is plenty for the rest of us.

The Minister for Railways: You could divide it voluntarily if you desired.

Mr. RAPHAEL: If the Government persist in the conditions they are laying down, they will find that the people will not stand it any longer. The sooner the people wake up and take direct action, the better it will be for all. I want the Minister in charge of unemployment relief to stand up to the Premier and insist upon sufficient money being made available for the absorption of all these men. I have a case in Victoria Park. A father on part time is earning £2 8s. 0d. per week. He has in all a family of nine, including four sons out of work and three daughters. I say that due provision should be made for this case and many others like it.

Clause put and passed.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 11.3 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 23rd August, 1932.

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

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,225,000.

Standing Orders Suspension.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved: "That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Supply Bill to be passed through all stages at this sitting."

All Stages.

Bill received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.39] in moving the second reading said: This measure differs from the Supply Bill ordinarily submitted at the beginning of the session in that it asks for three months' Supply instead of two months. The departure from the customary practice is due to the unavoidable delay in the calling together of Parliament. The reason for that delay is within the knowledge of members. The measure, in other respects, is the usual

Supply pending the preparation and submission of the Annual Estimates of revenue and expenditure. If this measure were restricted to two months, a further Supply Bill would have to be brought down before the current month expires. Accordingly, the Government are asking for funds to carry them over the quarter ending the 30th September. The total amount of the authorisation desired is £2,225,000, make up as follows:—Consolidated Revenue Fund £1,300,000, General Loan Fund £600,000, Government Property Sales Fund £25,000, and Treasurer's advance £300,000. For the information of the House I mention that the corresponding Supply Bill last year for a total of £1,370,000 and covering a period of two months only comprised Consolidated Revenue Fund £850,000, General Loan Fund £200,000, Government Property Sales Fund £20,000, and Treasurer's Advance £300,000. May I avail myself of this opportunity to apprise members of the results, in broad outline, of operations during the financial year which closed on the 30th June last. The estimated deficit of £1,226,373 was exceeded by £331,523, the actual deficit for 1931-32 thus being £1,557,896. This increase of £331,523 was caused by a falling off to the extent of £212,107 in revenue and by a rise of £119,416 in expenditure. The excess of actual over estimated expenditure in fact totalled £214,077, made up of increases of £163,996 on unemployment relief, £20,058 on exchange and £30,023 in relation to special Acts, but savings of £82,984 were effected in the estimated expenditure on public utilities and of £11,677 in the votes for ordinary Governmental activities. These total savings of £94,661 left a net increase in expenditure of £119,416, the amount previously mentioned. The decline in revenue is ascribable to decreases totalling £44,378 in the collection of land rents and timber royalties to reductions totalling £174,452 in interest earnings and departmental reimbursements, and to a falling-off of £17,776 in receipts from public utilities, an aggregate shortage of £236,606. On the other hand, taxation receipts exceeded the Budget estimate by £16,416, and Mint returns improved by £8,173. The total of those two items—£24,589—reduced the aggregate decline in revenue and receipts to £212,017. It will be noted that the fall in receipts is much more than offset by reductions in expenditure under the same head. The actual surplus of