

months, and make his home there, so that he may be easily accessible to different districts, and may be able to move quickly from one part to another. I am not going to criticise anything done in this respect, until there is occasion for criticism, when I shall be on the job as readily as anybody. I ask those responsible for creating the Department of the North-West, to be very careful in making selections. There is a great deal to be learnt about the climate and conditions of the North-West. People who have not had 34 years' experience, as I have had, up there refer to many industries as being suitable for the North. I can assure hon. members that some industries up there will never be successful. I would advocate experiments in cotton growing, and I would confine those experiments to inexpensive plots worked by native labour. At two or three townships along the coast numbers of indigent natives are being fed by the Government, and are not doing any work. Very few of them are incapable of carrying half a kerosene tinful of water a couple of hundred yards twice a day. At a place called La Grange there is an area of 50 miles of country over which water is accessible at a depth of from eight to 10 feet. That land is very suitable for cotton growing. I have had experiments carried out there, and have brought down to Perth splendid samples of cotton which are now being examined by cotton experts in England. I should also like experiments to be tried on a small scale with dates, pineapples, peanuts, tobacco, and coconuts. I am perfectly safe in asking that each of these be given a trial, inasmuch as I have seen splendid samples of all of them grown in the North. I have brought down from a station 220 miles inland, one of the finest samples of dates ever submitted to experts in Western Australia. They were grown with practically no attention whatever, the only water they had being confined to the overflow from a dam. Also from another tree, 300 miles from anywhere, 2½ cwt. of dates have been taken. I climbed the tree myself and got a cupful of fruit. It was of splendid quality, but very small and, curiously enough, stoneless. That tree never had in all its life any water but the rain from Heaven. It shows what is possible with ordinary attention. I do not want any money expended on those experiments, more than is necessary for the feeding of the natives employed—and they have to be fed as it is—and a little supervision in the shape of two white warders to accompany the natives backwards and forwards to the experimental plots. There are in the North hundreds of natives incarcerated in gaol. It would be far better for them to have a little light employment, attending to these experimental plots. And when those plots prove successful I should ask private individuals to come along, take up the matter in earnest and grow those products commercially. A point has been made of taking over practically the whole control of engineering and other matters in the North-West.

Mr. J. Thomson: Who is your informant?

Mr. TEESDALE: I feel that the Government are at last carrying out the promise which to my knowledge has been made for the last three years. I think the Premier is really genuine, and meant what he said when he stated "I am determined to spend a sum of money in the North and give it a chance. I am determined to exploit the mining possibilities in the North in those parts which have hitherto not been tried. I am quite prepared to try experiments in tropical agriculture. I am determined to do everything possible to bring about a successful state of affairs in the North." I am going to give the Government every support until I find that these promises are not being fulfilled. I feel that the Government are at length determined to bring about an era of prosperity in the North. We ask only for fair treatment and fair rentals. At the present time the double rentals imposed by the Government are bearing very hard upon the pastoralists who have difficulty in disposing of their wool and who have very heavy overhead charges in comparison with what they used to have. When we take into consideration the isolated position of these people in the North, we must recognise that they are fairly philosophical and fairly well contented. We in Perth hear very little from them. When we remember that they are cut off from numbers of conditions that make life comfortable, we must admit that these people in the North give us very little trouble. The absence of trams, trains, telephones, theatres, pictures and 101 other advantages, together with the exacting climate and the very poor means of communication with the outside world, indicate a fairly lengthy list of grievances if these people chose to exert themselves to make grievances of these things. They are satisfied to go along and take a share of what is offering. They do not ask for anything unreasonable. They have not been notorious for whining; in fact there have been very few complaints from the North. The only complaint of any particular moment of which I am aware was when the strike occurred in the Kimberleys and they were short of food. The people in my district have dozens of times been much more short of food than those people were, and Perth knew little or nothing about it. I have great faith in the country and I believe that, with all our drawbacks, with all the hardships we are experiencing at the present time, and despite the black outlook, the State will yet pull herself together and will come out on top again, prosperous as it was some four or five years ago.

Mr. GIBSON (Fremantle) [8.19]: In rising to make my first effort on the floor of this House, I would like to extend my thanks to members of each of the parties represented here for the kind words of welcome they have offered to the new members, of whom I am fortunately one. Coming here, as some of us have done, almost entirely ignorant of the rules of parliamentary procedure

and the practice of the House, it is very satisfactory to know that one has only to ask of those who have been here so many years in order to receive all the information and advice he can wish. To you, Sir, I would like to offer my congratulations on your re-election to the position you have occupied with distinction for so many years. I also wish to congratulate the member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) on the unique position she occupies in the parliamentary history of the Commonwealth. Should my remarks appear to be somewhat disjointed and halting, I trust members will cast their minds back to the occasion when they stood in the same position as I occupy to-night and extend to me that consideration of which they themselves felt in need. I have listened with a great deal of attention and interest to the addresses given from both sides of the House, particularly those of the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. It was stated that they had given great attention to the financial position for the purpose of enlightening those members who had just been returned for the first time.

Mr. Pickering: For the purpose of confounding them.

Mr. GIBSON: I am afraid I feel somewhat like that ancient philosopher quoted by the Leader of the Opposition the other night, who, after listening to great argument, came out by the same door as in he went. It is impossible for me to come to any conclusion as to who is responsible for the financial position in which we find the State to-day, but I am convinced that no matter which party had been in power, whether the Labour Party had continued to administer the affairs of the country, or whether a National Government had been in office throughout, the financial position would have been the same. I think our position is due to circumstances over which no Government could have control. In connection with the deficit the Railway Department has been mentioned as being the principal factor in the particular losses shown. The discovery of gold, which has had such great effect on the settlement of Western Australia, made it necessary for lines to be constructed to connect these outposts of civilisation with the metropolitan area, and at the time the railways were constructed, I think the prospects justified the expenditure. Unfortunately, the ideas entertained regarding the future of the goldfields have not altogether materialised. We recognise what the discovery of gold meant for Western Australia, but, unfortunately, the deposits have not lasted so long as we could have wished, and as a result the traffic carried over these many miles of railway has fallen away considerably. The revenue derived from the railways has, of course, been greatly lessened, while the overhead expenses have continued and have to be met. We hope that in time a revival of the mining industry will occur, and that the railways will then be more fully occupied than they are at present. It does not matter how the State got into its

present financial position, or who was responsible for it. The question which should exercise the minds of members and of the electors at the present time is how to get out of it. Although I have listened attentively to the various speeches which have been delivered, I have not heard any concrete method suggested as to how we are going to bring about that desired result. Certainly hints have been thrown out, mostly by members of the Opposition, as to the necessity for retrenchment, and the Leader of the Opposition said that, no matter how drastic or how unpleasant the means adopted to bring about a more equal proportion between expenditure and revenue, the Government could depend upon the assistance of his party. I think that was a very generous offer, and I hope the Government will take full advantage of it. Last evening the Minister for Works directed our attention to a sheet that has been prepared by the Railway Department and of which he was justifiably proud, stating that it had been copied by all the Railway Departments of the world. I compliment him on being responsible for its introduction. The Minister, however, in his perusal of the list, did not go so far down it as I have done. I find that in 1917 we had 6,921 men working in the Railway Department. For the year ended 30th June, 1921, we had 8,213 men employed, an increase of just on 1,200. Going further up the list we find that our rolling stock is practically the same as it was in 1917, but that the tonnage carried over the lines has increased to a very slight extent. I cannot understand why it is necessary to have such a largely increased number of men working in the Railway Department, to handle practically the same traffic in 1921 as in 1917.

The Minister for Mines: We are manufacturing commodities more for the department which we did not handle before.

Mr. Pickering: Does that take 1,200 men?

Mr. GIBSON: Averaging the wages of 1,200 men at £200 a year, it represents an increased expenditure of nearly a quarter of a million. This is merely the increase of wages paid—and not any increase in wages—over what was necessary in 1917 to do the same amount of work. If this is so, there is certainly something wrong somewhere. I commend this matter to the Minister for inquiry to see whether some economies cannot be effected. If economies can be effected I suggest that the wages men should not be the only ones to suffer by it. If there is to be retrenchment, the men on the salaried staff should bear as great a proportion of the retrenchment as the men who do the hard graft outside. We are all very anxious to meet the present position of affairs and several means have been suggested, among them land settlement and immigration. It has been my privilege during the last 18 months to meet practically every shipload of immigrants who have arrived at Fremantle, in my capacity as mayor of that town and a member of the Ugly Men's Association. These immigrants have been handled more efficiently by the

Ugly Men's Association on their arrival in this State than they were under the administration of the Government, and the association is deserving of every credit for the way in which this problem has been dealt with. We have extended the hand of friendship to the new arrivals and have given them good advice. A member stated the other night that nine-tenths of the immigrants who had landed in Western Australia during the last two years had been left hanging about the cities. That statement is absolutely incorrect. Ninety per cent. of the men have been found positions in the country and not 10 per cent. have gone to swell the ranks of the unemployed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That applied in 1912, 1913 and 1914, when immigrants were coming here in thousands.

Mr. GIBSON: I believe it did. My only desire is to correct the mis-statement which was made the other evening. In my opinion it is necessary that we should have a bold policy of immigration, and I want immigrants who come from the right place, namely the home of our fathers. Those are the people we want; people of the same ideals, people who speak the same tongue as ourselves. I am not altogether in accord with the proposal of the member for East Perth (Mr. Simons). I think it is possible to get any number of people of the right type, men from the Old Country. The type of people who have come out here have, in the majority, been of the right type for agricultural work. Unfortunately, some who came out in the earlier contingents, before the Ugly Men's Association took the matter thoroughly in hand, were very disappointed at the conditions which they found on their arrival here. Pamphlets distributed at Home did not give an altogether true statement of what they found on arrival here, and on the application of the Ugly Men's Association the pamphlets were withdrawn and people were no longer misled as to what would happen when they arrived in Western Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That pamphlet was withdrawn in May last year.

Mr. GIBSON: It is absolutely ridiculous to go to the length of circulating pamphlets which do not contain statements of fact. We do not need anything of that kind here. Western Australia has sufficient to offer to its people without that. They should be advised properly as to the conditions which they may expect to find here. It would be advisable to send someone Home with the necessary practical experience to enable him to select the right type of immigrant. We do not want men from the industrial centres to swell the ranks of the industrial unemployed here. We want men from the agricultural centres, men who have been accustomed to farming.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We cannot get them.

Mr. GIBSON: I think so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am sure we cannot.

Mr. GIBSON: I understand the hon. member has stated that wages at Home are possibly better than they are here.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: So they are.

Mr. GIBSON: That may be the case. Under the conditions offered here, however, men can get 200 or 300 acres of land, which they cannot possibly do in the Old Country. I have sufficient faith in the people of the Old Country to believe that they are desirous of getting property for themselves and not of everlastingly working for someone else. If we could send a man Home to choose the right type of immigrants, and to tell them what they may expect to find when they get here, so that they will know exactly what they are coming to, I am sure it would be a step in the right direction. We should not lead people to believe that this is a land flowing with milk and honey. If people know the conditions of the country they will be saved from disappointments, such as many have suffered from through being misled before leaving England.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not in regard to that matter.

Mr. GIBSON: I refer to the pamphlets dealing with the conditions that they might expect to find here.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That was in regard to returned soldiers.

Mr. GIBSON: Some 18 months ago it was my privilege, shortly after the Government had secured the Peel estate on behalf of the Repatriation Department, to spend a day travelling over it, in company with the member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale). The action of the Government had been adversely commented upon because of their purchase of this estate, and it was our desire to come into contact with the men who had been living in the district, and find out what they thought about it and its possibilities for the purpose for which it was purchased. The opinion was almost unanimous that it will be a very suitable place for the purpose. With the permission of the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum), in whose constituency a portion of this estate is, I should like to conduct a party of members over it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Premier will do that during the next week or two. It is all fixed up.

Mr. GIBSON: I am glad to hear it, though I have not yet received an invitation. It will certainly be an eye-opener to members, and will demonstrate to them what can be done with the coastal lands between here and Bunbury or here and Pinjarra.

Mr. Pickering: Between here and Albany.

Mr. GIBSON: Two or three months ago I was out on a block of land some four miles from Fremantle. It was a block of 10 acres, of which eight had been cultivated. This block provided a living and a reasonable income for two men, who were partners, and their families, and in addition for three labourers who were employed by them. There are thousands of blocks of that kind which can be obtained in the locality, and which will be suitable places for the settlement of immigrants. I was surprised to learn from the

Premier that practically all the first-class wheat land in the State had been alienated. One member of the Country Party contradicted the statement. If that is so, the Government of course cannot put people upon wheat land which is not first class. It was also stated by a member of the Country Party that there are hundreds of thousands of acres of land in close proximity to existing railway lines, which are not being brought into a stage of production. These lands should be brought into productivity. I am prepared to support any Government measure which will bring about that result, so that people who are starving for land may have an opportunity of securing it. Other members have referred to the industrial unrest, which has existed more or less for the last four years, as being partly responsible for our present financial position. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that industrial unrest does exist. Some people seem to think that the responsibility for this attaches to one side only, while others say that it attaches to the other side. There is a little bit of trouble on both sides. I was pleased to hear the member for South Fremantle the other night offer the suggestion he did. It is quite possible that half the industrial disputes that occur could be settled if a little more amity was displayed between the parties concerned in the dispute. I do not think the Arbitration Court has outlived its usefulness. It is the best means we have at present for the settlement of industrial disputes, but its work should be speeded up. If one court is not sufficient another court should be appointed. It is unnecessary that the President should be a Judge of the Supreme Court. There are many men who are capable of settling industrial disputes who may never reach that position. Most of the disputes which have been settled by private arbitration have been settled by the intervention of men, who may have legal training, but who have never been appointed as Judges of the Supreme Court. The Act might be amended to permit of something of the kind being done. If that is brought about, I cannot see the necessity for a bench of three in the Arbitration Court. The advocates for the contending parties should do their advocating on the floor of the court. They are described as assessors, but I have yet to learn that a unanimous decision has ever been given in any dispute that has been brought before the court. The representative of the employers must necessarily take the side of the employers, and the same thing holds good so far as the representative of the employees is concerned. They must of necessity have a bias towards the parties who employ them.

The Minister for Mines: The Government are not represented there at all.

Mr. GIBSON: The Government have the employers' representative to act for them, because they are employers. It is always the judge whose decision is ultimately given. I should like the court to be made as free as possible and the procedure as wide as may

be necessary, but the court should speed up its work so that any dispute that comes before it shall be dealt with immediately.

Mr. Pickering: And make it as cheap as possible.

Mr. GIBSON: The member for South Fremantle suggested the creation of boards of industries. I should welcome such an institution. By discussions between those who are employers in certain industries and the men who are employed by them, it should be possible to get an interchange of views on the subjects about which the contending parties are well acquainted. In the Arbitration Court we have gentlemen on the bench who are experts in law, but who are dependent upon the expert advice that is given to the court. They are not able to enter into the soul of the case. They must be guided by the advice that is given to them. Boards of industries should tend towards reducing the amount of industrial unrest. A suggestion has been made that the workers should give their services for less wages because of the present position. The reverse should also hold good. When a business is prosperous the workmen should get a little of the increased profits accruing to the employer in return for the work that is given to him. Reference has been made to the wheat pool. I am in favour of a wheat pool for the coming harvest. I am not going to discuss what I think about the 9s. a bushel which is being charged at present. I would support the establishment of a wheat pool for the coming harvest on the understanding that the London parity is charged for wheat in this State, and that this parity is adjusted monthly. By London parity I mean the price in London less the cost of getting the wheat there. If the price in London is 10s. and it costs 3s. a bushel to get it there, the price in Western Australia should be 7s. Unless I receive an assurance to this effect, I shall not be prepared to support the establishment of another wheat pool in Western Australia. Dealing with matters affecting my own electorate, I have no desire to complain about the treatment accorded to Fremantle by the Government. They have done all they could, and had the financial position been less straitened I think they would have done considerably more. The member representing South Fremantle and the member representing North-East Fremantle have always acquainted the Government with the requirements of their electorates. That being so, there will be a corner in this House to see that the requirements of Fremantle and the neighbourhood are not neglected. The harbour should be extended as soon as possible. Only three or four months ago there were three ships waiting outside because all the berths in the harbour were occupied.

The Minister for Mines: Send them to Albany.

Mr. GIBSON: Let all the ports in the State get what trade they can.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The ships will go where the most trade is.

Mr. GIBSON: That will be Fremantle. I do not object to the other ports being given what they require, so long as we get what we want at Fremantle. The extension of the harbour would necessitate the removal of the two bridges across the river. Had the Labour Government remained in office, I believe this work would have been done. I do not say the subsequent Administration was responsible for the work not being done, because at the time they came into office the war broke out. I hope, however, that the work will be gone on with as soon as the financial position permits. In order to cope with the coming harvest, it is necessary that the railway on the south side of the river should be constructed. As our harvest increases in size, so does the congestion of traffic passing through the central station increase in intensity. All our wheat has to come through Perth, and this has led to great congestion.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If the railway was built on the south of the river the tramway would not be needed because it would run right through there.

Mr. GIBSON: That is so. This is the tramway to which the member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) has such an objection. The work is very urgent, and I commend it to the Government. While on the subject of wheat, I may refer to the suggestion that terminal elevators should be constructed at Fremantle in the near future. I do not know that I have yet made up my mind as to the advisability or otherwise of that step; but I would recommend the Government to hasten very slowly in the construction of elevators. Let the very best advice obtainable be first taken. I do not know whether I shall be doing something I should not do when I say that while in Sydney I was advised that if we in Western Australia did anything in the way of elevators we should not on any account have anything to do with Metcalf & Co. I believe Fremantle will in future be the San Francisco of Australia. Its unique situation as the first and last port of call for ships using the Suez Canal route ensures that. Fremantle is not dependent only on the prosperity of Western Australia; the prosperity of the Eastern States must also be reflected on the port. In future we shall have Fremantle a very large city. I hope that all the promises of support made by various members to the Ministry will be realised, and that our deliberations will prove to be for the benefit of the country.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [8.48]: I feel no vocation, as seems to have been felt by most members who have so far spoken, to offer congratulations all round. It seems to me that the sincerest congratulations one can get as a member of the House take the form of the confidence of the electors. That compliment applies in the case of the member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) and of every other hon. member. As regards the representation of the northern portion of the State

in the Ministry, I take the opposite view to that expressed by the member for East Perth (Mr. Simons) and have to express my satisfaction. I am personally very pleased to be able to congratulate the new Minister for Agriculture, whose inclusion in the Ministry represents an act of justice to the North. In contradistinction to the member for East Perth, I am glad that the Ministry contains no city representatives. I think this State has been too long dominated by city interests.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Hon. W. C. Angwin: All rot!

Mr. WILLCOCK: Anyhow, that great statesman, W. E. Gladstone, said that the place where Parliament sits does not want any members of Parliament at all, because there is sufficient influence exercised upon Parliament by the people in the immediate vicinity of its location.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You say that 100,000 people should not have any representation?

Mr. WILLCOCK: No.

Hon. P. Collier: We country members will look after them.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I trust that the constitution of a Ministry of country representatives wholly, will mean an era of development in the country districts. Too much time and money have been spent on the cities and towns already.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Where?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Every Government institution is centred in Perth. Where are trams being constructed?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The people pay for the trams.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) may not agree with me, but nevertheless I express the hope that the constitution of an entire Ministry from country members will mean that the Ministry will adopt a policy of developing the country districts.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It does not make a fraction of difference.

Mr. WILLCOCK: In that case I am at a loss to understand why country members are included in the Ministry at all. Some disappointment was expressed on account of a particular member not getting into the Ministry, and to solace his wounded feelings it was said that his constituency was too close to that of the Minister for Mines. I hope, at any rate, that the construction of the present Ministry will be reflected in the development of the country districts. I think the Minister for Mines will agree that in the past his constituency has not had a fair deal; otherwise how shall we explain the manner in which Albany has gone down? If I ever happen to be in a Ministry, I shall see that my constituency receives at least a fair deal. Every member of a Ministry ought to see that not only his immediate constituency, but also the neighbouring districts, receive a fair deal. I had not intended to speak at all in this debate, and should not have done so but