

missioner of Railways, the system is not in the condition that ought to exist. The lines have been neglected merely for the sake of carrying on. There is a limit to that policy. The expenditure on re-conditioning the lines will be enormous. The cost of re-sleeping and other measures which will not directly bring in money will have to be met out of revenue. The group settlement position does not seem to me to show any improvement. I do not know whether the Government intend to help the group settler to remain on his holding in preference to letting him leave the holding in order to seek sustenance in the towns. The latter process has been prevalent lately. Group settlers forced off their holdings, not by the Government but by circumstances, proceed to the nearest town—Bunbury is particularly a case in point—and go on sustenance.

Member: Most of those settlers should never have gone on the land.

Mr. WITHERS: That cannot be helped now. The feature of ineptitude for the task undertaken is no fault of ours. I hope the Government will continue to assist settlers who are genuine triers. There has been a report on the subject from a Royal Commission, one member of which is in this House now. I know his view of the group settlement situation, and I take it that when the time comes for him to speak he will deal fully with that situation. I may mention that in my electorate there are few group settlers, and that these few appear to be getting on moderately well. Nevertheless, a certain consideration is due to them; and if the Government will show them that consideration and carry into effect certain recommendations of the Commission which are for the benefit of settlers, the groups will be more likely to succeed. I thank hon. members for their patient hearing. From various interjections I realise that I have not spoken controversially, but have spoken in all truth and sincerity.

MR. MOLONEY (Subiaco) [6.11]: At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I desire to express my satisfaction at your elevation to the honourable position which you hold. Having known you, Sir, for many years, I am indeed pleased to see you exercising in the Chair that wise discretion which I have remarked in you in other spheres. The Governor's Speech interests me extremely. The most remarkable characteristic of the

Speech, to my mind, is that while clearly exemplifying the Government's programme it is innocuous in that it does not hamper the Government in regard to legislative proposals. The position confronting Ministers is one which, though it does not positively appal, nevertheless cannot be welcome to anyone. The existing unemployment situation is one that has been accentuated as the result of lack of initiative on the part of the previous Government. It struck me as remarkable, this evening, that works proposed by the present Government were opposed on the ground that the city was getting too many of them. Evidently the desire was not so much that works should be put in hand as that works should be secured for the particular districts in which some members were specially interested. Such a policy is utterly mistaken. It is not a policy which animates the Government returned by the people with a mandate to do something. The Government do not study the interests of particular districts, but seek to put in hand works in localities where the effect will be to give the maximum of employment and circulate money. I commend the Minister for Works for his initiative in starting the reclamation works which have been opposed. An extraordinary feature, bordering on the farcical, is disclosed by the fact that out of a total revenue of some £8,000,000 received for the last financial year, over £4,000,000 went merely to pay interest, exchange and sinking fund. While over half the income of the State is absorbed by such charges, the Leader of the Opposition contends that production costs must be reduced.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MOLONEY: It must be apparent to every member that a reduction in interest charges is long overdue. It is true that we benefited recently by a reduction, according to "The West Australian," which represented £68,000. That was acceptable, but it merely evidenced the fact that while everything else depreciated, interest charges remained at the same level. Such a state of affairs is not equitable. A country possessing such a sparse population as that of Western Australia can ill afford to shoulder the load of interest to the extent I have indicated. It represents a total of £188 11s. 2d. per head of the population. In addition to that, we have the unemployment that is

rampant to-day. I have no hesitation in saying that the Mitchell Government did not even attempt to grapple with that problem. Taxation was piled up to an abnormal extent and yet there was no diminution of unemployment. The present Government have inherited an appalling legacy, and yet they have been chided because an Economic Council has been formed and the Minister is not devoting the whole of his time to the task. In making such an interjection and in giving utterance to the statement he did during the course of his speech, the Leader of the Opposition showed an extremely limited understanding of the fundamentals that characterise the relief of unemployment and a lack of knowledge of the way that problem should be tackled. It is essential that men who possess technical and industrial ability, such as those who have been selected from the various spheres of life in which they are experts, should be called together to advise the Minister. Yet we have been told that the Minister has been shelving his responsibilities. Rather than blame the Minister, the hon. member should have congratulated him for having called to his assistance men capable of handling such a problem. It must be patent to every member that the Minister, even if he were a super man, could not be fully acquainted with the intricacies of all matters that come within his purview. When he can secure the services of not only those who work with their hands, but of those whose brains direct industry, and avail himself of those services in an honorary capacity so that the Government may have the benefit of their assistance in a time of national crisis, the Minister, rather than be condemned, should be applauded. Never before has unemployment been rampant throughout the world to the extent that is apparent to-day. The problem has assumed an international importance and has threatened the existence of civilisation. Australia is not immune, and the task must be handled in the most effective manner. The Government are facing it as well as possible in view of the difficulties bequeathed to them by their predecessors in office. The people are desirous of observing the requirements of constituted authority and to afford all requisite assistance. Yet they are to-day, because of the existing system, still waiting for a more equal distribution of that which they know should be available for them as

their right. The great mass of the unemployed to-day are, in a sense, representative of our untapped wealth. Owing to the mechanisation of industry, as a result of the ingenuity of man, workers are deprived of the opportunities for work that they formerly possessed. In consequence, many are confronted with the spectre of destitution and ignominy. They are told that they are to receive charity and should be thankful for it. That is representative of the opinion of some of those concerned in the distribution of charity, for they think that the workers should ask for that which is, in the latter's opinion, their absolute right. In our opinion, they have an undoubted right to take that assistance from the Governments of Australia, failing the provision of work. I am pleased that the present Government, despite the gibes of those who ask when Ministers intend to put their policy into operation, are functioning effectively and doing all that is possible. As an indication of their activities, we have only to look at Parliament House itself. As a result of the ineptitude of the Mitchell Government, the building was allowed to lapse into a condition of decay, and white ants have been eating through the cover boards of the electric conduits, while dry rot is apparent as well. The Mitchell Government allowed the building to fall into a distressing condition of disrepair and it remained for the present Government to place men at work to restore the building to a more presentable condition. That state of affairs applies throughout the State where the Government buildings are concerned, especially school buildings, which have been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair. Now there is a change. We have a comprehensive programme drawn up and schools and public buildings are to be renovated. So it is all along the line. The Government intend to provide work that ultimately will absorb a large number of men, limited only by the amount of money made available for that purpose. It goes without saying that it is the desire of the present Government to do all those things that they promised the electors should be attended to. If I mistake not, that objective will be most certainly carried out to the best of their ability and by the application of initiative, which is a natural corollary, seeing that those who represent the workers know and understand their industrial needs. I

have instanced the lack of renovations with regard to public buildings, and my remarks apply equally to the railway system. We have it on the authority of a prominent departmental official that the cost of restoring the railway system to an efficient condition will represent about £500,000. Wagons have been stowed away with blue marks on them, indicating that they are not to be utilised. They have been placed away at Robb's Jetty where no one is likely to see them, rather than let the public know that the plant has had to be withdrawn from the road. Instead of keeping men in employment effecting repairs to railway wagons and plant, thus performing useful services, they have been handed out the dole. It is to rectify such a position that the Government take their stand, and they will see that the wheels of industry are kept moving to the extent of the money made available. Money has been frittered away while vehicles, necessary for transportation purposes, and public buildings have been allowed to rot. But the Labour Government have inherited that legacy, and they are confronted with the necessity to carry out long-neglected work. In my own constituency, there is need for work to be carried out and I have received a number of requests from Subiaco residents with that end in view. School buildings require renovating and school yards require attention. In some instances, the sand is showing through the gravel in the playgrounds, and other alterations, necessary from a health point of view, require to be carried out. In the past, such work has been allowed to stand over. It is time the people realised the position and I know they are not so gullible as the Leader of the Opposition would have us believe. He suggested that the people were receiving the benefit of all the educational facilities that they ought to have, and yet during the regime of the Mitchell Government, we had the spectacle of the Training College at Claremont being closed, the Psychological Clinic dispensed with and other essentials set aside as well. All the time, the Mitchell Government were putting off the evil day and were making the best of it. To-day we have in power Ministers possessed of vision and they desire to restore many of those facilities that were set aside by their predecessors. These are some of the features of the present day

situation that appeal to me, as a newcomer to parliamentary life. I hope the House will not consider that I am adopting a hectoring attitude but will realise that I am merely putting the position as it appeals to me. It must be evident to everyone that, as a result of the efficiency of labour and the introduction of machinery, the unemployment problem has been accentuated and the Government will be able to provide relief only to the extent of the money made available to them. Until there has been effected a complete alteration of the monetary system as it now exists, no panacea for the ills from which labour suffers to-day, will be forthcoming. I look forward to the time when the workers throughout the State will be placed at work again, not under sustenance conditions but under circumstances that will enable them to procure the necessities of life that they formerly enjoyed. To-day it seems to be accepted by a large number of people that the worker can exist upon the meagre pittance made available in the shape of the dole. This country has no need for the perpetuation of the dole system. I am pleased to know the present Government are considering a programme that will eliminate the dole as far as practicable, and place men at work on the basic wage. That will put into circulation a considerable amount of money that will, in turn, re-employ others. Rather than wait for a rise in the price level overseas we, as a community, should be operating with every facility to assist those in our midst. We are all awaiting an alteration in the international point of view, but according to to-night's paper it does not seem that anything is likely soon to loom on the horizon. There are at Subiaco various matters which, at the earliest opportunity, I will bring before the notice of the Government. First there is the necessity for a foot-bridge across the railway at Daghish, and then there is the widening of the bridge in Axon-street, and the renovation of various public buildings which I have been promised will be carried out at the earliest opportunity. I do not desire that members should think I am introducing parochial matters, but the interests of the Subiaco constituents have for so long been neglected that it is essential they should be brought before the Government. At the Jolimont school the fence is rotting away, and the teacher tells me he has seen no representative of the Govern-

ment there for years past. Nor has anything been done about the lake. People living in the other direction say their needs must be placed before the Government. I am satisfied that the present Ministry will be very ready to meet any legitimate needs consistent with the money they have at their disposal. I am confident that with the assistance and co-operation that have been promised by the Leader of the Opposition, the present Government will be reinforced, and that the legislation they desire to bring forward in the interests of the people will be thus expedited. I thank the House for the patient hearing they have given me, and I will reserve further comment for some future occasion.

MR. CLOTHIER (Maylands) [7.48]: I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment to the high office you hold, and to congratulate also the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. I sincerely hope the Leader of the Opposition will continue in his post for a very long time. I listened with interest to the remarks of His Excellency's Speech touching upon gold mining and prospecting. We must all commend the Minister for Mines on his prospecting scheme, the real object of which, I think, is to provide a chance for the rising generation, the youths in our midst. Time and again have those youths been refused sustenance, but now they are to be given a chance to get away prospecting under the direction of men with a wide knowledge of the game. I hope the Minister will be duly rewarded for initiating the scheme. We have heard several times that £555,000 spent on education is a fair proposition. Personally I should be very sorry to see that amount reduced. Only this morning, coming past the Maylands school, I counted the members of three classes. In one there were 72 children, in another 63, and in the third 54. That is beyond reason, for I hold that any number from 45 to 50 is quite enough to be in a class under one teacher, and I hope the Government will see their way to establishing this limit. The Leader of the Opposition had a good deal to say about our primary industries. It will not be denied that the Labour Party stand wholly and solely for the success of those industries. They recognise fully that primary production means the welfare of the metropolitan area. This is seen by comparing the achievements of the Collier Ad-

ministration during 5½ years with those of the Mitchell Government during a similar period. The Collier Government provided agricultural water supplies and Agricultural Bank allowances to the value of £2,644,000, as against £1,073,000 provided by the Mitchell Administration. Again, during the regime of the Collier Government 11,285,000 acres of land was taken up, as against 8,000,000 odd acres during 5½ years of the Mitchell Government. From this it will be seen that the people of the agricultural areas must have been satisfied that they were well treated by the Collier Government. The Minister for Lands remarked yesterday that there are any number of inquiries for abandoned farms. Here again, it seems to me we have proof that the agriculturists know they may rely for fair treatment upon the Collier Government. Having been in the industrial movement for a number of years and in touch with various firms of employers working undue hours of labour, I contend the Government should have an ample staff of inspectors in order to catch those people breaking the industrial awards to the prejudice of the genuine worker competing in business. Only the week before last the secretary of an organisation was notified that a certain firm of foreigners was going to work. The secretary of the organisation concerned thought it best to let the inspector know all about it. What was the result? The inspector rang up the firm and when he went to the place there were no men working. It would be to the general advantage for the Government to appoint two inspectors for that work alone, or alternatively give the secretaries of the organisations increased power to catch those breaking awards. I make bold to say that if this were done, the police court would not have sufficient paper on which to write out summonses for all those infringing the awards. Again in reference to inspectors—I understand this has never previously been brought forward here—there is the unfortunate position of domestic servants. I know that some parents of young girls who cannot get work answer advertisements in the Press, and when they apply for the job they are offered 5s. a week and keep. Fancy that in a country like Western Australia! Some employers offer a little more, but the hours of work are from 6 o'clock in the morning to 6 o'clock or 7 o'clock in the evening,