

enable them to meet their liabilities. Under the Act, the local bodies have to pay 8s. 7d. per day for every patient who is sent to an infectious diseases hospital for treatment. That might not sound very much, but it amounts to a large sum for the local bodies. For the city of Perth, it means a sum of £700 a year. One unfair feature is that a man from a country district might be residing in Perth for only a week when he is found to be suffering from an infectious disease and is ordered into hospital. The Perth City Council have to pay for his upkeep, although he is not a resident of the city and pays no rates to the city.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is, provided he is not in a position to pay for himself.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: That is rather misleading. In the majority of cases no patient pays. When people are sent to the hospital the local authority pays, and it is almost impossible for the local authority to secure a recoup when the patients recover. I had information from the City Treasurer this morning that very few of the patients meet their liabilities. I think the Government should undertake this responsibility. A hospital tax is already imposed, and if it were necessary to increase the rate a little, I do not think the public would object. Money for the various hospitals must be raised, and if the local authorities have to raise it, they will have to budget for it at the beginning of their financial year. Thus it amounts to six of one and half-a-dozen of the other, whether the Government or the local authorities do it. I do not wish it to be thought that I am poking my nose into other people's business, but I should like to refer to the development of the North. That part of the State requires a great amount of assistance. I am pleased that we have in this House members who are thoroughly competent to look after the interests of the North, and to urge its development as far as the funds available will permit. Arrangements should be made with the Federal Government to allocate a larger amount of money for the further development of the North. It would not be necessary for the Commonwealth authorities to send officials here to administer the fund, because we have representatives who know the North from A to Z and are in a position to advise what is best to be done.

Hon. G. Fraser: They carry a fair weight, too.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: As regards their "bingeys," undoubtedly they do. I regret that when we had an opportunity to appoint a Federal Senator recently we did not select one of those gentlemen. The North certainly needs a representative in the Senate, and the presence of one there would undoubtedly be advantageous to the State. I gather that during the present session legislation will be introduced that will benefit the State and make for its further progress, and so far as I can do so, I will assist the Government to get such legislation placed on the statute-book.

**HON. H. TUCKEY** (South-West) [5.28]: I should like to join with other members in expressing regret at the defeat of Mr. R. G. Moore and Mr. Yelland. I also join in the congratulations extended to the two newly-elected members. It is pleasing to me to note an apparent desire on the part of members to complete this debate without unnecessary delay. Year after year the debate has occupied a great deal of time, which, in many instances, might have been used to greater advantage. The debate has already been concluded in another place, probably in record time for that House. The Lieutenant-Governor's Speech is not very informative if one is looking to the future. The most serious omission is absence of any reference to a policy that would encourage people to come to this State. Our small population is a very serious disadvantage, and while I do not advocate bringing people here indiscriminately, I do consider that every effort should be made to inaugurate a scheme that would encourage people to come here and increase our numbers. To my mind, this is not a matter for the State alone. It should be a matter for the Federal and Imperial Governments as well. A few weeks ago the Minister for Lands said that the results of land settlement in Western Australia had left the State Government stone cold. I think the Minister, on that occasion, should have said "State farming" or "group settlement." It appears to me that the time has already arrived when the Government should give further consideration to the subject of group settlement. The Agricultural Bank Commissioners are being severely criticised, but Parliament is responsible for the Act which they are administering. That Act has not been amended. I understood, when the Agricultural Bank Bill was passed here last session, that all Agricultural Bank clients

were to be brought under one scheme, and financed and managed; but that does not appear to be the case. In the circumstances I support Mr. Thomson in his contention that group settlers should have an appeal board, which in special circumstances would make recommendations to the Agricultural Bank Commissioners. The Act controlling transport should also be amended to improve conditions in outlying districts. In my opinion the measure definitely penalises people outside the metropolitan area, and an early opportunity should be taken to review the whole matter. The Act is far from being perfect. If a person drives to the traffic office on the 1st day of July in order to renew his driver's license, and in doing so meets with an accident, then no compensation under insurance may be claimed, because the driver is not licensed. In my opinion it should be sufficient for the driver to be competent. Another serious question is that of accidents. If fatal accidents continue at the rate at which they are now occurring, before long no one will be left to pay license fees. Next I desire to say a few words about fruit cases. For some time past fruit-growers have experienced difficulty in obtaining their requirements in that respect. The main difficulty seems to be that it does not pay sawmillers to cut fruit cases except as a side line and from waste timber. The ordinary sawmill cannot do the work economically, not being equipped with planing machines and other apparatus essential to the turning out of the article cheaply. I consider that the fruit-growing industry of Western Australia is of sufficient importance to warrant the reservation of portion of our jarrah or karri forests for the purpose of establishing a State mill to cut fruit cases only. We should aim at getting fruit cases supplied at a much cheaper rate than the present one. I regret the necessity for drawing attention to matters connected with the fishing industry. It would appear that for many years Governments have done their best to wipe out what ought to be a highly valuable industry to the State. I ask the Chief Secretary, in replying, to state why the department was removed from Ministerial control and placed in the care of an officer of the Premier's Department. With all due respect to Mr. Shapcott, I do not think that should have been done. I can remem-

ber when the Chief Inspector of Fisheries had, in addition to his staff of inspectors, an office staff comprising an accountant, one or two clerks, and a typist. I understand that now he has only a part-time typist as his office staff. That fact gives an idea of how the department has been cut down. The department showed a decent profit for over 20 years, but instead of the industry being assisted and protected, successive Governments have used the departmental revenues for other purposes. The State went to a great deal of trouble in obtaining the present Chief Inspector of Fisheries from the Eastern States. It is generally recognised that an excellent choice was made; but the officer has never been given the ghost of a chance, because as the departmental head he has never had two bob to call his own. There are only eight inspectors to do the whole of the work between Broome and Albany. One of these inspectors is detailed to skins; so there are only seven men available for the remainder of the work. The inspectors have no transport facilities whatever—not even motor cycles. To demonstrate how difficult it is for them to do their work under such conditions, I would point out that should an inspector in Busselton be notified that poaching is taking place on the Blackwood River, he is obliged to travel by train to the locality. Augusta is 60 miles away, which means practically a day's journey; and by the time the inspector reached the closed waters, the poachers would have disappeared. Under such conditions there might just as well be no inspector at all for that district. I could quote many similar instances, and could say a great deal more on the subject. However, to be brief, I say that the Fisheries Department has never had a fair deal. I desire to commend the excellent work done by the Fish and Game Society, a body that appears to be using every effort to improve matters; but unfortunately for many years past Governments have not done their part. I agree with the stand that has been taken by the Minister for Agriculture regarding the payment of a bonus on foxes. My feeling is that the bonus should be continued as long as possible; in fact, many people would pay a higher vermin rate rather than that the bonus should be discontinued. We have been told that this is a suitable time

to complete the construction of Parliament House. I do not share that view. On the other hand, I consider it is high time proper consideration was shown to the officers and staff of Parliament by making their accommodation habitable during the hot summer months. If at all possible, that additional accommodation should be provided in accordance with the original plans. A great deal has been said about providing full-time employment for sustenance workers. The Mitchell and Collier Governments did all that was possible in the circumstances, and I understand the same policy is being carried out by the present Administration. Originally many people had to accept relief work on account of being thrown out of employment by the depression. I do not consider it fair to expect the Government now to provide those people with full-time work irrespective of whether the work is reproductive. There has always been a small army of Government workers. I remember that years ago, at certain seasons, the State had to provide relief work. If, however, we make it a condition that the Government shall find permanent employment for all those workers to-day, we shall be asking the State to do the impossible. Recently I attended a meeting at a centre near Donnybrook. At that meeting two farmers said that they had tried to get two men for four months' work at the rate of 10s. per day and keep. None of a number of sustenance workers employed in the locality at that time would accept the positions, because, they said, after they had left the farmers they would have to stand down for some time before the Government would put them on again. Thus the two farmers were unable to obtain the labour they needed. That state of affairs should be remedied. I fail to see why something cannot be done in the matter. It appears altogether wrong that farmers should go without labour while at their very doors the taxpayers are employing men. In conclusion, I desire to commend the Government for their generous treatment of the South-West during Labour's last term of office. The Government have spent a large amount of money on development work which will prove of the greatest benefit to the State. Particularly have the Main Roads Board opened up a large area of country by making various roads practicable

which at one time were quite impassable. The people throughout the South-West greatly appreciate the activities of the Main Roads Board. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.11 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 10th September, 1936.*

	PAGE
Questions: Bird pest .....	533
Water supplies, country .....	534
Bills: Justices Act Amendment, 1st .....	534
Wool (Draft Allowance Prohibition), 2nd, Com. report .....	546
Trade Descriptions and False Advertisements, 2nd .....	551
Annual Estimates, Committee of Supply .....	554

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

### QUESTION—BIRD PEST.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Has his attention been drawn to a paragraph in the "West Australian" of the 2nd September relative to the shooting of a starling at Gingin? 2, If so, has it been ascertained whether there are a number of such birds in the district? 3, If the answer to No. 2 is in the affirmative, will he take immediate action to have them destroyed, and also take action to prevent their further entry into Western Australia?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Yes. 2, The matter is being carefully followed up by the departmental officers and the local vermin board. 3, Every effort is made to prevent the introduction of this bird, which has been declared vermin, into the State.