

Mr. Marshall: Are the books changed every year?

Mr. WITHERS: Nearly every year. I am a family man, and I can show the hon. member a tin trunk containing between £15 and £20 worth of books, some of which cost 7s. or 8s., the leaves of which had hardly been turned before they had to be discarded in preference for other books that had been substituted. Parents cannot afford to pay so much for books in these days.

Mr. Marshall: Are those books compiled and printed within the State?

Mr. WITHERS: Of course not. The other evening the Premier referred to the tariff on books. He said we had to get books from overseas because Australian writers could not provide all that was necessary, and I quite agree with what he said.

The Attorney General: We are producing a great many books in Australia now.

Mr. WITHERS: I am glad to hear that; it is certainly time we did so.

The Attorney General: We have been doing that for some years.

Mr. WITHERS: I know that the school paper the children read is a Victorian publication. It is certainly an Australian product and is much appreciated, but I think we should go much further in that direction. I have no objection to all classes of literature for adults being imported into the State, but I think we should endeavour to give the children a little Australian literature in the early stages of their education.

Mr. Marshall: At any rate we should have books provided in Western Australia for elementary education purposes.

The Attorney General: We have officers engaged on the work of preparing such books now.

Mr. WITHERS: I am glad to hear the Minister make that announcement. It will have a tendency to stop the practice of changing the text books every year. The old Royal Reader that I used in my day had been handed down from brother to brother and is still in the possession of my father. It has been in the family for 40 years.

The Minister for Lands: The only mistake it made was that it brought you to this Chamber!

Hon. J. C. Willecock: That is not the only mistake the old Royal Reader made.

Mr. WITHERS: I trust that effort will be followed still further because the people in receipt of the basic wage, or less than that wage, are certainly not in a position to buy books for their children attending school. I thank members for the patient hearing they have accorded me. It is not a patient hearing that I desire, but justice for the South-West. I want the Bunbury harbour to be attended to properly because it is necessary for the South-West, for without it, that part of the State cannot prosper.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [6.5]: During the debate on the Supply Bill last week, the sustenance question proved a very vexed one. The outcome of that discussion certainly gave me great pleasure insofar as it proved to me that Opposition members resent very keenly the interference by the Federal Government with Western Australia. On that point they established, to my mind, a very firm case in support of secession. I am sure the Dominion League and others interested in severing our connection with the Commonwealth must have been very pleased indeed with the contentions submitted by Opposition members. At this stage I wish to say that I admire the Leader of the Opposition very much, and always have been an admirer of his. I know that uppermost in his mind is the welfare of the State. The Minister for Works must have been exceedingly pleased with the attitude of the Opposition respecting another phase. The Minister is endeavouring to establish the principle of bulk handling operations in Western Australia. The Leader of the Opposition and other speakers complained that the Government were employing hand labour in connection with the drainage works at Harvey instead of making machinery available. Opposition members certainly supported the Minister for Works in his effort to establish bulk handling because they advocated the use of machinery instead of hand labour.

Mr. Marshall: The Minister is not too sanguine about the position himself.

Mr. THORN: The Minister is desirous of establishing the principle of bulk handling and must feel pleased indeed with the support the Opposition gave him regarding the use of machinery. Bulk handling is an im-

portant matter for Western Australia. Today farmers are down and out, and are suffering from the effects of low prices for their products. Anything we can do to make available a few pence extra per bushel, it is our duty to accomplish. I am in favour of the bulk handling scheme that will give the farmers the greatest benefit, and I shall support it when the bulk handling measures are brought before the House. As a country member, I am concerned about unemployment in the outer districts, and the lack of consideration the country unemployed are receiving. It is difficult for those who are cut of work in the rural districts to establish their destitution, seeing that many of them own small blocks. The fact remains, however, that many of those people are passing through most distressing experiences.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Do you support their claim for £150 a year?

Mr. THORN: No, not for a moment. On the other hand, I have put a proposition before the Government, and if it were agreed to, there would be no need to force the farmers I have in mind to establish their claim for sustenance on the grounds of destitution. I propose that if work was undertaken in the areas where the farmers were located, they might be given two days' work per week, which would materially assist them. I can give an instance to illustrate the hardships involved in the present situation. The road from Chidlows Well to Wooroloo is being deviated from the blocks held by a number of impoverished settlers. They took up those blocks with the object of supplying firewood and charcoal to the city, but they have lost their market. With so many engaged with trucks in procuring and delivering firewood, those settlers have little chance of making ends meet. Their blocks comprise a poor type of land that would not maintain a sheep to 10 acres. They are in an unfortunate position. They are destitute but cannot secure employment. I appeal to the Government to give those people consideration and not to force them to come to Perth to establish their claim for sustenance. On the other hand, I ask the Government to provide them with two days' work a week in order to keep them going. I was glad to hear the remarks of the member for Geraldton (Hon. J. C. Willcock) and the member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) in advocacy of small allotments. There was

never a more opportune time than the present for the Government to encourage small holdings.

Mr. Marshall: We should not have done anything else.

Mr. THORN: I agree with that statement. Amongst the unemployed are men of experience and of good calibre, men most anxious to take up small holdings in order to provide for themselves. They are destitute and cannot get the necessary assistance to enable them to take up holdings. The Government would be wise to give that suggestion serious consideration. In the hills district of my electorate, along the Midland line and in the Toodyay area, there is land suitable for that purpose. It is well watered and is available.

Mr. Marshall: Not Crown land?

Mr. THORN: There is plenty of Crown land between Clackline and Toodyay. Of course the land along the Midland line is owned by the Midland Railway Company. There are poverty-stricken farmers who have good properties, but owing to the depression they have lost the market for their wool and wheat. The consequence is that they are not in a position to meet their commitments and they would be only too pleased to place the land I have in mind at the disposal of the Government. Although the dried fruits industry is fairly stabilised today, it must not be thought that the viticultural industry has all its eggs in one basket. Apart from dried fruits, the growers have exported grapes and have placed them on the local market. In addition, they have sent supplies to the wine cellars. I have heard it suggested by members that the dried fruits industry is in a flourishing condition, but the fact is that we are merely in a position to meet our interest charges. No member of this House would desire us to be reduced to the poverty-stricken basis of the wool and wheat growers. I will give an instance to illustrate the position regarding export grapes. The industry is like a barometer; it goes up and down. Although in the previous year we secured good returns, the market varies.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. THORN: Before tea I was touching briefly on the viticultural industry and endeavouring to point out that although dried

fruits are now in a fairly stabilised condition, we have not all our eggs in one basket. I want to demonstrate the position of export grapes this season. One grower exported 700 cases in one consignment and got a return of £2 7s. 6d. for that consignment. Imagine that amount for 700 cases! His next return, for 80 cases, was a debit of £5 5s. 6d.

Hon. P. Collier: His return was a debit.

Mr. Kenneally: It sounds like Government finance.

Mr. THORN: That is another phase of the industry. Fortunately during the last 12 months a new enterprise in the way of a wine cellar has been established on the Swan. That certainly has created a little more competition, and we have secured a better price for our wine grapes. I am hoping to persuade the Minister for Agriculture during this session to amend the Cases Act. On the goldfields we have a very good market for wine grapes, but unfortunately up to date we have had to send them forward in petrol cases costing us 14s. per dozen. I propose to ask the Minister whether it would not be possible to so amend the Act as to allow us to send the grapes forward in second-hand dumps, which we can purchase at 2d. each. The only difficulty is the possible danger of spreading fruit fly, but I have consulted the Minister's officers and have convinced them that at all events on the goldfields there is no danger in that respect.

The Minister for Lands: What about their orchards?

Mr. THORN: There is no danger to their orchards, because you will already find the fruit fly thriving in the quandongs in that district.

The Minister for Lands: I meant the orchards in the Upper Swan.

Mr. THORN: There is no danger there. We can use second-hand dumps in our industry to-day, but we are not allowed to send them over a certain line. I would be the last to advocate a method like this if it involved any danger. I have been vitally interested in the fruit industry for the last 25 years, and for seven years I was an inspector in the industry, so I can assure members that I would never take any steps that would endanger any district with pests. If this reform could be brought about it would mean an immense saving to the growers, for they would then have to pay for a dozen cases only 2s. as against 14s. I am a confirmed advocate of organised marketing, and I am

sure there never was a time when it was more urgent that we should endeavour to bring about the organised marketing of our products, and consequently the control of our surplus. To-day we have surpluses in a good many lines, such as eggs, citrus fruit, dried fruit, apples and fat lambs. I am sure control in that respect could be applied, and I am most earnest in my contention that if the Government can possibly bring down a Bill this session to assist us in the organised marketing of our products, they will not only do a great service to the producer, but will be benefiting the worker also. I have frequently heard members declare that the producer has wasted money in the past. I do not agree with that, but I will say the producer is a brave spender, and that if he is getting a good return from his products he will soon put that money into circulation. So any benefit the producer might get from this proposed reform will be reflected on the worker. A few months ago I had the pleasure of introducing a deputation to the Minister for Works in relation to a new bridge for Toodyay. The bridge leading out from the east end of the town, on the Goomalling road is unsafe, and the other bridge, having been built at too low a level, is under water in times of flood. So I ask the Minister to give, if it be at all possible, due consideration to that bridge for Toodyay. All that the people of Toodyay ask for is one central bridge. I have heard a little criticism from the Opposition directed at the building of the Yanchep road.

Hon. P. Collier: I forgot that is all rich land out there.

Mr. THORN: Yes, that is one point the hon. member has forgotten. That road was built at a time when we were all anxious to find employment for men who in turn were anxious to earn the money they were receiving. For the workers, I am sure, do not appreciate sustenance as such, but would rather earn the money. The opportunity to build that road was ripe, the material was all available locally, and so it meant virtually 100 per cent. labour. I was amongst those who took part in requesting the Minister to build it.

Hon. P. Collier: I find I have been criticising the wrong person.

Mr. THORN: The Wanneroo district is unserved by railways, and so the best of roads is required, since the people have to depend on road transport. In conclusion I should like to congratulate the Government

on the way they have carried on and the economies they have effected during this very serious crisis through which we are passing. Undoubtedly it is a world-wide depression, and so we cannot blame our State Parliament for it. It is one of those things that have been inflicted upon us. In difficult circumstances the Government have carried on, and I commend them for it. Also I offer my congratulations to the Leader of the Opposition for the statesman-like speech he delivered here on Tuesday evening. I may be pardoned if I say I am quite sure the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues sitting opposite have the welfare of Western Australia uppermost in their minds.

HON. S. W. MUNSIE (Hannans) [7.40]: The Speech delivered to Parliament by His Excellency is certainly a very short one. I do not altogether agree that that is a good thing, particularly if the Governor's Speeches to be delivered to future Parliaments are going to contain as little information as this latest one does. With the member for Geraldton (Hon. J. C. Willecock), I am prepared to admit that the Speech is informative respecting the State's production during the past year. But in a general sense the Speech is remarkable rather for the things it does not say. Here is one paragraph from it:—

In order to meet the grave financial crisis which existed, expenditure has been greatly reduced during the year in accordance with the Premiers' Plan. The falling off in revenue has necessitated economy in every possible direction, so that government might continue along the path of financial reconstruction.

Here is another remarkable paragraph from the same source—

The persistence of the world-wide depression made it imperative for the Premiers to decide unanimously that the provisions of the Premiers' Plan should be continued for the ensuing year.

I could understand that if during the 12 months' experience we have had of the Premiers' Plan it had proved to be of any benefit to the State. I think it as well that we should analyse what has happened during the last 12 months since the Premiers' Plan has been in operation, so that we may see whether we are justified in continuing that Plan for a further 12 months. May I point out that one result of 12 months' working

of the Premiers' Plan has been a record deficit in Western Australia's finances.

The Minister for Lands: You would not say the Premiers' Plan was responsible for the deficit. We got a 2 per cent. reduction of our Australian debt.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes, in some ways the Plan has been of benefit to the State, but the more the Minister argues in that direction, the more will it tell against him in the end; because if he claims that the Premier's Plan has been the saviour of Australia, then his Government's record deficit is a disgrace to them. I certainly do not think it opportune for the deputy Premier to mention the benefits the Government have had from the Premiers' Plan when even with those benefits they have so markedly failed in their attempts to square the Budget. And that would not be so bad if the present year did not promise very much worse. Under this Plan which is to be the salvation of Australia, including Western Australia, we find that for the first month to elapse of this financial year, the Government have gone to the bad by £34,020 more than they did in July of last year. If retrogression continues at the same rate throughout the 12 months, the Government will be £408,000 worse off this year than they were last year. There are no indications that the financial position in Western Australia has improved one iota. Everything points to its growing worse. I admit that the month of July always shows a deficit, but there are reasons for it.

The Minister for Lands: We had to balance on the 30th June.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: That applied to last year also. I was glad that the Loan Council or Premiers' Conference insisted upon all Governments closing their books on the 30th June. Previously the books were closed on that date as regards expenditure, but for revenue the books were kept open for 10, 12 or 14 days longer, and the money received was credited to the previous year's income. It was decided that the books should definitely be closed on the 30th June, and last year was the first occasion on which that system came into operation. Consequently the Deputy Premier cannot claim that circumstances were different this year, because last year the books had to be closed on the 30th June. I do not want to be critical, but I would like some information re-