

**Legislative Assembly,***Wednesday, 19th August, 1925.*

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

**QUESTION—STATE WHEAT MARKETING SCHEME.**

Mr. LATHAM asked the Premier: 1, What amount of unclaimed moneys or surplus proceeds remained after the 1921-22 State Wheat Marketing Scheme? 2, What is the sum remaining on hand to date? 3, Is it held in a trust fund?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, Unpresented certificates, £2,573 2s. 7d.; unpresented cheques, £13 17s. 9d.; surplus funds, £2,728 2s.; total, £5,315 2s. 4d. Less claims paid, £215 13s.; balance, £5,099 9s. 4d. 3, The money was transferred to Revenue, upon receipt, in accordance with the provisions of the Unclaimed Moneys Act.

**BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.**

- 1, Water Boards Act Amendment.
- 2, Goldfields Water Supply Act Amendment.
- 3, Land Drainage.

Introduced by Hon. J. Cunningham (Honorary Minister).

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.***Ninth Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. MILLINGTON** (Leederville) [4.36]: I congratulate the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) on her election and on the very able and creditable manner in which she moved the adoption of the Address-in-reply. The timber workers have in her a capable representative, one who understands them and who will be able to give sympathetic consideration to their many requirements. From what she told the House, there is ur-

gent need for reform, particularly in the conditions under which the timber workers live. I congratulate the electors of Forrest on their good fortune in having a representative who understands their needs so well. The Governor's Speech is a comprehensive record of the achievements under the Labour Government during the last 12 months. Although the Speech is longer than usual, it is a concise record of what has been done. I cannot point to anything that could have been omitted from the Speech, but later on I shall refer to something that I think might well have been included. During the year important commissions of inquiry appointed by the State and by the Federal Governments have pursued their investigations, and reports in respect to them have been laid on the Table. Amongst the reports are those of the Royal Commission on group settlement and of the Federal Commission appointed to inquire into the disabilities suffered by Western Australia under Federation. The State Government threw themselves whole-heartedly into the latter inquiry, and the case presented by them concisely and ably indicates the disabilities under which the State is suffering. Those disabilities have formed a theme of discussion during recent years and the document will be a most valuable one for reference purposes. The State Government can claim to have definitely recorded their views regarding Federation as it affects the State. It remains to be seen whether the Federal Government will view the matter in the same light, and whether they will realise the necessity for remedying some of the disabilities under which we are suffering.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I wish they would let us write the recommendation and approval.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I wish the Federal authorities would take the view of those people who are in close touch with the affairs of the State and extend to us sympathy such as has been extended to other portions of the Commonwealth. However we have not yet lost hope that the Federal Government will afford us some relief, and I believe much will be gained as a result of the manner in which the State's case has been presented. The Federal Government at least know what we want, and they have before them accurate and comprehensive tabulations such as had not previously been compiled. The Government should be congratulated on having risen to the occasion and had the State's



case prepared so thoroughly and well. Another report to which I shall refer later is that of the Royal Commission which inquired into the metropolitan milk supply. There is no question anterior to that of the milk supply for none of us can remember when he first became interested in the milk question. The report of the commission deals with the metropolitan milk supply, but it is valuable also because it affects the whole State. The Commissioner of Railways has presented statements showing the financial position of the railways, tramways and electricity supply. The report of the Commissioner is of considerable importance in that it has a material bearing upon the question of tramway extensions, in which I am particularly interested. I should like to discover why certain extensions have not been agreed to. It is pleasing to note the financial recovery of the railways during last year.

Mr. Mann: During the last three years.

Mr. MILLINGTON: That is so. The recovery is due to an extent to the increased volume of trade and to the increased population, and credit should be given to the management. The Commissioner has shown that despite inevitable increases in costs, the figures have been kept down to the utmost. The report, viewed as a whole, indicates that we have greater efficiency in our railway management to-day than there ever has been. One point to which I must direct attention is the number of locomotives. Despite the fact that the volume of trade has increased, as is shown by the statistics relating to haulage and ton mileage, the number of locomotives has decreased from 423 in the year 1921 to 405 last year. I hope that the improved financial position is not due to starvation of the system. If we get behind in regard to rolling stock and locomotives, it means that the recovery is really on paper.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The department have much heavier engines now.

Mr. MILLINGTON: That is true, but there is a danger, which has made itself felt under previous Commissioners, of an endeavour being made to show a good financial position by starving the rolling stock and the upkeep of lines. Owing to the advent of motor transport, in the shape of private cars as well as motor buses, the passenger journeys have decreased from about 18 millions for the previous year to about 17 millions for last year. That is a distinct

disadvantage to the Railway Department, but in spite of it the management have been able to present a considerably better financial position than in previous years. The matter of the decrease of passenger journeys will have to receive attention, but it can be discussed under other headings. Certainly it is well worthy of consideration by this Chamber. A portion of the report with which I desire to deal further is that referring to the charges on various classes of goods. I notice that fertilisers are still being carried at a little over 1½d. per ton per mile, and also that wheat is still the next most favourably considered freight. Timber occupies the highest position in percentage of traffic—18.15 as against 17.27 for wheat; but on local timber there is a considerably higher rate than there is on wheat. It seems that more special consideration is being given to one of our primary industries than another. Those who maintain that our railways are not what they should be, may refer to the fact that wheat is carried at 0.06d. while timber is charged 2.27d. All the advantage appears to be with the wheat growers in that respect. We must realise that the railways occupy a dual position—firstly that of a freighting concern which we insist shall pay its way, and secondly that of an agent in the fostering of industry. Next I desire to refer to the Government Electricity Supply. This big State trading concern, one of the most important we have, is suffering under a heavy disadvantage owing to its having been badly launched. This fact, in its turn, is due to the agreement made by the Government with the Perth City Council. Attention has frequently been drawn to the matter, but it is a very prominent feature in the Commissioner's last report. During the year 44 million units of electricity have been produced, and of this number the Perth City Council have taken nearly half—21 million odd. The difficulty is that whereas it costs 1.02d. to produce a unit, the City Council under their agreement pay for their electricity supply at .75d. per unit. The general manager estimates that if the Perth City Council paid the actual cost of production, and that would not be asking too much, then on the system of book-keeping the Government Electricity Supply would be a properly financed concern, in that there would be no loss, and from a State point of view that is all we ask. However, instead of getting the actual cost of production, 1.02d.,



the State receives from the City Council only  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per unit.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What agreement are you referring to?

Mr. MILLINGTON: The agreement whereby the Perth City Council are entitled for 50 years to current at  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per unit.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You know who made that agreement. It was one of your Ministers.

The Premier: I think the chief man concerned was one of your colleagues.

Mr. MILLINGTON: There is such an assortment of members now on the Opposition side concerned in the matter, that there will have to be a spreading out of responsibility if individuals are to be dealt with. However, we have to consider the position as we find it to-day.

Mr. North: It will get worse as time goes on.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Of course it will.

The Premier: We are adding to the plant in order to add to our loss through the City Council.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The Perth City Council are in a position to demand all the current they require. If we were short of current—and as a matter of fact we have been—it means that if they notified the Government of certain requirements, those requirements would have to be met even if we had to curtail the supply of electricity to the tramway system. The Perth City Council have first call. We are under engagement to supply them with all their requirements at cost for another 40 years. The agreement was made before the war, and at that time the cost of coal was 4s. per ton, plus 6s. 4d. freight, or a total of 10s. 4d. On that basis the cost of production of electricity was estimated at  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per unit. Since then the cost of coal has gone up to 12s. 6d. per ton at the pit's mouth, and railway freight has risen to 12s., making a total of 24s. 6d. per ton now as against 10s. 4d. at the time the agreement was made. If this position is to continue for another 40 years, it means that a big State trading concern, which should be run in the interests of the whole of the people, will be run in the interests of the City of Perth. We must remember also that all the power supplied to the Perth City Council is not used for what may be termed purely public purposes. The Perth City Council in their turn have become a trading concern, and the agreement

means that private persons and companies are getting the advantage of this electricity supply at under cost. If it were merely the citizens of Perth who received the benefit of the concession, it would not be so bad; but the fact is that a State trading concern is being starved in order to bolster up various private trading concerns.

Mr. Mann: Do you suggest repudiating the agreement?

Mr. MILLINGTON: I expected that. I quite realise what a terrible word "repudiation" is. I presume the Perth City Council are going to hold the Government to the agreement for its full term, placing themselves in the position of demanding electric current at .75d. even if the cost should go up to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. or 2d.

Mr. Mann: Suppose the cost had gone down?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Some of us have gone to sleep on this question. Agreements made prior to the war took into consideration the conditions then obtaining, and were all subject to review during the war. Many of them were actually reviewed. Had the Government of the day taken advantage of war-time conditions and war emergency legislation, they could have had this agreement made subject to alteration on account of changed conditions.

Mr. Mann: The City Council closed down their own works, you know.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes, but does the hon. member suggest that for a term of 50 years that obligation to sell at under cost must be observed?

Mr. Mann: Suppose the cost of production had gone down?

Mr. MILLINGTON: There was no danger of that. Indeed, it is greatly to the credit of the management that electricity can be produced now at a little over 1d. per unit. From what I can gather, no agreement of this kind made recently, or during the war, or prior to the war, is without a clause stipulating that the terms can be reviewed in accordance with fluctuations in the price of coal, which means 60 per cent. of the cost of producing electricity. Now I wish to point out that whereas the City Council have the advantage of an electricity supply at  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. under cost, the tramways, in which we are all interested, are in an altogether different position. This is my complaint. The tramway system has shown a slight profit, £700 odd, for the last year. During the previous year there was a small loss.



The impression is abroad that the tramway system is not paying. But whereas the Perth City Council get their supply of electricity at  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. under cost, the tramway system is charged considerably over the cost. They have to make someone pay and it means that, whereas the City Council can get electricity supplied at .75d., the trams have to pay more.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And, in addition, the City Council get the agreement over an area that they should not have got.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes. The trams have to pay 1.37d., or 60 per cent. more than the City Council.

Mr. Mann: Would you prefer to see the City Council running their own works in opposition?

Mr. MILLINGTON: The City Council would have no possible hope of running in opposition. They were treated very handsomely.

Mr. Mann: It was not thought at the time that there was no hope of opposition.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The City Council are holding on to their agreement, which is favourable to them. They farmed out electric current in a scandalous way until the fact was pointed out to them, and then they had to reduce their charges. It would have been more decent on the part of the City Council had they been prepared to review the agreement for the supply of electric current. Although the City Council received those supplies at the rate I have mentioned, they have not given the consumer the benefit of the cheaper rate. They have shown themselves capable of sharp practices in the past.

Mr. Mann: It was not sharp practice.

Mr. Wilson: Yes, it was.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The Government did not take advantage of the position that arose to have the agreement reviewed, owing to the increase in the cost of coal, freights, and so on. That was not done, however, and it means that other customers have had to be overcharged for electric current. Because the City Council receive the current at such a cheap rate, the tramways have had to pay more than they were entitled to, and have had to pay a price that was above the cost of production.

Mr. Mann: Which Government made the agreement with the City Council?

Mr. MILLINGTON: We fixed it up before you came in. We have a lot of respon-

sibility, but a great deal of the responsibility is on the Opposition side of the House now because the agreement was not reviewed when the opportunity arose.

Mr. Hughes: Did not those now in Opposition adopt the maker of the agreement?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes, as a very keen financier. When we have asked for tramway extensions we have not received that consideration our requisitions justify, even from the present Government. The trouble is, they say, that they are afraid the trams are being superseded by motor buses, and that on the figures it is just touch and go whether the tramways will pay. The point is that the tramway system is being starved in order to pay more than the actual cost of electric current. During last year the current used by the tramways was 8,000,000 odd units at a cost of 1.37d. Had the actual cost of production been paid instead of the inflated price, it would have meant that the trams would have had to pay £10,000 less and that would have meant, instead of a profit of £700 this year, a profit of roughly £11,000. If we could show such a profit in connection with the metropolitan tramways, we would have a better case when going to the Government for extensions, and the Government would not be so cautious regarding the construction of additional lines.

Mr. Taylor: Collie coal is a big item.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes, the price of coal has gone up considerably, and we cannot get any redress from the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson).

Mr. Wilson: What about the extra cost of new machinery?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Regarding tramway extensions, I have shown that if the tramways were able to obtain electricity at even cost price, a profit of £11,000 odd would be shown.

Mr. North: But has not the price been reduced to the trams?

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes, and they are now being charged 1.37d. That is the lowest price at which the trams can be provided with electric current. That is the lowest because someone must pay for someone else who is poling on the electricity supply.

The Premier: The city councillors, as fair-minded men, will agree to release the Government from the contract.

Mr. Mann: What would the ratepayers say?

Mr. MILLINGTON: I think the City Council should be asked to review the agreement. I have always found the mayor and city councillors enthusiastic in regard to tramway extensions, particularly in regard to one I am interested in.

Mr. Panton: That does not cost them anything.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I refer to the Cambridge-street extension. The City Council have some thousand acres, or more, of endowment lands through which the line would go, and therefore the construction of that extension would be all to their advantage. I believe on one occasion they offered to finance the Government if they would extend the line. As the city councillors are so anxious to have the line extended to improve the value of their property to an untold extent, I think they should be willing to do business with the Government so that the supply of electricity would be available at the correct price, and make it possible for extensions to be constructed. The council should be willing to negotiate the terms upon which such a line should be built.

Mr. Taylor: They say that the line is justified right through to the beach.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I do not say that the construction of an extension of the existing line to the beach is justified. I am more modest and I am advocating the construction of a shorter length. However, when we asked for tramway extensions we were told to wait for 12 months or so as the Government were afraid that the trams would be superseded by motor buses for short-distance passenger transport. At that time the motor buses were something in the shape of a novelty, and were called the poor man's motor car. I find, however, that where bus routes have been established the buses are not nearly so popular now as they were at the outset. We have a motor bus running to West Leederville, and the difficulty the people there find is that those in charge of the buses cannot be induced to run to a time table. If they agree to a time table they break away from it. I can understand what would happen if the Government had undertaken such a responsibility.

Mr. Taylor: What service do you get?

Mr. MILLINGTON: It is a day service with no bus running on Saturday afternoons or Sundays. The night service is very in-

adequate, too. This difficulty regarding the motor buses not adhering to time table arrangements has resulted in the people appreciating the fact that they cannot place any reliance on the service, and the result has been that there is a continual demand for the extension of tramway facilities to that district. It is well populated, and should have had tramway facilities 20 years ago. For some reason, however, the trams were not taken there, although other portions of the metropolitan area, where the population is no greater, have been enjoying the benefits of a tramway service for over 20 years. After a fair trial with the motor buses the people in that district are unanimous in their demand that a tramway extension shall be constructed to their area. There have been several inquiries in the Eastern States regarding the relative positions of motor buses and trams; more particularly does that apply to Melbourne and Brisbane with reference to short-distance passenger transport. The decision arrived at in Brisbane was that all the evidence went to show that motor buses cannot supersede the trams for short-distance passenger transport. The same decision was arrived at in Melbourne. There has been a general impression, not only in Perth but in other Australian cities, that the motor buses would supersede the trams, but so far it has not been proved that the motor bus service is as satisfactory as a tramway service. As in this State the Government are responsible for the tramway services, I believe it means that they will have to do the job thoroughly, or make way for someone else. Motor buses have received a fair amount of custom in certain areas because the tramways have not been extended. In another part of my electorate the terminus of the tramway line is in Angove-street just off Fitzgerald-street. When it was decided to terminate the line there many years ago, there was not nearly the population we find there to-day. I have had the Minister, the Commissioner of Railways, the manager of the Tramway Department, and other officials at that terminus, and all agree that it is ridiculous to have the terminus at that point when the district is thickly populated for at least half a mile further on. As that tramline has not been extended, a motor bus service has been installed and the trams have been robbed of a lot of traffic. I believe the Government will

be forced into extending the tramways where justified. The same thing applies to the Walcott-street extension. That part of the metropolitan area has gone ahead more during the last ten years than any other part. I believe that the extension must be made but there is no way of compelling the Government to do it. Now that a trial has been made and it has been shown that the motor buses are not as satisfactory as the tramways, in that they do not give the same permanency, the time has come when the Government should seriously take into consideration the question of tramway extensions in the metropolitan area. The justification is as plain in other metropolitan areas, and members representing those districts can speak to the question for themselves. When we took our last deputation to the Minister for Railways we pressed the point that we desired a declaration from the Government that they would agree to carry out all necessary extensions within the metropolitan area.

Mr. Mann: You will get that next year.

Mr. MILLINGTON: We are not selfish or parochial and therefore it is for the Government to decide on the necessary tramway extensions to be carried out in the metropolitan area. If that were done, the first line to be built would be the Cambridge-street extension, the most necessary line in the metropolitan area. The people in that district are going to keep on hammering away at their project, and the Government will have no peace until they grant the request. Every man, woman and child in the district is in favour of that tramway extension, so they are a perfectly united party on the question. In the Speech are many things that have been attended to during the recess. The only question of importance omitted is that of tramway extension, of which there is not one word in the Speech. That, of course, makes it necessary that we should continue to hammer away until we get our requirements attended to. It must be remembered that the metropolitan area is materially increasing in population. When, 18 months ago, I was elected to the House, the numbers on the Leederville roll were 9,000 odd; to-day they have increased to 11,400. So, too, in the Canning electorate, the numbers on the roll at the last election were 10,000 odd, whereas to-day they stand at 13,500. The member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) also is asking for tramway extension. Where the population is increasing at that rate, the facilities for transport must

also be increased, and the Government will have to sit up and take notice of the growing needs of the increasing population in the metropolitan area. I am particularly interested also in the report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the metropolitan milk supply. That Commission went about their work assiduously, and produced a report that is a credit to them, dealing most exhaustively with the practical, commercial, and scientific view points of the question. In the past we have talked by and large about the manner in which the milk producer was handicapped, and we have instanced the inefficiency of the distribution and called attention to the depot-keeper. The Commission have now set out exactly what each of these three factors receive from the industry. The Commission point out that at present the price of milk in the metropolitan area averages 2s. 10d. per gallon, although many customers are charged 3s. At the time the Food Prices Commission were sitting, it was laid down that a fair price for the milk producer was either 1s. 7½d. or 1s. 8½d. I should like to think the producer was getting that amount. As a matter of fact the evidence before the Milk Commission shows that he is getting from 1s 2d. to 1s. 5½d., and that it costs as much as 1s. 2d. for the feed necessary to produce a gallon of milk. One of my friends in the industry told me the other day that he had great difficulty in getting 1s. per gallon for his surplus milk. This matter has been discussed for years, and a great deal has been said about encouraging the primary producers. At present we are supposed to be doing our utmost to establish the dairying industry. This report of the Royal Commission is dealing with the dairying industry, and it shows definitely that the producer is not getting a fair return. The report is based on evidence taken from the principal producers and distributors, and from Mr. R. S. Sampson, M.L.A.

Mr. Taylor: What does he know about it?

Mr. MILLINGTON: It seems to me he knows something about everything.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Therefore he is a very suitable man to be in Parliament.

Mr. MILLINGTON: One could tell the class of witnesses the Commission had, by their putting Mr. Sampson, M.L.A., last on the list.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Did they call you?



Mr. MILLINGTON: No, they overlooked me. The fact remains that this Commission went about their work very thoroughly. They show that a fair price for the producer would be 1s. 7½d. per gallon, and that to the depot-keeper a fair return would be 1½d. per gallon, and that the distributor is getting 1s. 3d. per gallon. So it is the distributor who is getting the best of the deal. The Commission point out that the unorganised producers and the unorganised consumers have no chance against the organised distributors.

Mr. Taylor: The producer gets 1s., and the others 1s. 10d.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The producer gets less than 1s. and is not able to sell the whole of his product, the surplus being left on his hands. The Commission put up the proposition for the establishment and financing of a central depot. The time has come when an organisation of producers will have to be formed; otherwise it is useless to talk about establishing the dairying industry in Western Australia, for we will not succeed in inducing anyone to engage in a sweated industry at the mercy of the middlemen and distributors. The Commission have drafted a feasible scheme for a central depot run by a board representative of all parties concerned. That scheme provides for compensation for those driven out of the business of distribution. I am not going into that, because the producers I represent are not favourable to it. Recently they have been forced to organise, and have formed a dairy producers' company. About 90 per cent. of the producers have taken shares in the company, their object being to control, not only the production, but also the distribution and the receiving depot. Already they have secured a site on which to build a factory, and they say that in addition to treating their own milk they will be able to deal with the milk from the Peel Estate and adjacent districts engaged in the dairying industry. I do not know what view the Government take of the Commission's report and recommendations, but I can say that the producers, having organised, are anxious that their co-operative company should be given a fair run. The Westralian Farmers have made the advice of their experts available to the company, and have also in a measure, extended to it their financial backing. In view of this, I should say the

newly formed company is bound to make good.

Mr. Panton: It is to be hoped they will not have half a dozen carts distributing in one street, as at present.

Mr. MILLINGTON: A dairy farm with 30 cows and all equipment would entail a capital outlay of at least £2,000. The evidence given before the Commission shows that the men running such farms at Osborne Park are not even making wages, despite all that outlay. Then it is shown, on the other hand, that milk rounds have been purchased at a price of £10 per gallon. If they can show that 20 gallons are distributed they charge £10 a gallon for that.

Mr. Taylor: That is selling their goodwill.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes. They had it cut up in such a ridiculous fashion that the Commission presented a table which shows the amount of running about that is done. We speak of milk and bread carts passing the door, but the Commission brought it down to a definite figure. The secretary followed the carts on the round in a motor car, and he has all the matter tabulated. In one instance of a round of 115 gallons, the number of streets over which it was distributed was 248, and the number of customers 565. This means that in some instances there is not more than one customer in a street. The carts must be going by dozens of houses and leaving half a pint here and there. Having organised the round in this manner they now demand as compensation, if this proposition is put into operation, £10 per gallon. This would be of no use to the scheme if they were organising the distribution. In any case the matter has reached such a pass that the producers themselves are organising. They will arrange for a central depot for the proper treatment of milk, and for the block system of distribution. Considering that the producers have first to be considered—their existence depends upon better organisation—I hope that every encouragement will be given to them. I refer particularly to the producers in the Osborne district, but would also include the greater metropolitan districts. They are all endeavouring to overcome this difficulty, which is at present crippling their industry. Another matter of interest is that of the development of the Herdsman's Lake scheme. I understand this



has been handed from the Drainage Department to the Lands Department, and that it will now be the business of the latter to cut up the land into blocks suitable for settlement. I have been in touch with residents who have had 20 years and more experience of Lake country, and of the industries suitable to such country. They say it will be necessary if this settlement is to be a success, that each holder should live on the property he is working. I believe there was an idea of placing the people in a sort of settlement, and that they would have to walk in some instances a mile or a mile and a half to their work. The residents point out that in market gardening it is essential that the settlers should live on their holdings. They, therefore, desire to consult with the Minister and his officers before the surveying is carried out so that some of the high land surrounding the lake may be attached to each block, in other words, that the district may be surveyed in strips.

The Premier: Land would have to be repurchased to achieve that object.

Mr. MILLINGTON: That is so. To a great extent the high land is included in the land that is resumed.

Mr. Taylor: There is a large acreage there.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes. I have every confidence in the officers controlling the department, but I think a good many mistakes could be avoided if they would consult with these residents and get the benefit of their experience. I believe this would lead to the successful development of market gardening and dairying in that district. I commend the Government for their reference in the Speech to the metropolitan water supply. At one time this was a question of paramount importance, but owing to the manner in which the job has been tackled by the Minister and his department, we now find there is very little cause for complaint. This is fortunate for members representing metropolitan constituencies. The matter has been tackled in such a way that during the past summer very few complaints were made.

Mr. Taylor: The water was very discoloured in Leederville last week; it was as bad as ever.

Mr. MILLINGTON: There has been very little dissatisfaction.

Mr. Taylor: It is no good complaining now.

Mr. MILLINGTON: In order to keep pace with the growing needs of the metro-

politan area it will be necessary that the schemes now in hand should be proceeded with as speedily as possible. It does not take long for a growing population to outgrow its water supply. We must, however, commend the Government for what they have done. The report of the Royal Commission on group settlement has given rise to a good deal of discussion, but I understand an opportunity will be afforded members of going more fully into the question at a later stage. It should be gone into, considering the importance of the subject, and the volume of evidence that has been adduced. I always felt that the inquiry was justified, and failed to see why even those who solidly supported the scheme objected to the investigation. We must all admit that the group settlement scheme was an experiment, and that there were many difficulties in the way of organisation. Those who took exception to the inquiry now say that the report shows it was not needed. In my opinion both the majority and the minority reports demonstrate that it was completely justified. The evidence should prove of the greatest value to those who have to administer this scheme. The report also contains most valuable information. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [5.40]: I congratulate the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) upon her election, though I regret the circumstances that led up to her standing for the seat. We know that the timber workers, many of whom are in my electorate, have a great champion in their lady member. I was impressed by her remarks, and by the black picture she painted of the lives and conditions of bush workers. I do not know whether someone had been "pulling her leg," or whether it was that she was having her first experience of bush camps. Those of us who have been in the back country know these camps, and are aware that they are established only for temporary occupation in the one place. The iron is taken off the sheds, the camps are re-erected elsewhere, and that is probably how the 63 holes came to be found in the iron covering one of those camps. We have also seen places where the floor boards are much more than an inch apart, and where the wind does more than merely whistle around one's ankles. The unemployment at present existing in the State has been brought under the notice of the