

other Governments when in power. I hope and believe that they travelled with good intentions. I am satisfied that they travelled in order to see the possibilities of the country and to understand our difficulties. If they consider that the State can develop the North and put up proposals to that end, they can depend upon my support through thick and thin in carrying them out. If they consider the problem too much for them, they are in duty bound to say so, and when the Commonwealth Government, probably urged by the Imperial Government who realise the weakness of the position, submit proposals, let the Government give them every consideration. They should not condemn the proposals but rather should they analyse them and, if necessary, make counter-proposals in order to develop one of the most important parts of this State.

HON. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN

(Metropolitan-Suburban) [S.10] Upon this my initial entry into the Parliamentary life of Western Australia, my first duty is a pleasant one. It is to offer you, Mr. President, my hearty congratulations upon your elevation to the Presidential chair, which I am sure you will fill with credit to yourself and with honour and dignity to the Legislative Council. May I be permitted to thank you, Sir, and hon. members generally for the kindly words of welcome and encouragement with which they greeted me upon my entry into this Chamber. It will be a great incentive to me to work in harmony with them and their very kind words of welcome will be to me a great encouragement indeed. During the short time I have been in the House I have been sitting like a disciple at the feet of so many Gamaliels, listening for words of wisdom falling from their lips. I listened in order to equip myself for the great work that I hope lies ahead of me. I listened with rapt attention to hon. members asking the Honorary Minister certain questions and listened with equally close attention to the replies furnished by him. If hon. members gained all the information they desired from those replies, then all I can say is that they possess a much greater imaginative mind than I do. I have also taken part in the debate on the Supply Bill. During my long public career in connection with a big municipality and also during my association with certain commercial concerns, never before had I seen such a large amount of money passed with so little information given to those who had to

authorise the expenditure. Mr. Nicholson called attention to the fact that whilst members did not desire a detailed account of how the money had been spent or was to be spent, the Minister should give members a rough outline as to how the money had been spent or was to be spent. The Minister preserved a Sphinx-like attitude and, considering the enormous sum involved—it represented nearly £2,000,000—very little information indeed was furnished to the House. In all my commercial experience, I have never seen that incident equalled. I understand this Chamber has no rights regarding money Bills, but as a matter of courtesy alone some little information should have been given to hon. members when a Bill involving such a large sum of money was placed before them for their approval. I have been handed a copy of the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor at the opening of the session. I was one of the new members who were not permitted to be present in their seats at the opening ceremony. It is quite true we were placed in the extreme rear of the Chamber. When I was placed there with nine others, it reminded me of my younger days when I was a member—

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Of a Sunday school?

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: No, of a minstrel troupe. All went well for a time and no doubt the intentions of those who placed us there were good, but when members of another place were summoned to the Chamber and they interposed their portly frames and wide backs, we were entirely hidden from view, and we could neither see His Excellency nor hear the words of his Speech. Might I suggest that if the same procedure is followed on future occasions, the title of the Speech should read, "Mr. President and some of the hon. members of the Legislative Council." Both Mr. Ewing and Mr. Nicholson dealt lucidly with the financial question. I agree with both of them, more particularly when they said that during the past few years there had never been a better opportunity for the Government to balance the ledger. It is true that the revenue has increased by a considerable amount, but it is unfortunately true also that the expenditure has increased enormously. It is well, not only for the present Government but for all Governments to realise that they are the trustees of the people's money, and that the concessions that might be granted to certain sections of the people can be granted only at the expense of the whole of the people. Concessions

which are granted to only one section of the people are not fair or equitable to the people who have to find the money. While the Government take a certain amount of credit for making financially what they called a fair showing, I disagree with them. The first thing any honourable community must do is to pay its debts. We must endeavour to live within our means and balance the ledger, not once in six or seven years, but, as a commercial organisation has to do, every year. Excuses might be made to shareholders on a few occasions, but excuses will not do when deficits are so incessant in their repetition. Touching the paragraph on the Disabilities Commission, I strongly object to the manner in which it is worded, because it is not a fair statement of what has actually occurred. One would have thought that when the Federal Government had promised the State £450,000 it was a fact of sufficient significance to receive mention in the Governor's Speech, but there is no mention of that very important fact. I was one of the humble citizens who gave an enormous amount of time to preparing evidence which I eventually placed before the Disabilities Commission. I followed the work of the Commission throughout the whole of their sittings and I also followed the deliberations in the Federal Parliament. The paragraph in the Speech reads—

The Commonwealth Government, however, have not accepted these recommendations, and have submitted an alternative proposal much less favourable to this State.

Let us view the facts fairly. As one with no political experience, I may perhaps view the position more clearly from the point of view of a citizen than is possible for those who have been permeated with political jealousies or with the prejudice that I am sorry to see exists so strongly against the Federal Parliament. When the Disabilities Commission were appointed I am sure everyone in Western Australia was delighted to learn that an inquiry was to be made into our difficulties under Federation. Evidence was tendered by a number of citizens and the strong point made by most of them was that we desired to control our own tariff for a period of 25 years. That recommendation was eventually agreed to by a majority of two to one of the Commission and presented to the Federal Government. I am aware that the Federal Government gave serious consideration to the proposal, but every member of this House realises the difficulties that would confront the Fed-

eral authorities when so drastic an alteration of the Constitution was recommended. In the first place it would be necessary to obtain the consent of the other States and we are all aware that that would be an impossibility. The Commission also realised the difficulties attending the carrying out of that recommendation. The principal witness for the State Government, Mr. N. Keenan, K.C., stated in his evidence—

We do not anticipate that we are likely to receive any relief in the form of a revision of the tariff, for the simple reason that whatever our belief is in the matter we are a small community and a great majority of the citizens of Australia are of an opposite opinion.

The Commission were well aware of the difficulties that confronted them and the Government, and they made a second recommendation, also by a two to one majority, that Western Australia be granted £450,000, while the minority recommendation was that we be granted £300,000. The Federal Government took what I believe to be a fair and liberal view of the position by granting us the sum of £450,000. In spite of all the onslaughts directed at the Federal Government, it would have been quite within their province to grant the State the lesser sum of £300,000. There seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding as to how that money should be spent. I was present on the platform in Queen's Hall when Senator Pearce first announced that that amount would be granted to Western Australia, and he was definite in his opinion as to how the money should be spent. It was not to be spent in trading concerns or in other ventures of a like nature; in his opinion it should be spent in accordance with the decision of the Commission to alleviate the burdens which it was contended had been imposed upon the State as a result of Federation. I think it will be found that when the amount is paid to the State, there will be attached to it certain stipulations as to how it shall be spent. I venture to say that increased assistance could well be given to the mining industry, because probably no industry has suffered so seriously as the direct result of Federation, particularly through the incidence of the tariff, as has mining. I am one of those people who believe in neither bonuses nor protective duties, and while I maintain that it is fair to give a bonus on the production of gold if it is given on the production of sugar, I consider that neither is good policy in the long run. On the other hand so much has been done to assist other

industries that it is only fair we should get some consideration for the mining industry. There is another important factor to be borne in mind when we consider that the grant has been given to alleviate the burdens arising from Federation. That is the high income tax, particularly on the larger incomes. It is within my knowledge, as I am sure it is within the knowledge of many other members, that enormous sums of money have been taken out of Western Australia as a result of the imposition of high rates of income tax, particularly on larger amounts. When the revision of the income tax was last before Parliament, members are aware that a minimum was laid down, and in order to make up the amount of the estimated loss, it was added to the incomes of people receiving £5,000 a year or more. In theory everyone will agree that that was the best thing to do, but in practice it turned out that at the time there were only 55 people in the State receiving £5,000 and over, with the result that they had to bear an enormous burden. I do not wish it to be understood that I am making any plea for the capitalist class, but I wish to bring home to members the fact that enormous sums of money have been withdrawn from investment in Western Australia, and further that large sums of money which would have been brought here have not been invested because of the high income tax. When the £450,000 is distributed I hope it will be in accordance with the terms on which it was granted. I believe we shall gain nothing by this constant haggling with the Federal Government. By united effort and sincere endeavour to assist to meet our own requirements, we shall gain far more if we come to an amicable understanding than by belittling all the efforts that the Federal Government are making for our benefit. I have been twitted with having championed the cause of the Federal Government because I have the honour and privilege of the friendship of the Prime Minister, but believe me I do not champion his cause on that ground. No one will fight harder for the interests of Western Australia than will I. When the interests of the State clash with those of the Federal Government, my friendship with the Prime Minister will not count, but I believe there are few men in Australia who have a wider vision as to the future of the Commonwealth than has Mr. Bruce, and I say emphatically there is no man in Australia who has a more kindly regard for or a more sincere wish to do well by Western Australia than has the Prime Minister.

The Honorary Minister: He has a peculiar way of expressing it; that is all.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: Dealing with the evidence before the Disabilities Commission I am aware that Mr. Keenan, K.C., spoke on behalf of the State. Everyone realises the enormous amount of work that was done by Mr. Keenan, and how splendidly the case was put forward from the point of view of the State. I am not sure whether any emolument was granted to him, but I understand he did the work in an honorary capacity. If he prepared that evidence and presented it to the Commission in his capacity as a citizen, without fee or reward, he should be called to the bar of the House and publicly thanked for his services. Many men to-day render signal service to the State. They may receive a letter, or some other intimation, thanking them, but when such signal services are rendered as were rendered by Mr. Keenan, something should be done to show the gratitude of the people towards the giver. Many years ago Chief Justice Higginbotham in Victoria undertook to consolidate all the statutes of that State. He did the work in an honorary capacity, and presented the result to Parliament. He was called to the bar of the House and publicly thanked for his excellent services. I think Mr. Keenan's work should be recognised in the same way. Mr. Holmes has spoken at length upon the North-West. I quite agree we should not adopt a dog-in-the-manger policy concerning North-West problems. The Federal Government, in their management of the Northern Territory, have not yet shown that ability and consideration and progress, that I feel are necessary if the northern parts of Australia are to be populated and cultivated. Until we have some definite scheme showing the Commonwealth Government's intentions with regard to the North-West generally, I prefer to withhold my views as to what should be done. There is only one point I wish to emphasise on the question of group settlement. I have not yet been able to assimilate the figures that have been placed before us by Mr. Holmes. We are told that since the time group settlement was instituted, there have been settled 22,677 migrants. During the debate Mr. Gray interjected as to the number of unemployed we have. There have been these 22,677 new arrivals, and in my opinion there is no more unemployment in Perth to-day than there was in any of the years before any migrants arrived. This shows clearly that the more migrants we receive, the more work is created for others. Mr. Gepp,

the chairman of the Development and Migration Commission, has publicly stated that he is opposed to bringing people into the country if this is going to tend towards reducing the standard of living. We all heartily agree with that. It is satisfactory to note that the Federal Government have written off £750,000, that is to say have cancelled that charge against the State Government, for the revaluation of the properties of settlers established under the Soldier Settlement Scheme. I understand that many soldiers are desirous of reaching finality as to the allotment of the money, so that they may know what their real position is when the revaluations are made. Valuers are at work, but I have been informed that greater progress might be made in the interests of the settlers concerned. I heartily support the proposal with regard to the new road scheme between this State and the Federal Government. We have heard a great deal as to the taxation that will accrue, and the new petrol tax, and the penalty that will be imposed upon motorists. To quote from a speech delivered by Mr. Latham, the Federal Attorney General, as it appeared in "Hansard," I think that motorists are pretty well provided for in the matter of roads. They are not called upon to pay more than a fair proportion that is due from them for the privileges they enjoy. It is proposed that the Federal Government shall raise out of the petrol tax £1,500,000, will pay £700,000 out of revenue, and that the State shall find its proportion, equal to 15s. in the pound. That is a mere fleabite compared with the money that has been spent on roads in Australia by municipalities and road boards. Apart altogether from the £3,500,000 now proposed to be spent, the local authorities lay out annually in this direction between £11,000,000 and £12,000,000. Some few years ago I made a trip to the Fitzgerald River—I was looking for oil and did not find it—and went through Gnowangerup and Ongerup, as far down as Needilup. The roads were almost impassable. I was well equipped, but had the utmost difficulty in getting through. I succeeded in my object in getting through, but had great sympathy for the man who is trying to settle on the land there. Less than 12 months ago I went over the same route again. This time, owing to the great road-making combination, I was able to travel over the route at 40 miles an hour. I had the same experience in my peregrinations through Denmark, Nornalup, and along the coast. Already roads have been constructed in this State as the result of this combination, that would not

have been built for 25 years. I hope the Federal Government will be able to carry out their proposal in its entirety. It will do more than anything else in the way of giving practical assistance to those who are battling so hard in the out-lying portions of the State. Practically in every session of Parliament reference is made to the metropolitan water scheme. I congratulate the Government on having taken seriously in hand this matter of providing an efficient water supply for the city. The whole of the water supply, sewerage and drainage is being worked under a wrong system. Every year sums are placed on the Estimates to provide these facilities for the metropolis, whereas the people should be able to provide their own, and pay for them. The only way to do this is to create a metropolitan board of works. Within three years we shall be celebrating the centenary of this beautiful city. It will be 100 years old but is not yet sewered, and is not likely to be sewered for many years. I live within half a mile of this Chamber, and bought my house 13 years ago. I was told then that the sewerage would be connected in less than 12 months, but it appears to be as far off as ever. It will remain a long way off for most of the districts around Perth so long as the present system continues. The Metropolitan Board of Works of Melbourne is doing magnificent work. It comprises nominees of the Government, and nominees of the various councils within the metropolitan area. The board has full power to undertake all the work in connection with the scheme, and to raise the funds required. My remarks apply particularly to sewerage, because some water supply work is going on. A good engineer informed me that we are not looking far enough ahead in respect of our water supplies. He said we should see that the Whitby Falls are protected and that the Serpentine is also protected. I believe that Perth will grow into a great place, and all these undertakings must be put on a firm basis, otherwise they cannot be successful. We have been unfortunately placed because of the manner in which our water supply has been played with for so many years, and by so many Governments. The rate is now going to be increased by 5d. in the pound. This is due to our adoption of the wrong system. If the whole business were placed under the control of a board, we should have one big scheme and a continuous construction policy would be carried on from year to year, no matter what Government were in power. The people of the

metropolis would not then be under any compliment to anyone for the supply of the utilities that would belong to them. There would not be much difficulty in the matter of finance. There is a big and continuous income. In Melbourne no debentures stand higher in the estimation of the public, more particularly the small people, as a safe and sound investment, than those of the Metropolitan Board of Works. The debentures are easily negotiable and can be readily exchanged and disposed of. They are regarded as a first class investment. I hope the Government will seriously consider the formation of such a board. The suburbs are growing at a great rate. Even if a board were established to-morrow, it would take many years to complete the sewerage scheme. In the meantime the people are suffering from severe disabilities and inconvenience. It is not right that they should suffer so in a city that is about to celebrate its centenary. I congratulate the Government upon having given substantial assistance to the local bodies in the South-West in order that cheap electrical power may be available to them. In England to-day no question is receiving greater attention, or is regarded as of more importance, than that of cheap electrical power. The British Government, realising its importance as the chief factor in cheaper production, contemplate the erection of five or six enormous generating stations in various suitable centres to supply all the requirements of the nation. It is stated that the scheme, when completed, will effect a saving of £6,000,000 per annum, besides giving a great impetus to many languishing trades. I consider that the time is ripe for the undertaking of a scheme on similar lines in Western Australia, because in addition to the South-West there is the Great Southern line as far as Albany and the whole of the Eastern Railway to be supplied. I am not sure how far the current can be carried; but I gathered from Mr. Lovekin, after his last trip Home, that on high power the tension could be distributed over wonderfully great distances. Collie as a distributing centre is most favourably situated, because it stands almost equi-distant from numerous principal centres. Another important factor is that Collie produces enormous quantities of small coal, which as a commercial commodity is now practically worthless, but the whole of which could be used in generating power which would be transmitted in the directions I have men-

tioned. In my scheme I would include the whole of the requirements for the metropolitan area, because naturally it must be cheaper to transmit electricity by its own power than to haul coal from Collie to Perth. Coincident with the Collie scheme I strongly urge the electrification of the railways in the metropolitan area—at any rate, for a start, from Fremantle to Midland Junction. This suggestion will have the support of everyone who has visited Melbourne and seen the revolution in travelling facilities for the people of that city under the electrical scheme. The saving of time in transport which is effected is something almost incredible. The distance from Melbourne to St. Kilda, for instance, takes seven minutes with five stops, whereas the best that could be done by electric tram or motor bus was between 15 and 20 minutes. On the trip from Melbourne to Frankston, a distance of about 27 miles, the electric railway has saved 25 minutes. Electrification means far cleaner as well as far more rapid travelling facilities. The electrification of our railways will certainly cost a lot of money, but so will many other things. Perth is going to be a very big place, and a scheme like this must be inaugurated when the city is in its infancy, so as to permit of expansion as necessity demands. Mr. Holmes has already spoken on the Government's proposal to establish a State insurance office. I shall wait till the Bill comes before the House. If it means the establishment of another State trading concern of any sort whatever, I shall have something very definite to say about the matter. I have looked in vain in the Governor's Speech for any mention of a Redistribution of Seats Bill, and I desire to draw the attention of hon. members to the unsatisfactory way in which the people of the metropolitan area in particular are treated under the present distribution. In the metropolitan area there are 103,516 electors with 12 seats, the average enrolment being 8,626. Fremantle is the lowest with 4,670 electors, and Canning the highest with 14,609. In the agricultural areas and outports the total number of electors is 81,941, and the number of seats 21, the average enrolment being 3,902. In those particular areas the distribution is fair and reasonable. But when we come to the gold-fields areas we find that there are 17,811 electors and 13 seats; the average enrolment being 1,370. Let hon. members compare these with the corresponding figures in the metropolitan area—103,516 electors, 12 seats,

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average enrolment 8,626. In my opinion the figures speak for themselves, but I may specially mention Cue with 563 electors, Mt. Magnet with 970, Mt. Margaret with 460, and Menzies with 324. Let hon. members compare Menzies and its 324 electors with Canning, where Mr. Clydesdale represents 14,609 electors. One elector in Menzies has 45 times the power of an elector in Canning. The position is so ludicrous as to call for immediate readjustment. I repeat, that the representation of the metropolitan area is utterly unfair and inequitable. The appointment of the Migration Commission by the Federal Government I regard as a step in the right direction, and I consider that Western Australia is very fortunate in having Mr. Charles Nathan, C.B.E., as its representative. That gentleman's appointment means not only that the interests of Australia will be well guarded, but that the interests of this State will receive fair and equitable representation. Mr. Gray in his speech drew special attention to the Fremantle railway bridge, and I should like to utter just one word of warning. The present Government and previous Governments have had warnings regarding that bridge. The most serious warning has been given to the present Government, but the responsibility falls upon all of us to see that the work of reconstruction is proceeded with as speedily as possible. In that connection I hope special attention and consideration will be given to the growing requirements of the Fremantle harbour. Wherever the new bridges may be placed, they should be so placed as not to hamper the development of the harbour. I thank hon. members for the kindly consideration extended to me. As a member of this House I shall do my utmost to conform with its usages and customs, to work in harmony with all members, and to obey your rulings, Mr. President; and as a citizen of Western Australia I shall do my best to further the prosperity of the great State in which we live.

On motion by Hon. H. Stewart, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th August, 1926.

Question: Hospital for the Insane, fruit supplies ...	PAGE 291
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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—HOSPITAL FOR INSANE, FRUIT SUPPLIES.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. Cunningham): 1, Is the policy of providing fruit, at intervals, to patients at the Hospital for the Insane being maintained? 2, Will he indicate the number of cases and value of fruit so provided in each six of the months during the past two years?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM replied: 1, Yes; the arrangement indicated was made in 1922, and purchases confined to periods of glut in the fruit market. The matter of further purchases will receive attention when the next glut may occur. 2, July-December, 1924—51 bags oranges, value £19 2s. 6d.; January-June, 1925—83 bags oranges, value £31 2s. 6d.; 2,278lbs. water-melons, value £9 9s. 10d.; July-December, 1925—10 bags oranges, value £3 15s.; January-June, 1926—36 bags oranges, value £13 10s.; 3,162lbs. water-melons, value £13 3s. 6d.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the 12th August.

MR. CHESSON (Cue) [4.37]: If I should happen to wander in the course of my remarks and refer to matters relating to constituencies other than my own, I ask hon. members to realise that it will be merely to express my appreciation of the actions of the people in the districts I shall refer to in formulating schemes for the advancement not only of those particular centres, but of the State as a whole. I will also take the opportunity to indicate my appreciation of the action of the Government in assisting such schemes. In looking through the Governor's Speech, I notice a reference to the offer made by the Government to assist in the establishment of a central power house on the Golden