

say, is spending what he ought to be giving the landlord on washing machines and motor cars, buys the house at the low price because the owner cannot guarantee possession to any other buyer. Having dispossessed the landlord of his income for ten years, the tenant buys the property for a song, thus dispossessing the owner of his capital. Being in a position to sell the house with vacant possession, he can then gain an increment of £500 or more, and does so.

Mr. RANGLES.—Where would he live then?

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—I invite the honorable member for Brunswick to explain his approval of the Landlord and Tenant Act to Brunswick people who have been robbed of their capital, or apologize for his interjection. The legislation of which I complain has created in the community a new strata of under-dog. If I could speak to individual members on the Government side of the Chamber privately, I believe that they would say, "We agree with you, but it is not the policy of the party." The members of the Labour party cannot have it both ways. I want it to be on the record that the Socialists are satisfied to deprive poor people of a reasonable income in order that those who are able to pay them a decent rent shall enjoy the poverty of the landlord, and also that it is right for a tenant to buy out his landlord at a no possession price and sell the property at a great profit by giving possession. Of course, the honorable member for Clifton Hill can say that so far as he is concerned he is out of step with the party and is in favour of justice. I know that the humane member for Clifton Hill agrees with me and will probably tell me so outside afterwards, but he will not be found on his feet in this Chamber going against the Premier and Treasurer.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—He will not be found at the Tivoli, either.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—If the honorable member for Clifton Hill, who is a returned soldier from the first world war, in his ordinary days in France, did not see more entertaining objects than are visible at the Tivoli, he must have been a "Salvo." Anyway, who wants to go

to the Tivoli when there is a show like this for nothing? In our hearts, regardless of the parties to which we are attached, as ordinary citizens of the State, I am sure that there must be almost complete agreement that justice should be done to a deserving section of the community. I do not ask the Government to scrap the Landlord and Tenant Act because there are elements in it which I think need to be continued, but it would be proper for the Government to interpret the will of the members of this Chamber, as a collective institution, and amend those parts of the legislation which bear harshly on the section of the community to which I have referred. That section includes those who are deprived of a proper income from the letting of a house and those who have houses let for only 30s. a week where the tenants are deriving £5, £6, and £7 from subletting rooms. Houses which have been designed for one family are now housing five families in a state of congestion; consequently they are being worn out at five times the normal rate. Not only are the tenants making £7 and more a week, but they are selling their tenancy for goodwill.

I suggest that it is reasonable to ask the Government to say that during the next session it will sympathetically view the plight of that section of the community whose case I am pleading. In conclusion, I express amazement that members on the Government side of the House did not remain silent on the matter so as to conceal their discomfiture and their disagreement with their Ministers. By interjection, the younger members of the Labour party have revealed that they have much to learn in the matter of hardship, because apparently they have indicated their concurrence with this state of affairs.

Mr. MURPHY (Hawthorn).—On Supply, we are dealing with finance, which is of great importance to every Government and I think we must all agree that it is the supreme test that may be put on any Government. The power of the purse has been recognized through the parliamentary history of the British Empire and the British Commonwealth of Nations as the test of sovereignty, because it has long been an

axiom that he who controls the purse decides in whose hands the sceptre shall lie. Probably all members realize that on the subject of finance depends the answer to the question whether or not we are, in fact, able to carry out the function for which we were elected. It is useless for the people to send members to Parliament or to elect a Government unless that Government has the power and the financial means to carry out the functions that properly belong to it. The Premier realizes, as Leaders of previous Governments have done, that unless the necessary finance is available the Government cannot do the things it desires. In past months, we have been faced with the fact that various Departments have not been able to carry out necessary work because available financial resources have not been sufficient. All members of this Parliament know that within their own constituencies various matters need attention. We know that there are social problems with which our constituents are faced, problems that have been in existence not for just a few months; they have been growing in intensity over the years. Nothing can be done about them, however, because there is no money available.

I wish to make a protest against that attitude of mind. There is no doubt that Premiers and Ministers consider the problem to be real, but I think we should try to do something about it. If we are prepared to accept the position that we cannot obtain money to do necessary work, we may as well resign ourselves to the fact that the Government simply cannot function as a Government and that we cannot carry out the jobs for which our constituents returned us to Parliament. I deprecate the fact that we are told that there is no money available to do certain work or to solve particular problems. I maintain that there is money in the community. One can see evidences of money all around. The reserves of this State are very great and, in my opinion, they should be called upon to support whatever Government the people put into power, in order that the needs of the State may be met. We know that there is money available for the reconstruction of hotels, for the conduct of football, racing, and sport of all

kinds, and that there is even money available for the Olympic Games, but we are told that there is no money available to deal with certain social problems. As far as I can see, there is no money because those who control the finances of this country are not prepared to make it available. No country operates on money as expressed in hard cash; it is only a question of credit and of the release of that credit. I am not contending that credit can be illimitable, because there may be limits, but I believe that the present limits are too drastic and could be made less rigid.

When responsible government was instituted in Victoria in 1855 this State started with a public debt of £1,000,000. Since then and during the development of responsible government our public debt has grown to £217,000,000. That enormous increase is evidence that the general growth of the State is bound up in the release of credit. We are not called upon to meet the capital represented in the public debt or to pay it back to-morrow. Certainly, we are called upon to meet the interest and sinking fund charges on the public debt but the development of Victoria has been built up on credit and will continue so as the years go by; and unless those responsible for the release of credit are prepared to play their part the progress of the State must stop.

There is sufficient credit belonging to the community to enable this Government to carry out its functions. In the days before Parliamentary government, power was vested in the monarch. As time went on the king was deposed so far as real power was concerned and that power was reposed in the hands of Parliament. In the early days Parliament was composed mainly of the rich so that the government passed from the hands of the monarch to those of the wealthy. As years went on, Parliamentary government became more democratic, at least on the surface. It was carried on by people like ourselves, who can claim to be just ordinary citizens.

Even though democracy has been introduced into the Parliaments of this country, the main power still remains in

the hands of the people who control the country's finance and who decide what a Government shall or shall not do. That state of affairs should not exist. In the early days the king, if he wanted money, used persuasive powers in various ways, and the credit of the country reposed in the monarch himself. In these days of democratic Parliamentary government the credit of the country resides in the community. It is represented by all the things that are produced by the community. In the State Savings Bank of Victoria there is a total sum of about £200,000,000 representing the deposits of the people. In the Victorian branches of the Commonwealth Savings Bank there is a further total sum of about £60,000,000. So in this State we have £260,000,000 held in the savings banks, to say nothing of the volume of money deposited in the trading banks by the people of Victoria. Yet this Government, which represents the people of Victoria and which has public works to carry out in the interests of the people, cannot make use of that credit, or only in restricted circumstances.

Up to a certain point the financial institutions do make a certain amount of credit available to the Government, but that amount could be increased. I admit that the banks, and insurance companies also, assist in that direction but there is room for big improvement in the extent to which financial resources are made available to the Government by those who have the money in their hands. Even if a decision to take every possible step to obtain money means going to the length of raising it by unorthodox methods, we should consider doing so.

We have had bitter experience of the strangle-hold that financial institutions can exercise on a Government. In the depression years the Scullin Government was smashed by the absolute misuse of financial power. We know of the misery and degradation into which our people were then plunged. I do not believe any member here would want to see the people of Australia subjected again to the misery and degradation of depression. Those who were in control of finance did not then know the nature of

Mr. Murphy.

the commodity in which they were trading. Mr. Scullin and Mr. Theodore only proved as the years went on that they were years ahead of their time in regard to the proposals they put forward. The measures they suggested could have been taken and, although I do not suggest that the effects of the depression could have been averted, I do say that those effects could have been reduced if those in control of the finances of this country had had any inkling of how the finances should have been used.

We must solve this problem, otherwise we are wasting our time in assuming that we are a sovereign body in this Parliament. I have reason to hope that this Government will in the near future consider some way of encouraging in this State the formation of various co-operative enterprises, which would go a long way towards solving our problems. In other parts of the world the whole system of co-operative banking has been greatly developed. Credit unions, as they are known, have been in existence for more than 100 years, and in Northern America, which is considered to be the home of finance, credit unions are prolific. There are, I understand, about 15,000 in Northern America at the present time and these control assets of something like one thousand million dollars.

A co-operative bank has a logical answer to many of the problems to-day confronting the man in the street. If we put our money into the banks we must lose control of it, and why should it be invested in enterprises with which we have nothing to do? The people who want to put their money into a bank can do so by means of a fund controlled by themselves, and out of that fund they can lend money to one another to meet their own particular social needs—that is, if a system of co-operative banks is carried out.

One of the biggest tragedies of society to-day is the fact that the decent man in the street has no credit so far as the financial institutions are concerned. He can go to a bank, which, however, is not in the slightest degree interested in him and his needs. His credit and his status in the community amount to absolutely

nil, and if the financial institutions will do nothing for him it is up to the Government to legislate to allow him and his fellow citizens to manage their own affairs in their own interests. I look forward to the fulfilment of a promise given by the Government that it will encourage the establishment of co-operative enterprises in this State. In New South Wales these activities have been carried on in a big way and there is a Ministry of Co-operatives which is in immediate control. I sincerely hope that before long we shall have the same set-up in Victoria.

With regard to education, I feel that there is not much we can do except to examine the possibilities, not of saving money but of spending more. We are not doing all we should in the matter of education. We are not spending the money we ought to be spending. We are getting education on the cheap. Although we boast of free education in this State, it must be admitted that if it were not for the efforts of school committees, mothers' clubs and so on, many of our schools would be in a very bad way. The State itself is getting out of its responsibilities very cheaply because it does not really meet its obligations to the people as it should be doing. At the present time the State is financing the education of only about three-fourths of the children who attend school.

Although the State takes upon itself, and very properly, the responsibility of providing schools and teaching staffs for the education of children, the primary responsibility for education rests with the parents. That is their natural right. Rights and responsibilities are allied. The child is born not to the State but to the family, and it is the responsibility of the parents to rear the child, feed him, clothe him and bring him to manhood. During those years it is the right of the parent to have the say as to the sort of life his child shall live. It is one of the rights of the parent to decide upon the education that the child shall have, and it is the function of the State to supplement the efforts of the parent, to co-operate with the parent and to provide the facilities for the education of the child. I plead for those parents who have children in registered schools.

Twenty-five per cent. approximately of the children of this State who attend schools selected by their parents are entitled to the assistance of the State in their education.

Finally, I desire to refer to the matter of land settlement. The State should spend more money on settling people on the land. Citizens possess a right to own their home and the land upon which it is built. Many of our social problems could be solved if we were able to place people in homesteads of their own outside the city area. I trust that the Government will take action in that regard. The settlement of citizens on little farms of their own would contribute much towards a solution of the problems associated with the production of food. That primary industry, in my view, has been turned into a sort of secondary industry. It bears the same superstructure of cost as is borne by secondary industry, but with much less reason. Actually, there is no reason why primary production should bear those costs that secondary industries are expected to bear, because the primary producer is given certain things that are not given to the secondary manufacturer.

I often think, when I hear Opposition members speaking about the hardships of the land—I concede that there is some substance in their argument—that God gives the sun, the wind, and the rain and flocks and herds will multiply irrespective of what action might be taken by the man on the land. Admittedly, a certain degree of cultivation of the soil is necessary, but, after all, primary production is primary production and there is no reason why it should have the huge superstructure of costs that is associated with it now. In my view, there is a very real problem associated with the mass production of food for profit. Food is regarded as a commodity that must be produced for profit, whereas it was originally intended for the sustenance of the human race. The function of the ordinary man is to produce, as far as is possible, the food necessary to sustain himself and his family. I concede that, under prevailing conditions, certain food-stuffs cannot be produced by the ordinary individual, and, for the sake of economic

marketing, they must be produced in bulk. Nevertheless, I contend that if large estates were broken up and families placed upon the land, they would be afforded an opportunity to grow what they needed for their own requirements and, to an appreciable degree, the problem of food production would be solved. Then the ordinary man in the street would not be faced to the same extent as at present with the failure of the crop of this, that, or some other commodity, as has been the case with regard to eggs and potatoes of recent years.

There is considerable scope for breaking up large unused estates in country areas and allocating them to settlers who wish to go on the land. I should like to mention one instance that has come to my notice in the Western District. Last year, Mr. N. P. Wilson, State president of the returned servicemen's league, made a statement to the effect that on the estate of "Ardachy", which had an area of 9,324 acres, the wool that had been grown and marketed had increased by 250 per cent. since the estate was broken up and families settled upon it. Mr. Wilson also mentioned that until 1947 there had been only one family on that estate and that two or three other persons had been employed. They had been producing 150 bales of wool from grazing, but, since the estate had been broken up and settled, there were fifteen families established on the estate, and they were producing 360 bales of wool, 8,300 lb. of butter-fat, 2,690 fat lambs, 120 fat cattle, 28 fat pigs, 657 tons of cereals, and 2,743 dozen eggs.

I emphasize that money invested in land settlement must not be regarded as money that is lost. It is an investment that will yield valuable returns. As I mentioned at the commencement of my speech, the State of Victoria has been developed on credit. Money must be made available, particularly for settlement on the land, with the view of producing foodstuffs. Then rich dividends to the State will accrue, not only in pounds, shillings, and pence, but also in the development of a healthy civilization. That will be so because people will be living where they want to live and they

Mr. Murphy.

will dwell there as normal people, living a life which will be devoted to the development of the land along the best lines possible.

I thank honorable members for the patient hearing they have given me and I hope that when the matter of finance, which is an important one, is considered, the Government will make adequate provision for those functions which are necessary in the discharge of its duties.

Mr. McDONALD (Shepparton).—I listened with much interest to the remarks of the honorable member for Hawthorn, and, at the commencement of his speech, I could hardly believe my ears. I thought: At last I have a first class convert to the case which I propose to submit for the advancement of the interests of the citizens of Victoria. There were some parts of the honorable member's speech with which I could not agree. When he spoke of primary production, I began to lose faith in his views. I consider that he needs to be educated on that subject. I sincerely hope that, when the Government brings in the scheme enunciated by the honorable member for Hawthorn, he, personally will play his part in the development of the thousands of acres of land to which he referred, relying solely on the rain, sunshine, and wind when it blows. In my younger days, I was silly enough to believe in those things and I went on the land, but I had to do much more than depend upon the elements; I had to take into consideration the superstructure of costs about which there has been much discussion and to which I shall refer later.

One interesting aspect is that the honorable member at least is giving serious thought to the important matter of the sovereignty of the Victorian Parliament. My contention is that, in this State, we no longer have a sovereign Parliament. It is true, as stated by the honorable member, that we Victorians cannot decide for ourselves what shall be done in the best interests of our citizens because we are bound by the decisions of another Government. It is important that honorable members should understand clearly the present