

# Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 24th August, 1920.

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

## QUESTION—MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (without notice) asked the Premier: What is the name of the Minister appointed by His Excellency the Governor and gazetted as Minister for Agriculture?

The PREMIER replied: The Hon. H. P. Colebatch.

## QUESTION—GOLD, PRICE.

### Ministerial Explanation.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [4.35]: I desire to make an explanation in reply to a question submitted by the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green). I notice that in the printed reply to the question mention is made of 20s. as being the amount of interim dividend for the accounting period ended June, 1920. This figure should be 21s.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

### Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the 19th August.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [4.38]: With the consent of the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), who secured the adjournment of the debate on Thursday last, I propose to address a few remarks to hon. members on the Address-in-reply. Whilst it is usual to make some apology for doing so, I think on this occasion, although so many different reasons have been given by members for having taken part in the address, an apology from me is not necessary. It is usual for a member to point out that it is a waste of time, but he does not mind wasting that time when he has something to say himself; and although it may be considered waste of time on my part I am not going to apologise for addressing myself to this question. I do not agree with hon. members who consider that the Address-in-reply is a waste of time. I regard it as an opportunity given to members, which I think should be valued by them, to speak on all matters affecting the general welfare of the State, and also an opportunity for the Opposition to show what, in their view, are their reasons why the Gov-

ernment should be displaced. I do not know that, taking the general trend of the discussion on this debate, there has been very much change in the attitude usually adopted on such an occasion. Every Governor's Speech that I have ever heard submitted to Parliament has been "full of rubbish," particularly from the point of view of the Opposition. It has always been urged against those that I have had any hand in framing, and I suppose it will be urged against those in the framing of which I have no hand. The Opposition are, of course, entitled to draw attention to what they think are weaknesses in the Speech, and to make the most of their opportunities. On this occasion the discussion has centred largely around those matters that are not contained in the Speech. It would be folly in the Speech to attempt to state all that had occurred between the last meeting of Parliament and the reassembling of Parliament, as also would it be to state all that it was proposed to do during the session. I, therefore, do not intend to discuss the Address-in-reply itself. At the last sitting of the House we had some rather candid criticism of the Government. I have not the slightest objection to criticism, as I have said before. It is rather helpful than otherwise, but when an hon. member sets himself out to criticise the Administration, he should at least, while attempting it, if he is not able to suggest the way in which anything should have been done, say in what manner the Government have failed. No such criticism has come from either side of the House. We had the criticism from the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) on the finances. I would suggest to that hon. member, who has filled the position of Treasurer of the State on at least two occasions, that he might have been able from his experience to help materially in guiding the destinies of the State from a financial point of view. I doubt very much if hon. members have received any instruction at all from his remarks. True, we have, what is apparently a common place thing in Western Australia, a deficit. I do not know whether many hon. members who know much about either the public finances or the conditions prevailing in the State, or those conditions which have prevailed in the State during the last seven years, would be courageous enough to suggest that we must at once set about making the revenue and expenditure absolutely balance.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You must make some attempt to get somewhere near a balance.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will deal with that later. I have urged, when submitting budgets to this House which have shown a deficit, that the first endeavour of the Treasurer is to place before the House a true statement as to the finances. He has no right to mislead either hon. members or the public by attempting to keep in the background certain things he may have in his mind, which will affect the finances and which will become known when the year closes. On the other hand, we have always

made provision for a sum of money for the Treasurer to meet any unforeseen expenditure. As with a private business of any magnitude so it is with the Government. In controlling the affairs of the State it is impossible to foresee all the likely expenditure that will be incurred by the State in carrying out its operations for a period of 12 months. No Treasurer ever will succeed in doing that. In these circumstances, the criticisms offered by the member for Irwin in particular have not been helpful, because they merely state that although we have received more revenue we have expended so much more in earning that revenue. It might be a simple task for the Treasurer to cut his garment in such a fashion that he might have sufficient cloth to complete it. On the other hand, we do not know that we are living in a country where we like Seymour coats, but I think we prefer to see that we get enough clothing to keep us warm rather than wait in the meantime to get clothes from overseas. If we did what the member for Perth suggests—and he is the worst judge of human nature I know of—we should make everyone feel the pinch because there is at present a difficulty in making the revenue and expenditure balance. The hon. member, in his capacity as one of the heads of the legal profession, would feel the pinch severely not merely as a taxpayer but from the point of view of his actual business, and all those who are producing wealth would suffer so severely that it would reflect largely on the general condition of the community. The best guide as to whether we are producing that which is sufficient to make life worth living is to be found in the material condition of the community; and although the State may for the moment find some difficulty in making expenditure and revenue balance, the success or failure of a Government has to be judged, not merely from that standpoint, but from the standpoint of how far the Government are assisting in the establishment of the State's industries. Take the period 1911-1914, when we were passing through droughts. Had it not been for the fact that the Government then went to the money-lenders to obtain the wherewithal to carry on and assist industries, we should not have been in the position to-day to produce that wealth which we are producing; had we merely adopted the attitude that revenue and expenditure must meet, the State would have suffered then and, in consequence, would have been still suffering severely to-day. This year we have once more a deficit. But I have not heard so much criticism on the score that there is a deficit as on the score that the Treasurer received £900,000 revenue more than was estimated, notwithstanding which the deficit has not been materially reduced, as, according to the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington), it should have been. The member for Perth does not appreciate the fact that the additional revenue was due to an expansion of business, which required additional expenditure. When we reach a stage where

we can make £900,000 additional revenue without increased taxation and increased departmental charges, somebody, some section of the community, will be suffering tremendously. Let me explain to hon. members the position from the standpoint of that additional revenue. The increased revenue was £918,000 and the increased expenditure £934,000. The increased expenditure was due largely to the increased activities of our business undertakings and trading concerns. After all, no one would suggest that, with a return to conditions approaching normal, our trading concerns, which have suffered tremendously from war and other causes, would not expand, or that the expansion would not entail both additional revenue and additional expenditure. Of that £934,000 increased expenditure, business undertakings and trading concerns were responsible for £504,000 and the railways were responsible for £432,000, which was largely due to expansion of traffic. No one knows better than the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) that if railway business expands, it is necessary to increase the mileage, and with it the staff, and, consequently, the working expenses.

Mr. Gardiner: Is it your argument that the more revenue you receive from railways, the more you are going to leeward?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No; I will come to that point later. The ordinary revenue of £414,000 was received from ordinary Government departments other than business undertakings and trading concerns. Of the increased revenue of £918,000 no less a sum than £504,000 was from trading concerns and business undertakings. At the same time, these business undertakings and trading concerns absorbed an additional expenditure of £521,000, and I suppose hon. members would be justified in pointing to the fact that the expansion of those trading concerns entailed a larger sum in expenditure than it returned in revenue.

Mr. Smith: Still, it is in the pockets of the people.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I want to point out that of the £521,000 additional expenditure on business undertakings and trading concerns, £432,000 was expended on our railways, leaving only £89,000 additional expenditure on all the other business undertakings and trading concerns.

Mr. Gardiner: You anticipated £221,000 more revenue from those concerns.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member may suggest that, but I am speaking of actual results of last year as compared with the previous year. The £918,000 increased revenue represented an increase over the revenue of the previous year, just as the £934,000 increased expenditure represented an increase over the expenditure of the previous year. In the Railway Department, then, there was an increased expenditure of £432,000. But the Railway Department earned an additional £396,000, of which £148,000 was due to increased freights. So that the expansion of business in the Railway Depart-

ment was responsible for earning £248,000 over and above the revenue of the previous year.

Mr. Gardiner: At a cost of £400,000.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Of that increased expenditure of £432,000, no less than £182,000 was due to increased salaries and wages.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The "West Australian" said it was £301,000.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is quite true. I am trying to put the position in such a way that it will be thoroughly understood without any risk of misleading. The "West Australian" was dealing with the reasons for the additional expenditure in a general way, but I am showing in detail how the increase was made up. As I say, the £182,000 was made up of increased salaries and wages.

Mr. Gardiner: Was that for the whole year?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. That was the amount we paid for the year, but it is not the amount that will accrue in future years. It was £182,000 over and above the estimate, owing to awards of the Arbitration Court, and increased salaries and wages due to expansion of business were responsible for an increased expenditure of £112,000. I want to be quite fair and point out that where we have had to increase the staff, either the salaried or the wages staff, we have deducted the amount paid to them by way of increases through awards of the Arbitration Court for the purpose of showing the actual increased amount paid through the Arbitration Court's awards, which in this case amounted to £182,000. Increased salaries and wages entailed by increased business cost us £112,000 for the whole year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I was only taking the figures which your office supplied to the "West Australian."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, but they were not given in detail. I am trying to explain how they were arrived at. On the other hand, the increased cost of coal accounted for £50,000, of which only £18,000 was due to increased business. No less than £32,000 was due to the increased price granted by the coal controller in Melbourne, amounting to 2s. 7d. per ton on every ton used. That was unforeseen expenditure, the only additional amount we had to find.

Mr. Gardiner: Was that on local coal?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, and we had to find £32,000 more in consequence. Then stores and materials, exclusive of coal, represented £81,000 additional expenditure over that of the previous year, while payment for holidays to returned soldiers represented £7,000, which makes a total of £432,000 additional expenditure. Taking into account the fact that nearly all the expenditure was absolutely beyond our control, I suggest that if there is new business to be done we must meet it. If we expand our business, it means additional expenditure. The point is whether the cost of the expansion is warranted by the increased revenue. Having regard to the fact that the increased price of coal represented

£32,000, and that £182,000 was absorbed in increased wages and salaries over which we had no control, while the increased cost of material represented another £181,000, I say that, unquestionably, the expansion of business paid the Railway Department handsomely.

Mr. Gardiner: Would further expansion of the business require a like proportion of increased cost?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. If the hon. member will take the Commissioner's report, he will find that as we extend the train mileage, so we reduce the cost of railway administration. What is the use of talking about filling up the empty spaces along the railway system, unless we are prepared to expand our operations? On our existing train mileage we have only one Commissioner, one Chief Traffic Manager, and so on, and we could considerably expand without requiring to duplicate those offices. During the last 12 months we have expanded our railway business tremendously, and that without incurring unduly increased cost. A fair percentage of the increased cost was due to the increased wages paid to those already employed, and due also to the increased cost of coal and material, over which we had no control.

Mr. Harrison: Is the position in regard to rolling stock equal to that of last year?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, I think the position is much about the same. Let me make some reference to the cost of material, because that has a large bearing on our railway operations. Before the war we were paying £3 5s. for tarpaulins, whereas the present price is £13 4s. 9d. Tyres cost us £2 12s. before the war, but to-day we have to pay £7 14s. 6d. Wheels in pre-war days cost £15 10s., whereas to-day the cost is £56. Axles cost us £3 10s. 7d. before the war, but to-day we cannot get them for less than £7 18s. 2d.

Mr. Gardiner: Make a comparison with the year immediately preceding the one just closed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: During the year prior to the one just closed, very little material was purchased.

Mr. Gardiner: And consequently that would be a material factor.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is the point. We have had to purchase a larger quantity of material during the last 12 months, whereas our purchases during the previous year amounted to little or nothing.

Mr. Harrison: I understood that you could not get it.

Mr. Gardiner: I understood that you did not purchase much.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Last year we made considerable purchases which, for tarpaulins alone, cost us £15,000 more than in the previous year. The material was not available in the previous year, and we were tremendously short of tarpaulins and had to purchase at this increased price. We are often told that the cost of administering the railways has increased out of all proportion to the increase of earnings, but that is not

correct when we take into account the cost of material, which has increased so tremendously, and the cost of operating, which also has increased tremendously, together with the fact that we have not increased freights and fares to any great extent. I have endeavoured to explain the position so far as the amount of £432,000 is concerned, and I hope I have convinced the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) that the expenditure was due to the fact that certain things beyond our control actually happened.

Mr. Gardiner: What is worrying me is that you are always making a loss.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There are two ways of looking at this matter, and they are not the ways in which the hon. member looks at it. The hon. member said that when we received so much additional revenue we should have been able to save something and reduce the deficit. Then he went on to argue that, although we received so much additional revenue, we also incurred so much additional expenditure. After having had additional expenditure cast upon us without having been able to foresee it or control it, the marvel to me is that our deficit has not gone up to the figure of a million. But for the fact that we were able to earn additional revenue, we would have gone to the bad by a considerably larger sum.

Mr. Gardiner: Could not that have been avoided?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. All these things which have happened have been beyond our control. The member for Irwin knows as well as I do that, although at the commencement of the financial year the Treasurer might feel confident that everything will go along swimmingly, and that he will be able to end the year as calculated in his Estimates, there is no telling what will happen even on the morrow. The whole community might be held up. The spark of to-day becomes a tremendous fire to-morrow, raging throughout the State. Can the Treasurer foresee that? We hope an abundant harvest will be reaped this year, but the hon. member knows that too much rain might lead to a failure in certain parts.

Mr. Underwood: Are not these failures becoming normal? I have been hearing of them for several years.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not suggesting a failure of the harvest. I am pointing out that these things might happen. But while failures come, so also does prosperity, without being sought. That is what happened last year. Let me quote the remarks of the leader of the Opposition on the Estimates. According to "Hansard," page 949, he said—

I want to say at this juncture (21st October, 1919) that I do not believe the Premier will be able to achieve, in actual results, what he has estimated and placed before us on paper, though I sincerely hope he will be able to do so.

Hon. P. Collier: I was a pretty good judge.

Mr. Gardiner: What about the extra money received?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Let me finish the quotation from the leader of the Opposition—

Bearing that in mind, and glancing through the Estimates, it seems to me that, allowing even for the prosperous season ahead of us and allowing for the fact that trade is again beginning to flow into its natural channels, and that there will be an expansion and increase in many of our primary industries, allowing for all this, I say, the Premier has unduly inflated his estimates of revenue.

It will be seen that even the leader of the Opposition was not able to foresee what actually happened.

Hon. P. Collier: Even a financier like me could not foresee it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have dealt with the increased revenue and expenditure under various undertakings and trading concerns. In what is known as ordinary revenue, there was an increase of £414,000, due almost entirely to expansion of business, there being no increase in taxation or departmental charges. When I say there was no increase, there were very slight increases, just here and there. But apart from those slight increases, charges remained stationary. The ordinary expenditure increased £413,000, leaving a difference of £1,000. I would direct the attention of the member for Irwin to the fact that a saving was effected there. The salaries and wages in Government departments were responsible for increases to the following extent:—civil servants £35,000, teachers £24,000, police, approximately, £15,000, and other departments £10,000, making a total of £84,000 additional salaries and wages paid in Government departments over and above the Treasurer's estimate. These increases we were unable to foresee or control unless we had adopted the attitude of the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington), and, in cold-blooded fashion, had said, "No, you shall not have any increases. I am determined to present a good face to the House and to continue on good political terms with my friends in the House, and I shall see you suffer rather than that I should suffer by way of criticism." If we had adopted an attitude of that kind, the amount of £84,000 might have been saved. Then, owing to the industrial dispute on the goldfields, our receipts from the goldfields water supply amounted to £25,000 less than would otherwise have been the case.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And you gave £8,000 to £10,000 away.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are always giving money away.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Just for support, that is all.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Judging by the criticism on Thursday evening, we have not been very successful in giving money away to gain support. I noticed that a charge was levelled against the Government

of having bought the support of the "Sunday Times" but, judging by the results as disclosed by last Sunday's issue, we did not succeed very well.

Hon. P. Collier: You have been pretty successful on the cross-benches, though.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: As to that, we shall see as we proceed. The influenza epidemic cost us £50,000 more than in the previous year.

Mr. Underwood: It should not have cost that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have to remember that the hon. member was quarantined, otherwise we might have saved some of that amount.

Mr. Underwood: With good administration, that would not have happened.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not in a position to deny the hon. member's statement. Probably he is correct but, so far as I can judge, the hon. member did remarkably well to get out as lightly as he did.

Mr. Underwood: They killed a lot of people, anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think I am echoing public opinion generally when I say that we as a State got out of it remarkably lightly in comparison with other countries where the epidemic raged.

Mr. Underwood: We never had the epidemic here.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Expenditure under special Acts, which included the Forests Act, accounted for £120,000, and the balance—

Mr. Gardiner: That is not in addition to your Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member did not base his criticism on actual results as compared with the Estimates. What he argued was that, because we had received £900,000 odd more revenue, we had expended £900,000 more. I am telling the hon. member the facts. Of the additional amount of £413,000 over and above that which was estimated, these amounts make up the total. The balance is made up by the increased cost of stores and expansion of business, which amounted to £134,000. These increases, over which we had no control, accounted in the aggregate for £465,000.

Mr. Gardiner: Do you honestly tell me you had to find £140,000 more for interest and sinking fund than you made provision for in your Estimates?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, I said under special Acts—

Mr. Gardiner: What are the special Acts?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I cannot permit the hon. member to argue.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There are a number of special Acts which include interest, sinking fund, and expenditure under the Forests Act, amounting in all to £120,000.

Mr. Gardiner: Are those above your Estimates?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member can look up the Estimates.

Mr. Gardiner: You do not wish us to believe that that was extra expenditure?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, over and above the expenditure of the previous year.

Mr. Gardiner: But provision was made for interest and sinking fund.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We made provision in the Estimates for certain revenue, and we received an additional revenue of £900,000. The hon. member argued that we expended additional money to the extent of £900,000, and his criticism was on that basis. I am replying on exactly the same basis.

Mr. Gardiner: No, that is not so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot follow the hon. member. The hon. member said we had received £900,000 additional revenue, and had expended £900,000 more than in the previous year, and that under the circumstances there should have been a saving. Had it not been for the fact that prosperity came our way and gave us an additional £900,000 revenue, we should have been that much more to the bad, because we had to find so much more money to pay increased wages, salaries, and cost of material.

Mr. Gardiner: You had £900,000 more revenue. This expenditure under special Acts was provided for according to the Estimates. You cannot get it both ways.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member is trying to get it both ways. He did not criticise the finances on the actual results as compared with the Estimates. He criticised them on the basis of the increased revenue and increased expenditure, and I am trying to show where we earned more money and where we had to spend more money.

Mr. Gardiner: Why put in a sum which was already provided for on the Estimates?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has already addressed himself to the subject.

Mr. Gardiner: We are all trying to get at facts.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am trying to explain what that additional expenditure was due to.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It could not have been due to additional sinking fund.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: These are the figures which have been supplied to me.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No doubt they have been supplied to you. One set of figures is supplied to the "West Australian" on one day and another set on another day.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have here the figures as published in the "West Australian," and will refer to them. I have given the details in order that the misunderstanding which arose in the mind of the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) might be cleared up. He referred to the increased wages in the Railway De-

partment under the award, and said we had so much additional revenue for the year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I said you had double the revenue.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I shall return to the assertions of the hon. member later on. I am trying now to prove that the increased cost to the Government, which arose in directions over which we had no control, amounted to £465,000 for the year. If we deduct £148,000, for which we made provision by increased freights, actually earned, the amount remaining is £317,000. Deducting the £317,000 from the amount of the deficit for the year, the position is that if we had not been faced by this increased expenditure for wages and salaries and cost of material, the year would have closed with a deficit not of £668,000 but of £351,000. In view of that, it might easily have been the other way. Then we would have had a deficit of nearly a million, and hon. members would have had reason to complain. It is the general expansion of business that has enabled us to meet these difficulties. Take the railway system. Will hon. members admit that in view of the Arbitration Court award we were right in granting the increased wages? Of course they will. Had our business remained the same in the Railway Department, had we had to pay these additional wages and salaries without increased earnings, then hon. members would have complained that we had taken no action to meet the difficulty. They would have said that the Government had failed in not meeting the increased expenditure. But to-day, because we have saved the position from being very much worse than it actually is, hon. members find reason to criticise. I do not complain of that; it is natural for hon. members to criticise. But I do object to those who failed to do better being the keenest critics. The member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) was like a shareholder who said to the directors of the company, "I am going to advise you, but I am going to sell my shares. I agree that the business would be all right under proper control, but I am going to sell my shares." It is useless to be a candid critic while saying, "At the first opportunity I am going to run away." Let us be fair in our criticisms. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) made certain statements which I desire to correct. The hon. member said—

I was also struck with the leading article published in to-day's "West Australian," and I think it is a great pity that that article was not published during the sitting of the Farmers' and Settlers' Conference. It would have been information to that conference.

That would imply that the information made available to the "West Australian" was not made available to the conference. As a matter of fact the only information upon which the "West Australian" based its article was also made available to the conference. In

order that the members of the conference might fully understand the position from a railway point of view.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The conference also said it was a pity that the information was not available.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was available. The information supplied to the "West Australian" was exactly the same as that supplied to the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) as I think that hon. member will admit.

Hon. W. C. Angwin. The figures you supplied to-day are entirely different.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No; they are the same. The only difference is that I have gone more into detail for the purpose of showing hon. members the actual amount of the increase we had to pay owing to the Arbitration Court award, and the additional amount of expenditure due to increased earnings. The member for North-East Fremantle further said—

For the quarter ended on the 30th June last, we learn there was a loss on the railways of £155,503. Of that amount £92,000 was represented by an increase in wages. The position is that the department had to pay back wages right to the 1st August of last year. The full amount of the wages increase paid was £106,000. That was for a period of 11 months. Adding one-eleventh to that amount we learn that the total annual increase would be approximately £115,636. But we learn to-day that the increased charges have affected the traffic to the extent of £148,400. Of course I realise that other costs apart from wages have also increased. But we were told last year that the increased railway charges were rendered necessary by the increase in wages granted by the Arbitration Court.

As a matter of fact the £92,000 referred to by the hon. member covered increases due to the award covering the period from the 1st August, 1919, to the 15th November, 1919, and from the 1st April, 1920, to the 30th June, 1920; and the increase of £14,000 in salaries brought the amount to £106,000. The £106,000 which was later quoted by the member for North-East Fremantle is based on the assumption that the £92,000 referred to covered the whole of the extra expense to the department for the full eleven months, instead of 7½ months as it actually did. As a matter of fact the total of the extra amounts paid to railway employees as a result of the Arbitration Court award was £182,000, as against the hon. member's figure of £115,000. Having explained that matter so far as I am able, I want to make some further comments on the statement made by the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) in connection with certain additional revenue earned. He pointed out that the amount received from re-imbursements, fees, and other services was much in excess both of the estimate and of the amounts received in previous years. The impression the hon. member left on the

minds of some other hon. members, and also on mine, was that he intended to convey that the Treasurer had deliberately arranged the payments from the departments.

Mr. Gardiner: Nothing was further from my mind.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I am glad the hon. member has made that statement, because the impression I have mentioned was conveyed to me and to other members.

Mr. Gardiner: I would be very sorry indeed if I left that impression. There was not the slightest intention on my part of conveying anything of the kind.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I am assured by the Treasurer that no instructions of any kind were issued in regard to the collection of revenue under the head of reimbursements. As a matter of fact, the item is one of the best indexes to our prosperity. Re-imbursements, fees, and other services are shown in detail in our Annual Estimates, as the hon. member will see on referring to pages 8 and 9. Those payments have increased owing to expansion of business and greater prosperity. I do not propose to make a Budget Speech this evening and to give the hon. member in detail all the information he asks for. He will get that information when the Estimates are before the House. In the meantime I merely wish to disabuse the hon. member's mind.

Mr. Gardiner: There is no need to disabuse my mind at all. The figures in nearly all the departments have increased. You are not making nearly as good a case for yourself as I made for you.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not trying to make a case.

Mr. Gardiner: I said that particular item had increased by £114,000 more than your estimate. You have given no explanation of that increase. Give it now.

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Not being the Treasurer, I do not know that I am entitled to give the explanation; and even if I were the Treasurer, I do not know that the present time is opportune for making such an explanation. If the hon. member moves for a return, he can obtain the information he wants. But he unquestionably left on my mind, and on the minds of others, the impression that he thought the increase under the heading of re-imbursements, fees, and other services, was due to the fact that the Treasurer had been gathering up the threads of revenue.

Mr. Gardiner: If you gathered that, you must be thicker in the head than I thought you were.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I would not deny even that soft impeachment, because I do not consider the hon. member is entitled to judge of other people's heads from his own. The amount received last year in this direction was on all fours with amount received in previous years, except

that there was an increase in almost every item. The increases will be explained when the Estimates come before the House. At present I merely want to remove any impression that the Treasurer sent instructions to gather from the various departments amounts which he is not entitled to get during the present year.

Mr. Gardiner. That is the best explanation you have made.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot say any more than that. I do not think the hon. member would have any difficulty in obtaining the information he desires if he went to the Treasury and asked for particulars of the amounts received. I am sure the Treasury would supply the information almost at a moment's notice. There is nothing unusual in getting increases under those heads. I shall not deal further with the financial position, except to say that I presume hon. members will agree that it would be infinitely better if the Government could present a statement showing a balance of revenue and expenditure. But I want hon. members to appreciate what it would mean if we proceeded to do what may not be in the mind of the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) but what might perhaps be inferred from his speech—introduce a black Wednesday system here similar to that which was once instituted in Victoria. It is far better for the State to spread our difficulties over a number of years, thus permitting the people to go on expanding their businesses and producing that wealth which we all enjoy. In that way the State is more solvent than if the other method were adopted. Everybody knows how Victoria suffered from the black Wednesday method. I do not consider that the position of Western Australia is so desperate that we must get a knife in and drag it round the body no matter what injury we may do. We must go about the matter carefully, instead of setting about to cut off £100,000 here and £100,000 there. Such a course will only land us in greater difficulties still. Let us prune the tree in such a way that it will give us more fruit. Now, as regards the increased railway rates, the statement has been made that the Government should have approached Parliament for a direction on this subject. That sounds very well, but does the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) know that the Arbitration Court's award was not issued until about a fortnight after Parliament went into recess?

Hon. P. Collier: The award was not delivered before Parliament rose?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: No.

Hon. P. Collier: It was delivered before the House rose, and the Minister intimated to the House what amount of increase in wages was involved.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: That is quite correct; but the hon. member overlooks the fact that only the minutes of the

award were known before Parliament went into recess. The award itself was not delivered until after Parliament went into recess. I told the House, on the last day I think it was, and "Hansard" will show it, when dealing with the railway Estimates, that from the minutes of the award then issued so far as we could judge that award meant an additional expenditure of £250,000. I also said at length that that was a condition of affairs which the Government would have to consider. We had already made a loss in the previous year on the railways of something like £600,000, and if we were to have an additional £250,000 added to it without any effort being made to meet it, we would be regarded as being neglectful of our duty. I distinctly told the House that it was my opinion—I had not consulted Cabinet—that if we were going to have an increased cost of operating the trading concerns or business undertakings, the community who were deriving the benefit from those concerns and undertakings would have to pay something in addition. I said we could not ask the men engaged in the industries to work for less than a living wage, and if the cost of commodities increased, the persons who used the undertakings would have to find something in addition out of which to pay the increases.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It was the same with everything else.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) must appreciate the fact that the cost of living was then advancing, and he cannot shut his eyes to the necessity for imposing the additional charges.

Mr. Johnston: Why not let the whole community share the burden?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Will the hon. member tell the member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack) that those who are working on pastoral holdings in the far North-West, where they have no railway communication, and only an indifferent steamer communication, should be called upon to pay towards providing the people in the district represented by the member for Williams-Narrogin with a railway service?

Mr. Johnston: What about the community in the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The same thing applies there. If we are to be logical the only thing to do is to see that we carry on our services if possible without a loss. The general community are bound to pay the cost of carrying on a commodity.

Mr. Gardiner: Do you not think that around Perth there has been an increment because of the expenditure on the railways?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The people in the metropolitan area have had to bear their share. I do not know of cases where increased charges on railways have not been distributed. When I introduced the question to the House I told hon. members that we were not in a position to make a definite announcement. There were members here

who urged that if increased railway freights were to be imposed they should be on the basis of a surcharge. That was supported generally by hon. members. I do not know that any voice was raised against the proposal. If we had to receive additional revenue because of the additional cost of running the service, there was no better method than that which we employed. We have collected from the general community in the metropolitan area, the goldfields and everywhere else. We have collected a fair percentage from all in accordance with the business transacted. Take other countries. The increased charges in America and Great Britain in the matter of fares and freights have been enormous, so big in fact that ours are hardly noticeable.

Mr. Johnston: You cannot increase taxation without putting a Bill through the House.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: When the hon. member starts out to introduce indirect taxation for the purpose of paying interest and sinking fund on railway capital, he will find that he is up against a stiff proposition. It cannot be done. There would be an uproar on the part of the people. The amount we receive to-day by way of land tax is less than £50,000.

Hon. P. Collier: It is £46,000.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Does the member for Williams-Narrogin suggest that we should introduce a land tax which would increase the revenue received from that source from £46,000 to £800,000?

Mr. Johnston: Certainly not.

Mr. Lutey: Certainly.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not going to take the responsibility for it. I do not deny that we might with wisdom and justice increase our land tax, but I still say that we should never increase it to such an extent as to prevent an increase in the freights. I do not think there are too many people who hold land at the present time who are loafing on it. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) pointed out the other day that we would never get immigrants if we did that kind of thing. Our desire is to get additional traffic as the result of additional population, and while a land tax would make land available, we would not get the result the hon. member anticipates.

Mr. Lutey: You would not have to pay through the nose for land for the soldiers as you are doing at the present time.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have a Federal land tax and a State land tax and the suggestion the hon. member made would not be a panacea for all our ills. Compare our railways with the railways in other parts of the world. In Great Britain the railways had a deficit of over 41 millions last year.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not as big a deficit in proportion to the population as ours is.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, it is.



Mr. Johnston: It is ten times as large there?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: When an additional charge is imposed on a community they always complain. Those who are employed in our industries, or in fact anywhere else, are entitled to demand that they shall have fair remuneration for the labour they supply. If they supply that labour to the Government, who has to pay for it? The Government for the time being are only acting as trustees for the community, and the community must pay.

Mr. Duff: The mining companies pay it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not to us. As a matter of fact, when the community talks about a fair wage, the community has to find the money with which to pay it, and if the cost of the service is increased, the general community must either be taxed or they must pay for the service rendered. The cost of the services rendered by our railways in comparison with the cost of similar services elsewhere is not high, and until we reach that stage people should not complain. In comparison with America and Great Britain our producers are infinitely better off than the producers in those countries. Our railways are not such a burden on the community as some people would suggest. If we can make up the leeway by increasing the land tax I agree that we might increase it, but we should consider the question first from the point of view of railway finance. Let me deal with a matter in connection with which the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) asked a question this afternoon. He wanted to know what we had done about the making of regulations to deal with the question of prospecting for oil. I have read so much about oil that I am beginning to think that wherever we may go we will find it. For the last 12 months I have had many people assuring me that they had found beautiful deposits of oil—I think it must have been salad oil. Every day they come along and assure me that there is oil in the State, and that they could find it if they had the opportunity to get it. I asked what opportunity it was that they required, and they replied, the opportunity to go out and prospect. I was struck recently by an article which appeared in the "Sunday Times" which declared that the Government had made no effort to assist in the prospecting for oil.

Mr. Jones: They want some of it to oil that machine.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They also pointed out in that article that prospectors had been shut out because the Government would not make regulations to control the prospecting for oil. Further on they also pointed out that the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, before they discovered oil, had spent two million pounds. Imagine a prospector in Western Australia, the sort one meets, placing his hands on two million pounds to spend on prospecting for oils in this State! The thing is absolutely apart from prospecting for gold or minerals; it is entirely another

proposition. The first thing to do is to get a geological map of the country, and to understand the position from a geological point of view. Then there must be spent a tremendous amount of money in boring. No individual can do that without capital, and as far as we have been able to do so, we have made provision to permit that to be done. As a matter of fact, the regulations merely provide that under existing conditions a big extent of country can be made available to a syndicate, company, or individual, and that on this country prospecting may be carried on. We provide also that a bond of £50 shall be entered into for each area taken up. People run away with the idea that because a man does not go round with a pick and shovel and a billy-can that he is not prospecting. As a matter of fact, prospecting is being carried on in Western Australia to-day.

Mr. O'Loughlen: In America they do not put a pick in the ground at all.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is what I have stated, and we set out under existing legislation that we can give no title. All I can say is, "You discover oil and we will approach Parliament and ask Parliament to give you certain rights." I realise the advantage that would accrue to Western Australia from the discovery of oil here, and to help in the discovery I will give everything except the assets themselves. If oil was discovered in Western Australia, and through some regulation made by the Government we gave away that asset which belongs to the State, the hon. member would be the first to call out about it. We are prepared to give a permit over 640 acres as a reward claim to the exclusion of everyone else.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They say that is not sufficient.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I would not be prepared to give them the lot.

Mr. Underwood: They could have the lot of what is down there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is another tale. I have also stated I am prepared to approach Parliament, and ask Parliament that, in addition to the 640 acres reward claim they should also have two additional areas of 48 acres each. That, compared with what is given in other parts of the world, is fairly generous. When introducing the Bill, I am going to ask Parliament to reserve the balance of the known flow to the State, giving the State either the right to grant additional leases to the company, syndicate or individuals concerned who discover the oil, or to operate the discovery itself, or make an agreement for someone else to do so. Whatever is done must be done on the basis of the State getting the proper advantage of that which belongs to it and is in the earth. People ask why the Government do not bore for oil. I would have to get a new geological staff before I could start that. I have not been able to get any encouragement from the geological survey on this question. The officers there are convinced that the natural

strata of Western Australia does not lend itself to the production of oil.

Hon. P. Collier: They are emphatic about that.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** That is true. I got "Hark from the tomb" after last session, because of some statements I made on the subject of oil. At the same time I still believe that geologists can be wrong. If there are people who have sufficient faith in their ability to discover oil, and who are prepared to spend their money in trying to find it, I am prepared to give them the necessary facilities to enable them to go ahead. That permission has only been granted as regards Crown land. No land that has been alienated, or is in process of alienation, or is proposed to be alienated, has been reserved for this purpose. I see from the paper that oil has been discovered in Collie. I am of opinion that oil is still to be found in Western Australia, and anyone who likes can go ahead and look for it. There is no difficulty in prospecting for oil in this State. As soon as the opportunity presents itself, a Bill will be brought down to give people the rights that are necessary to enable them to deal with any oil that they may find. I think we are treating them very generously. They can go ahead at any moment that they find it. All these statements about giving encouragement to the oil prospector are so much moonshine. The men who went prospecting for oil in this State were not prospecting for oil; they were prospecting for capital. Men have been holding areas of land in this State who have only walked over those lands, taken a certain amount of geological data, and distributed this information in those channels from which they thought they would have an opportunity of obtaining money with which to carry out prospecting work. They have, in fact, been looking round for people who will put up the money for them. They have done little or no prospecting work themselves. My predecessor granted certain permits to enable certain persons to prospect over defined areas in the State. There was no Act then in force giving them any rights, so that the position is not different to-day from what it was then. When these people made application for the renewal of these permits, I felt that, as they had been able to produce evidence that they had collected certain geological data, they were entitled to this renewal. Almost simultaneously, however, with this application we had an offer from another company to undertake prospecting in Western Australia, and this company had more money with which to do this than all the other persons put together. They said, "You reserve all the oil in the State to the Crown, and enter into an arrangement with us to work on your behalf, and we will do all the prospecting in Western Australia to obtain oil, if there is any." They were doing all that could be done under the existing circumstances. That being the case, the only thing I am faced with is to provide

means of encouraging prospecting for oil, but not to be led away by the possibilities of this valuable discovery being made and doing something for which I shall afterwards be condemned. If the coal pits of England had been made a national asset, then probably there would have been less of a struggle in England than there is to-day. I would never be a party to giving away any possible oil discoveries in Western Australia. If we can make arrangements satisfactory to the men who may discover oil in this State, and give them a fair deal, and still retain to the State the value of the asset, we shall be doing something for our own benefit and for the benefit of posterity. We are entitled to look ahead at times. The member for Cue (Mr. Chesson) raised the question of the sale of a certain printing machine. I am told that very serious criticism has been levelled at the Government by a certain yellow rag published one day last week. I would not suggest that there was any political animus in the article. The gentleman who is the editor of this paper would be above anything of that kind. I give him credit for that.

Mr. Roche: You do not know him.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** I know as much about him as I want to know. A good deal has been said about the sale of this printing machine to the "Sunday Times" Publishing Company. To suggest that the Government were responsible for the sale of this machine in order to buy the support of the "Sunday Times" is a suggestion that I know no hon. member would believe. There may, however, be an impression in the minds of the public that something of the kind occurred. No member of the Government was aware that the machine was sold until the actual sale had taken place. Not a single member of Cabinet knew of it. The file is here, and if hon. members so desire I will lay it on the Table of the House. This machine had been hawked about all over Australia. The only occasion when any definite offer was made for it was after it had been sold by someone in the Railway Department, who said, "I could have got a buyer. I was dealing with someone who was a prospective buyer when the sale took place."

Mr. O'Loughlen: It was not offered at that price.

Mr. Chesson: Did not the "Worker" make an offer?

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** The "Worker" was asked to state a price but would not do so. Time and again prices have been put on the machine. It was taken over from the "Sunday Times" office when the railway resumptions took place. We had to take the whole thing over. If a man's business is disturbed, the man can decide what part of his business shall remain in his hands. That machine was valued for the purpose of resumption at £5,800.

Mr. Chesson: That is what you offered it at.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That was years ago. What I think prompted the "Sunday Times" Publishing Company not to take the machine was the fact that it was out of date, and they left it on the premises. We got out catalogues and sent them with photographs everywhere. We have asked agents and promised them commission to sell the machine. Up to the date when a firm offer of £500 was made, not a single bid was received. We called tenders years ago. The "Worker" knew that, and the "Worker" was asked to quote for it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The department put a price on it; it was not £500.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The department asked the "Worker" to make an offer, but they did not do so.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Did the department ask a price?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member knows that the machine was very much out of date, and that they would not take it on. If the "Worker" was to be a paper worthy of the name of a paper, it required up-to-date machinery. No paper will make progress if it buys out-of-date machinery. I had a man in the office recently who complained about the sale of this machine on the score that he wanted to buy it himself. That was Percy Brunton. The machine has been occupying room in the buildings which were resumed for Government offices. We were urgently in need of the full accommodation available, and the final word went out to the department that this machine had to be got rid of. It was deteriorating every day that it remained there, and it has remained there for years.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It would not deteriorate.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Commissioner for Railways received an offer of £500 and accepted it. The minute is as follows—

I recommend the acceptance of this offer for the amount of which I have already received the company's cheque.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is that on the file?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. I want to show that the sale of the machine to the "Sunday Times" was not known to any member of Cabinet until the whole transaction had been completed.

Mr. Johnston: It sounds a bad business deal.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I should like to say a few words in regard to the recent public service dispute. I do not go as far as the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) and say that the strike in the public service was in the nature of a rebellion. It is a serious thing, but I am doubtful whether one could term it a rebellion. Being a lawyer he naturally seeks to find every side to the argument. He blames the public service in the first instance and then blames the Government. He wanted to be certain that his

client succeeded. His client was not the public service and it was not the Government. It was someone who stood between, and whatever happened, one way or the other, the hon. member could show that he had succeeded. It is true that the public servants have had grievances. They will ever have them just the same as any other body of workers will have them. To suggest that, because they had grievances and took a certain course of action, the Government did not adopt the cold-blooded attitude suggested by the member for Perth, and say to the civil servants, "If you do not go back to work we are going to dismiss the whole lot of you," is evidence of the fact that the hon. member really agreed with our action.

Hon. P. Collier: Whom would you have put in their place?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is the point I am coming to. Most of us can be wise after the event. At the present day, and quite rightly, the worker, whether he is working on a salary or on wages, is entitled to demand a fair return for the labour he gives. His demand may not always be justified. He may claim more than he is entitled to. Differences of opinion may arise. It may be that the methods which the employee wants to introduce are not acceptable to the other party. In those circumstances we must find ways and means of settling the difference. It has been said that I personally am responsible for the strike, because I promised a board to the railway men away back in November last. It is said that the civil service dispute arose because that promise of mine was not fulfilled. But, as a fact, I did not promise a board of the nature of the public service board. When the railway employees approached me on my assuming office, they asked for a board which would apply to the railway officers. I told them then that such a board would be futile. I said the matter could be settled better by a wages board. But I added that if the salaried staff of the Railway Department were granted a board, all the other Government servants, including the teachers, would also demand such a board. I told the railway men, "I am prepared to recommend that a provisional board be appointed to consider the question and to make recommendations to the Government as to the establishment of such a board and as to its jurisdiction." But I said, "As soon as Cabinet agrees to that, the public servants and the teachers will ask to be joined, and that will probably create delay." I got Cabinet to agree to the appointment of what is called a committee. The public servants and the teachers immediately asked to be joined. They were joined. The committee held several sittings under the chairmanship of Mr. Trethowan, the Under Secretary for Agriculture.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There were two public servants on the committee.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. A committee of that kind is almost bound to consist of public servants. The committee made a recommendation, and that recommendation was not satisfactory to the Government. The committee dealt with the whole question—not only the establishment of the board, but its powers and authorities; and it was considered by the Government that the committee were taking the control of the public service not only out of the hands of the Government, but out of the hands of Parliament, where it should be. Accordingly, the board suggested by the committee was refused. Thereupon conferences were held, and a representative of the railway officers accompanied the Attorney General to the East and inquired into the board system there, and came back. The strike of the public servants, however, did not arise out of the question of the board, but out of a demand for a 33 per cent. increase in salaries. That demand was; in the opinion of the Government, an unfair one, in view of the fact that a board had already been appointed to settle the salaries. The Government withstood the demand, and a strike occurred. The member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) is of opinion that the Government ought to have gone round and said to every public servant, "Because you have adopted an attitude which we consider unfair, we are going to throw you out and punish you."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is what the Government did at Fremantle.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I did not do it. Although I may be, and very often am, violently opposed to another man in opinion, I am not going to suggest that therefore he should be suffocated. The Government were entitled to consider fairly all the demands that were made by the public servants. So long as we really conserved the interests of the State, it was our duty to meet a reasonable demand. It is true that the public servants made the unreasonable demand of payment for the time they were on strike, a demand which the Government would not concede; but I do not think the member for Perth would suggest that we should impose a hardship on these people, who have suffered severely. Men in permanent positions undertake permanent obligations, and if, by a refusal to advance them the amount of their salaries during the period of the strike, which amount they could repay over an extended term, we had brought about a position of hardship which would have closed up a number of them, we would have been doing something detrimental to the State. It will cost the State comparatively nothing to make this temporary advance, and in doing so we shall be giving evidence of the fact that the State wants to deal fairly with its servants. I disagree entirely with the attitude adopted by the public service. In view of the fact that a board had been granted and in view of the jurisdiction conferred on the board, there was nothing that could not have been settled by the board. To hold up

the State in the way the public service did was not only unfair and unreasonable, but something entirely against public policy and the best interests of the community. However, I do not wish deliberately to do something that will be felt by the community not temporarily but permanently. When these men returned to their offices, I thought we should make that the end, and not cause the ill-effects to become permanent by trying to get even, as some people would term it. The whole thing has been ended. We do not now feel any further ill-effects from the strike. We suffered during the time, and I think it will be beneficial to the State that the Government acted as they did. One can easily criticise the Government for every move they make, but the attitude of the Government on that occasion was, in my opinion, in the best interests of the general community.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You could have taken their holidays in exchange for their wages.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The point was raised that we ought to pay the salaries for the period of the strike and take them out in holidays. That course, in my opinion, would have been tantamount to paying the public servants for the time they were on strike.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, it would not.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It would be a very bad principle. I think the Government struck the happy medium between the attitude of the member for Perth and that of the member for North-East Fremantle. The former would dismiss all the public servants, and the latter would pay them for the time they were on strike. I consider that under the circumstances the Government met the position fairly between all parties. I do not wish to detain the House further, except to say that it is natural for the Opposition to find a weakness in the Government and to make the most of that weakness. When we were in opposition we did it, and I suppose the present Opposition are entitled to do it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You will have a chance again next year.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Possibly. But, if we do get that chance, the hon. member interjecting will find that some of the things which appear to him on the Opposition bench as simple of adjustment are extremely difficult. He will then realise that he is only laying up trouble for himself by suggesting to the working men and the working women whom he represents that all they have to do is to ask and they will receive.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have not suggested that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: After all, the desire to act fairly and justly by the people of the State does not exist with members on the Opposition side alone. I believe there are others in the House desirous of doing the right and proper thing by the community who produce wealth. I want to tell the hon. member that he must not, while

in Opposition, deliberately, I will not say mislead, but lead the community to believe that all the demands they make are justified, for, later on, when he is on this side of the Chamber, he will have to stand up against those demands. Does not the hon. member recollect that in 1913 the Government were faced with a railway strike in Perth because of a demand that 9s. a day should be paid for work which was previously paid at 8s. per day? The Government declined. The Labour Government declined. We declined on the ground that the demand was one which sought to place ordinary sand shifting on the same level as work in a ballast pit. In consequence that work of sand shifting was held up for months and months. Then the war came upon us, and a deputation from all sides of the House waited on me in my office, and suggested all sorts of undertakings for the purpose of finding work for the unemployed. Water supply, harbour works, and all sorts of projects that had been hung up for years and years were suggested. I said to the deputation, "Have you taken into account that all these works mean that we have to find not only money to pay wages but money to buy the material required for these works?" The deputation had not thought of that. Then I said, "There is work which has been hung up for months because we have had to refuse the rate demanded. Until that work is done, there will be no fresh work." Thereupon the men concerned went back to work. That happened under a Labour Government. When hon. members now opposite find themselves on the Government benches they will meet with unreasonable demands from their supporters, and they will find more difficulty in resisting those demands than we have. Further let me say that there is not a member on this side of the House but recognises that the economic position has changed, and that a man who assists to produce wealth is entitled to his fair share of that wealth. But that does not mean that every demand which is made is fair, and that if every demand made is not granted the Government should be condemned. Only last week a few shunters in the Perth yards might easily have held up the whole of our railway system through their demand for something that was not given them by the Arbitration Court. Because these few men were discontented with the rate fixed for them by the court and refused the amount that was offered them by the Commissioner, they went out on strike. I suggest to our friends opposite that that is not the method by which the country will make progress.

Mr. Green: Their own union told them that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Their union went further than that, but their union could not induce them to go back to work and let the matter be decided through the proper channel. An arbitrator had to be called in to settle this matter between

the Commissioner and a few individuals—a matter which had already been decided by the Arbitration Court. Such are the conditions under which we are working today. I suggest to the member for North-East Fremantle that he should endeavour to remove the impression among the community that all they have to do is to make a demand and enforce it by direct action.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have never suggested anything of the kind.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: By doing so he is only building up trouble for himself and his party. I suggest to the hon. member that he might try to assist the Government to overcome some of those difficulties which are necessarily encountered during the development of a State.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I desire briefly to make clear the point raised by the member for Perth in connection with the final settlement of the public service strike. The hon. member intimated that the general opinion amongst public servants was that they would not be called upon to repay the amount advanced by the Government covering the period during which they were on strike. The Attorney General, interjecting, said the public servants had no such idea; but the member for Perth persisted that the feeling amongst the service was that the Government were not serious in demanding repayment. As a member of the Government, and also through my knowledge of the correspondence which passed between Cabinet, the Public Service Commissioner and the disputes committee, I happen to know that at no time during the negotiations did we suggest anything short of the full repayment of the amount advanced to the public servants. On the 6th August the Public Service Commissioner wrote to the Premier, explaining that he had met the members of the disputes committee and that certain things had been discussed and decided. In that letter he said—

Both the Attorney General and the Solicitor General were of opinion that a further guarantee—

That is to say, guarantee of repayment. The letter continues—

was unnecessary, and that the amount which had been advanced could be treated in precisely the same way as an overpayment, and deductions made in accordance with any arrangement agreed upon. I do not therefore propose to issue any further instructions in this direction. In connection with the advance which the Government have made to officers of a sum equal to the amount of salary forfeited during the strike period, the committee asked for special consideration when dealing with terms of the repayment. The whole question was thrashed out thoroughly, and a number of suggestions both from the committee and

myself were carefully considered. The committee finally urged that their request that the first repayments should take place in October next, and the total repayment to be completed by 12 equal amounts deducted monthly, be adopted. I have gone very carefully into the request, and I recommend that the Government accede to it.

There is clear evidence that at no time during the negotiations have the disputes committee been under any other impression than that the repayment would have to be made on the terms mentioned. The arrangement was made that they should start the repayment in October. I hope that will finally clear up the question. I know of no moment during the negotiations when it was even suggested that they should do anything but repay the amount advanced to carry them over what otherwise would have been a most difficult period.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [7.35]: At the request of the Minister for Mines I gave place to him in the debate, which I think was only proper, seeing that the request was made by a Minister. However, I must say that I should have liked the Minister, before he spoke, to hear one or two points which I intend to make. The Minister has told us that the condition of the finances does not matter.

The Minister for Mines: Oh, no.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: On a previous occasion he told us that the money was in the pockets of the people. I can only hope that it is in their pockets still. But taxation is near its limits, and our credit is near its limits, yet the Minister has not told us how he is going to run the State on credit in the future.

The Minister for Mines: That is not my job.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is not my job.

Hon. P. Collier: It does not seem to be anybody's job.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is the job of every citizen of Western Australia to know how the country is to be run. All the world has been through a pretty hard time. I recall the lines "The world is out of joint; oh, cursed spite! that ever I was born to set it right." I do not suggest that I personally was born to set it right; still, as Parliamentarians, and therefore leaders of the people, our duty is to endeavour to put the State on a sound basis. It is quite to be expected that after a war such as we have been through, the milk of human kindness might turn a little sour. It is the duty of every man appointed to be a leader of the people to put that milk into cold storage and get it down to normal again.

Mr. Hudson: Why not churn it?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Because you would then get butter. It is our duty as members of Parliament to get the milk back to normal. We who did not go to the war have not lost much. We have lived possibly better

than any other people on earth; we have lost only—a very hard loss, it is true—some of the flower of our youth, and we have the cripples and the dependants of those who are lost to look after. That is a fair duty to assume. We have lost 60,000 of the flower of Australia, and besides we have the cripples whom it is our duty to keep. Moreover, we have a huge war debt to pay. If we are the people that we claim to be, that is what we have to do. How are we going to do it? I agree with the optimistic Premier that this country can do it—if all of us set our minds on doing it. It is a question not of optimism, but of hard, solid work. Australia can be made to produce sufficient for all of us; but that has to be done, not by proclaiming optimism, but by sound work. The present is not the time for divisions on either party politics or religion. We have to cut out both of those, and every member requires to sit down and do the best he possibly can to pull the country out of its difficulties. I have listened to the Minister for Mines, and heard nothing but the same old platitudes on party politics, a term which has been proved to mean simply that one set of men is in office and the other set is out. There is something more than that to be done to save Australia to-day. We are still talking of party politics, of the Labour party, the Liberal party, the Country party, the National Labour party, the member for Leonora's party and my own party. There should be no other desire on the part of members than to see this country through a very difficult time, not only for ourselves but for our children. The leader of the Opposition has criticised the Government. I sympathise with him, because I was in office with him when the Opposition criticised us most unfairly. The present Premier, when in office, is "Sunny Jim," but when in Opposition, or even on these cross benches, he was the most dismal circumstance I ever struck.

Mr. Smith: It makes all the difference.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It has made all the difference to the present Premier, but it has made no difference to me and it should not make any difference to a man who desires the wellbeing of Australia. A man who can be Sunny Jim in office and Dismal Jim in opposition—well, we cannot have any faith in him. In regard to party politics, if we analyse the position to-day, we find that, after nearly 20 years of high speed legislation, we have almost finished all the legislation we require. We have all heard and agreed with the saying that we want measures, not men. To-day we want men, not measures. We want men who are industrious and have executive ability. I would say to the leader of the Opposition that, if he had to put forward a policy to-day, he could not put his finger on one big bit of legislation. As a matter of fact, what we need to-day is administration. I do not desire to be aggressive towards the Opposition.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Go for your life; we don't mind.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am going, and I am not worried about the member for Forrest.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I am not worried about you, and I do not think anyone else is.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am not worried about the hon. member.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do not hold up; let yourself go.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We want men of administrative ability and industry.

Hon. P. Collier: Well, I am at your disposal.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: And I do not mind saying it is absolutely certain that we could pick men from the Opposition side of the House who would be able to assist the men on this side of the House to administer the affairs of the country. I do not say I would pick the member for Forrest.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I do not think you would. I am pretty certain no party would pick you. You have joined every party and have been elected Minister for none.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The hon. member should keep cool.

Hon. P. Collier: I shall not go over if you will not take him.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The greatest difficulty we as a Parliament have to-day, and I do not mind confessing it as being the greatest difficulty of my life, is that of finance. Since 1912, that is for eight years, I have heard criticisms on finance. I have heard the late Mr. Frank Wilson from the Opposition side, the present Premier, the Minister for Works, the member for Canning. They all criticised the finances. I have heard the Minister for Mines to-day; but I do not know that anyone has yet attempted to put forward a remedy. It is absolutely certain that we cannot go on borrowing and paying for our luxuries out of borrowed money. I do not desire to go into the reason for the deficit, but it might be stated shortly that the principal cause of the deficit is that we have constructed public works for the ordinary development of the country. We have constructed railways in open country, hoping that settlement would take place alongside those lines, and that the settlement would provide the freights which would make those railways pay. That settlement has not taken place. Hence we have half of our deficit representing sinking fund on public works. That is the chief part of our trouble to-day.

Hon. P. Collier: We are over-capitalised.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No, over-borrowed. I came into this House 14 years ago as one opposed to excessive borrowing.

Hon. P. Collier: And we stuck to it, too.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Wait until I tell the hon. member. For five or six years I stuck to it. I opposed railway after railway and then—

Mr. Teesdale: The Marble Bar railway came.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Then the Labour Government came into power. I was sitting in the seat next to that now occupied by the member for North Perth, and the Premier turned around and said, "Here, you go out and have a drink. I have a Loan Bill here."

The Minister for Mines: You might as well tell us the rest.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Well, I went out and had a drink and, in five minutes, the non-borrowing Labour party passed a Loan Bill for five million pounds.

Hon. T. Walker: For reproductive works.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The trouble is they have not proved reproductive.

Hon. P. Collier: They will be ultimately.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They may be. The Government borrowed the five millions and did it with the assistance of all the members at present in Opposition. They passed five millions in five minutes.

The Minister for Mines: That is a record.

Mr. Smith: A million a minute.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes. Members need not worry about the cause of the deficit. It was the million a minute to which they all agreed.

Mr. Johnston: That is done almost every year.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Not at the rate of a million a minute. The Premier now speaks quite casually of the deficit. I have just told hon. members how he spoke when he moved a motion of no-confidence. That was when he was Dismal Jim. He is now an optimist. I want to say that an optimist, without any other ability, or anything else to recommend him, is just about as valuable as an empty bottle. If one has an empty bottle and has some spirit to put in it, the bottle will hold the spirit. An empty bottle is a good thing. An optimist is good, but an optimist without ability is about equal to an empty bottle. That is about what the Premier's capacity amounts to. Talking about optimism, I have read the reports regarding a trip made by the Premier and the Minister for Works. They were somewhere down in the swamp country and they said, "We believe in the country." Well, of course they do; so did Micawber, so did Mulberry Sellers. He was another optimist, and so was Dick Swiveller. In my opinion he was more after the style of the Premier than any of them. He borrowed.

Mr. Green: And Mark Tapley.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No, he always paid his way. Swiveller built up credits. He borrowed wherever he could, and got beer and other things on trust wherever he could; and he had to walk two miles to reach his lodging in the next street in order to dodge his creditors. He was an optimist. So is the Treasurer. But optimism is not going to carry us through. Dick Swiveller had to get work, and any Government who are going to carry on the work of this country must get down solidly to work on the deficit. Regarding optimism, one may bluff on it as long as

he likes. If a man speaks of something in the nature of a danger ahead, he is described as a pessimist; but a man who does not look at the dangers ahead is a fool, not an optimist. We have a very serious time ahead of us. This applies to all Australia, but to Western Australia particularly. We have heard of the decline of gold production, and much of our public works has been built on the gold mining industry. I will speak of this later, but I would like to point out now that unless we can reduce the costs, not only of fracter but reduce the general cost of living, our gold mining is going to almost peter out, because gold mining is the only industry that cannot get increased prices. That is a position, which any man who studies things must recognise. If we cannot reduce the costs, then almost all of our gold mines must close down and, with the closing down of our gold mines, our costs on railways, water supplies, and many other public works will be lost. One does not require to be an optimist or a pessimist, but one requires to have a knowledge of these things to know that what I am saying is absolutely correct. We have not had a complete balance sheet of our finances. We have yet to get the absolute losses made by the Agricultural Bank. They will not appear in our national balance sheet for some considerable time, but these losses are there all the same. It is all very well for the Treasurer to say, "I am an optimist and I believe in the country." It is cheap, but we must get down to realise the difficulties ahead of us and to find a way to get through them. No mere talk about optimism is going to do that. What are to be the remedies? I have asked several members to suggest a remedy. There is one remedy, and that is an increase in population and an increase in settlement. As to whether or not we can get that increase in settlement, we are to an extent in the lap of the gods. I have heard my late chief talk about, "Produce, Produce, produce." In speaking thus he was absolutely correct. We are only going to get out of the trouble we are in through increased production. To get increased production we must get increased population. I have heard the present Premier, particularly when moving his vote of no-confidence in the Government to which I belonged at the time, say how the Lefroy Government had failed, and how he was going to settle soldiers on the land. I have watched the progress of his administration. I have noted that he never changed one single officer which the Lefroy Government had. I have noticed that it is just the same old thing that occurred in the Government that he denounced. The present Premier wants to keep in office. He will go to sleep peacefully. I presume he will have his salary sent along to him at the bank, and he will be an optimist. If he was not getting that salary for being a Minister he would be a pessimist. We have not much to work upon in regard to reform.

We are a small State in numbers, a large State in area. We are handicapped in regard to taxation by the taxation of the Federal Government. There are some things we may reform in, and, allowing that we have a £600,000 a year deficit, a very large one, just about £2 per head of the population, we must think how we are going to do it. In my opinion the first thing to consider is civil service reform. I do not desire just now to speak of the civil service strike, nor of the salaries paid to civil servants, but I do desire to speak of the circumlocation of the service, and the excessive numbers that are employed in the service. The only way to get over that is to get Ministers who will sit in their offices, and not go round the country talking about optimism, and oil, and Albany, Ministers who will sit in their offices and look after the administration. We want economy in the Education Department. Upon this question I will speak later, either on the Estimates or by direct motion, but in the meantime I should like to read an extract from "Hansard" of 1914-15. It may draw the attention of members to the attitude adopted by that most influential paper which supports the present Government. This is an extract read by the Minister for Education—

The leading article published in the "West Australian" of the 5th February last says, "Education is another department in which expenditure has grown by leaps and bounds, and an analysis of the administration gives some striking and unsatisfactory results. The aggregate expenditure upon the education vote was £276,555 in 1912-13—no later departmental vote is available. In 1910 it was £183,698. This is an enormous increase of a shade more than 50 per cent. in three years. It is interesting to discover other features of the departmental report. The "West Australian" of yesterday, or the day before, pointed out that there were any amount of excuses for the excessive expenditure, and that the education vote for this year will be £490,000. Of course, many people say, I am not educated. The then Minister for Education put up a report of his officer, who can put up reports, and I think very little else, for that is his long suit. Again quoting from "Hansard" I will read what the Minister for Education at that time said—

If the parents are too poor to keep children in the central schools for a year or two, and so prepare to enter the secondary schools, then if the child is earning a livelihood in the daytime, we have our night classes, our continuation classes, and I know very few things which have become more popular in recent years than the continuation classes. They have swollen enormously, and my only regret is that we cannot extend them further. There the child can prepare himself or herself to enter the Technical School, and through the Technical School, the University, all things converg-



ing to the highest pinnacle of learning in our midst. We have also training schools for the teachers themselves. There we train our young in the art of teaching, and there we fit them to take charge of the youthful minds committed to their care. This is a matter to be exceedingly proud of. We leave no stone unturned. All our ways lead upward to the University, which we have recently established, and we have put no obstacle at all in the way of a child, be that child of the poorest parents in our midst, to reach that goal. We have abolished all fees. What other nation has gone so far in the same direction? We have abolished all fees from the primary school right up to the taking of a degree and passing with honours through the highest seat of learning the State possesses. We will always find those who will sneer or take exception to what we are doing, but I claim there is no organisation in the world that has shaped more towards the spirit of the times than our educational establishment.

Peanuts or lollies! That was £270,000, and now we are going to £480,000. That seemed right. That was good. That was peanuts and lollies all right. It is a most extraordinary thing, and one which we practical men should look to. We want to audit the Education Department, and find out whether we are getting value for our money. Since I have been here, over 14 years, I have found that we always appoint our best talker, our greatest orator, to the Education Department. I will undertake to say that if the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) were appointed as Minister for Education, there would be many things he would want to know about. My Minister, when I was sitting behind one, has increased the figures from £180,000 to £270,000. There was no doubt he could talk and justify it. Then we come along with another talker, the Hon. H. P. Colebatch. He outtalks Walker, or, in other words, he outtalks the previous talker. He doubles it again. And we, the taxpayers, have to pay just for the talk. We have run amok on it, and we want a check. Fifty years ago parents could teach their children to read, write and reckon, without the assistance of all these schools. There are thousands of us who were so taught 50 years ago. If the parents in the back country, with the assistance of books, cannot teach their children to-day, as my parents taught me, and the parents of my time taught their children, then those parents are slipping back and the education system is a failure. There is another point in regard to education that I would refer to. We have during the past 15 years taught possibly 20,000 boys and girls to write shorthand, and yet not a single one of them has been sufficiently taught to go into the reporters' box in this House. We want an audit of the educational expenditure; we want to see whether we are getting value for our money and where we are spending it. I can remember reading "Little Dorrit." The member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) has

also read "Little Dorrit" and remembers the circumlocution office where the Government man came along and the minister showed how many reams of paper had been used. The actual advantage gained by the people, however, was never shown. We want an audit made of the position. I had hopes in regard to education that the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) would do something. Of course, being a member of the Ministry at that time I could not help him. I am sorry for that. All I can say is that if that hon. member is prepared to go on now I will give him my assistance; I will help him, not to become a member of the Ministry, but with the view of squaring the finances. There are other matters as well. Take the Charities Department. I was in charge of that for some time but I was never satisfied. This I was aware of that there were considerable numbers of shiftless, shuffling, and drifting wasters who so long as they could get a bit of tucker would do nothing for themselves, and the department was finding the tucker. I am satisfied that the Charities vote can be cut down. Next we come to the Geological Department—I am going right into my own district now. We have a huge Geological Department. Is the leader of the Opposition prepared to go into this with me and say that we shall cut out almost the whole of that department? We can keep the Assaying Department. Then there is the Observatory. I have heard—and I was sorry to hear it—the member for Kanowna put up a most eloquent appeal for the retention of the Observatory because they were photographing stars. We can do without photographs of stars for a few years until we get our finances straight.

Mr. Lutey: It is a Commonwealth department.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is not Commonwealth. Then we have the parks. While we are working on borrowed money it is not fair for us to maintain the parks. Let them go. At the worst they can only drift back to their wild state, and they are just as beautiful in their wild state as they are now. If there are no citizens who can put up the money to maintain the parks, the parks must go and we will save a good deal. Then we have the museum and the art gallery. Can we as a people say that we are going to continue to maintain those institutions? Let us lock the doors and cut off the salaries and permit those institutions to be closed, and perhaps in 10 years time when our finances are all right again we can open the doors. Is it fair to maintain parks, the museum and art gallery and the Geological Department?

Hon. P. Collier: And the University.

Mr. Duff: What about the Zoo?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, the Zoo.

Mr. Pickering: And turn the lions loose.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I ask the leader of the Opposition what remedy he would propose. Is he prepared to support the suggestions I have made?

Hon. P. Collier: I will consider them.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: All I can say is that we cannot possibly go on with a £600,000 deficit every year, and in view of the Federal taxation we cannot keep on further taxing the people.

Hon. P. Collier: And the Federal taxation is going to be heavier.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: What does the hon. member propose? Let me come to a matter in regard to which there may be a saving effected—I refer to the civil service. I do not desire to speak about the recent strike more than to say that when the civil servants strike, they strike against Parliamentary government, and if Parliamentary government is beaten then I do not know what government we are going to have. It is correct to say that the Ministry should have given earlier consideration to the civil servants' case. At the same time there is no getting out of the position, that had the civil servants won the strike, Parliamentary government would have finished. One speaker was reported to have said that no Government in the future would have dared refuse the request of the civil servants because they would go on strike and put that Government out. If the civil service can put a Government out of office, Parliamentary government is finished. We can all say we are pleased—at any rate I am pleased and I think almost every member is pleased—at the termination of the strike. I had no desire to see the civil service humiliated, nor did I want to see Parliamentary government defeated. I might tell the Opposition, and possibly some members on this side of the House, that when I joined what was then the National Party a plank above all others that I desired to have included in the platform was in regard to civil service reform. My desire was that a Minister should finally decide a question. Those who were with me at that time said, "Yes, we will do that when we get into office," but they shirked it. The present Government are pledged to this reform, but they do not like it; it might cause a bit of hardship. As a matter of fact we must have civil service reform; we must have an amendment of the existing Act. We must have a boss, and there is no one more entitled to be boss than the man who is elected by the people of Western Australia. The people must have charge of the civil service. What have we to-day? We have our present Commissioner. I do not desire to speak disparagingly of the late Commissioner. He was a very able and conscientious man, but he had his Act to work under. The present Commissioner deems it to be his duty under the Act to look after those who are in the service, and not to pay any attention to the public. He has said in print and has acted upon it that his duty is to the civil service, and the public are nowhere. We know, and every man who has been in the Ministry knows, that the tendency of civil servants is to build up their departments. We know that a Minister cannot have technical knowledge of all the departments. He would be a

pretty good Minister who had technical knowledge of, say, two of perhaps ten departments that he is controlling. The people have no one to represent them. Under the present Act a Commissioner is appointed to protect the civil service but no one is there to protect the public. Therefore we find that the officers go on building up departments. They build up the prestige of their departments and this is done over and over again. It is not a question of doing a certain amount of work with a limited number of men, but a question of the employment of an unlimited number of men to do a certain amount of work, because the more men they employ the greater is the prestige. Under such conditions we are likely to drift back. I can say from experience that officialdom grows rank and much faster than any growth I know of, not even allowing that cane grass which the leader of the primary producers saw in Kimberley. I say to those who would think of having a communistic country where all property would belong to all people and where every individual would have to do his share of work and would be prodded up to do it by an official, "Look out for those officials!" The officials would prod the people up all right. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) may be under the impression that he is going to be an official.

Mr. Jones: We certainly would not employ you.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am quite convinced that the hon. member will not work. Now, reverting to the officials—and some of the hon. members whom I am addressing know this—the system of officialdom is to build up bosses, and to have circumlocution going round and round. One officer reports, and another paraphrases, and yet another paraphrases that, and then another paraphrases that again, and eventually it comes to the Minister. And it goes back in the same round.

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister concurs in the paraphrasing.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: But the officials paraphrase again, and then the Minister is not certain what he concurred in. Take the Labour Bureau. The Labour Bureau was under the Charities Department. The manager of the Labour Bureau used to report to Mr. Longmore; Mr. Longmore reported to Mr. North; Mr. North reported to me. Then I returned the report to Mr. North, and it went three or four times back again. At that particular time when I made my name famous by telling the cockies to get work, I was labouring against pretty severe odds.

Mr. Pickering: You must have been.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I was, or possibly I would not have made such a statement. The Industries Assistance Act was under the Treasurer. The administration of the Act was under the Lands Department. When I came along to assist my late colleague, Mr. W. D. Johnson, I naturally went the straightforward way and asked the chairman of the Industries Assistance Board to call at my office. The next thing I heard was that I had "slighted the Under Treasurer." It had never struck me that the Under Treasurer had anything to do

with the matter. But such is the circumlocution of the departments. I can tell hon. members about this paraphrasing. When I first entered Parliament Mr. Gregory was Minister for Mines, and I spoke to him about some extended claims on creeks and rivers in the North-West. I asked him did he know about the matter. He said he did not. I said, "Very well, I will go away and write you about it." I wrote explaining the whole thing. The next I heard of the matter was that my letter appeared in the "West Australian" as a statement under the name of Mr. H. Gregory. There was my letter, and it was a pretty good one, one of my best descriptive efforts. There was all my stuff paraphrased, and the graphic force to a certain extent lost in consequence, under the name of the Minister. Naturally I had somewhat of a grudge against the Minister for having done such a thing. I followed the matter up, and I found that my letter had been paraphrased four times before it got into the "West Australian." What it had gained in diction by the paraphrasing it had lost in graphic force. Now, are we going on with this system? Is it any use our talking about deficits unless we cut out that paraphrasing? The Minister for Mines knows, and the leader of the Opposition knows, that if one puts in a request to the Mines Department, the inspector of mines reports on it first; then the State mining engineer paraphrases the report of the inspector of mines; then the Under Secretary for Mines paraphrases that; and eventually it goes to the Minister. There is another phase of this matter, and here I come to a question not only of State finance but of Federal finance, because the same people have got to pay the taxes to both Governments. I am now referring to the matter of overlapping. There are the two taxation departments, State and Federal. The only reason why I would suggest that these two departments should be combined is that it would save the taxpayer the trouble of making out two returns. I have had experience of the Federal Government as well as of the State Government, and all I can say is that if officialism has a possibility of growing rank, it grows rank in the Federal departments. In any department that we hand over to the Commonwealth we can look out for rank officialism. There is the Savings Bank. This is a matter purely of the official overriding his Minister; there is no shadow of doubt about that. I tell those Labour men who talk about the great things they did, that this was done by Andrew Fisher. It was pointed out by the present Minister for Mines that the Federal Government were robbing this State of something like £80,000. The official overrode his Minister, and since then we have had two savings banks. The two electoral departments could easily be run as one department. Then there is a matter which does not come much before this Parliament, but a matter that is worthy of consideration—the management of the Transcontinental Railway. If ever officialdom ran mad, it did so when placing that railway under Federal control.

The officials in Melbourne build up a system, for which we have got to pay, to run a line between Kalgoorlie and Port Augusta. If that section of the Transcontinental Railway as far as our border were given to the Western Australian Railway Department, and the other section to the South Australian railway Department, there would be no more overhead expenses, no more Commissioners, just possibly an inspector or two. But in addition we would have this—and it is something that should appeal to the people of Australia—that in running that railway we could send our officers there to put in a year or two or three, and then we could shift them to some other part, either in South Australia or in Western Australia. But Federal officialdom built up—I want to tell the O.B.U. men to look out for officials—this system of management from Melbourne, and there is no place for the Transcontinental Railway men except in the desert. The man who joins the Commonwealth railway service joins it to serve in that desert, and to rear his children in it, and all the rest. That is officialism, pure officialism. When the Premier and the Minister for Mines are in Melbourne, there is no question they can talk on with more effect, in my opinion, than that of the management of the Transcontinental Railway.

Hon. P. Collier: We tried hard to get the railway managed by the State, but the Commonwealth Government would not listen to the proposal.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They would not listen; that is so. To an extent the members of this House will not listen to me altogether, but that is no reason why I should stop talking. I have said that we have no great dividing lines in regard to politics. As a matter of fact, if the Opposition came into power to-morrow, there is no great legislation that they could propose. But what we require, what possibly the Opposition may be able to bring about—or possibly some members on this side of the House may be able to do it—is a recognition of the responsibilities of Ministers, a recognition of the fact that Ministers must dominate, must take their place, take their responsibilities, show the people that they are capable of close and clean administration. We have heard the Minister for Mines talk to-day. In the course of his speech he mentioned that this State had been put to an expense of £50,000, more or less, owing to influenza. I want to say that if we had had a Minister who would have attended closely to that matter, that expenditure would not have been necessary. I do not like to be hard, but I must say that with sauer administration many lives would have been saved. Many lives were lost owing to the panic that was allowed to occur. We got through the influenza cheaper than any other State. The explanation of that is that we did not have the influenza. Most of the deaths occurred through people being frightened, scared, and pulled out of their beds and taken away to hospitals. As a matter of fact, the administration was guilty not only of wasting our

money but also of wasting some of our lives.

Mr. Duff. That was only in the early stages.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There were no late stages. I was in the late stage of the influenza, and it never killed me, and it never killed anybody who came from the North-West. Above all others the question of the cost of living is likely to influence our immediate future. We have heard a great deal about the profiteer. We might be able to initiate legislation to deal with the profiteer, if we could but find him. What we want is a definition of "profiteer." I ask, are the producers of stable foodstuffs obtaining a fair share of what the consumer pays? I am not referring to food-stuffs produced in other countries, because of course we have no control over what another country produces, but in respect to our own country, are the producers getting what the consumer pays, less the customary charges? Later, I suppose, we shall hear it stated that not the present Government, nor the Nationalist party, nor even my party, has reduced the cost of living.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not think anybody is likely to refer to it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Scarcely anything else was referred to at the last Federal elections.

Hon. P. Collier: Billy was going to shoot the profiteers.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: So was Ryan.

Hon. P. Collier: Oh, no.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, and Storey and Theodore were doing a little on similar lines. However, take our own producers: Take the position of the kangaroo shooter. The price of kangaroo skins has increased from 2s. 6d. to 7s. 6d. per lb. Is the kangaroo shooter a profiteer, or is he merely getting what the world is prepared to pay for his produce.

Hon. P. Collier: Somebody who gets the produce might be a profiteer.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That will do. Kangaroo skins are sold mostly to America, and what the Americans make on them I do not know. Coming to our bread, does the wheat-grower get a fair price for the wheat which we eat as bread? Coming to meat, can any member point to a place where a middle man is getting excessive profit on meat? If we can find the profiteer I am prepared to go even as far as the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) in search of a lamp-post upon which to accommodate him. Take vegetables, fruit, eggs, butter: is the producer getting what the consumer pays, less ordinary charges? I say he is getting at the present time closer to it than ever he has got before in the history of Australia. In regard to profiteering, I am convinced that this is very little of it in the actual essentials of foodstuffs produced in Australia.

Mr. Harrison. You cannot say the same in regard to clothing.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If any member of the community does not care to pay the price of clothing he can go without it. There is no reason why we should pay 10s. 6d. for silk hose.

Mr. Jones: You cannot get silk hose for 10s. 6d.

Hon. P. Collier: They pay it in the North-West, do they not?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No, they do not. If people do not like to pay the prices for such things, at all events such things are not necessary to life. It is the necessary commodities that we require to keep our eyes upon. Those who want silk hose or patent leather shoes, let them pay for them if they have the money; and if they have not the money, let them tick it up if they must have those things. If one cannot get silk hose, one can still get Prince Alberts. But some items are essential, are necessary commodities, items such as butter, wheat, wool, vegetables, eggs, bacon—

Mr. Duff: And hops.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Federal Government have put an undue tax on the drinker of distilled hops. There are other things in respect of which we can say we have not had a fair deal, things such as iron, which are necessary for the development of this country. We find that the Australian Government have protected iron, and that a big corporation, known as the Broken Hill Iron Works, has been established. Consulting their balance-sheet, we find that, last year, they made over half a million profit, and that in the preceding year they made over £600,000 profit. That company is not dealing fairly with the consumers of iron in Australia. Then the Federal Government are bringing in a tariff to protect Australian manufacturers. Such a company as the Broken Hill Iron Works has no call whatever on the people of Australia. It has taken the last sixpence it could possibly get, it has put its commodities right up to the import parity. The only way to deal with such a combination is to establish Government iron and steel works. There is no doubt about the profits made by the sugar combine. The remedy does not lie with the individual States, but the Federal Government should be given power to take over that industry and work it for the benefit of the people. I have referred to the high cost of living. If it were only a matter of costs increasing, and wages increasing correspondingly, there would not be much to fear. But in respect of Western Australia it is a most important circumstance indeed, because the high cost not only of living but of all commodities, renders gold mining practically impossible. Gold mining is a great stable industry of Western Australia. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) stated that we should endeavour to reduce the cost of explosives and of mining requisites. Those costs are only a circumstance. In my opinion, miners at Kalgoorlie cannot work for anything less than £1 a shift. I know,

and the miners know, that if their wages were increased to £1 a shift, it would result in the closing down of the mines. That is a proposition which no thinking man can get over. I put it clearly that a man employed in the deep mines of Kalgoorlie cannot work for less than something like £1 a shift. Another much discussed question is that of industrial unrest. Industrial unrest comes naturally at a time like this, and we should be foolish if we did not expect it and provide for it. At the same time, as I have said, we have great responsibilities which we cannot fulfil unless we get rid of our internal troubles. The leader of the Opposition and others have said that the Arbitration Act is obsolete, and they have pointed out that the Government have brought down no suggestions for its amendment. In my opinion the Arbitration Act is not obsolete. It has been in existence for only a few years. Some of its provisions require amending, and I will undertake to say that if the Opposition bring down the necessary amendments, the House will pass them, irrespective of whether they are acceptable to the Government. If those who represent the workers—I used to represent them till they threw me out—will bring forward the amendments required to make the Arbitration Act a good working measure, I undertake to say that Parliament will pass them. I do not care whether the present Government agree with them or not.

Mr. Nairn: Will your party support them?

Mr. Lutey interjected.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is an old gag.

Mr. O'Loghlen: And a pretty good gag, too.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I would like to ask the members on the Opposition side just to try and see how they get on. Let them put up their amendments. The revision of awards has been suggested. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) said that some person other than a judge was desired as president. I supported that years ago.

Mr. Lutey: What became of that when it was put up by the Labour party?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It never came before the House. There is one regulation which should be brought in—I do not know that an alteration of the Act is necessary—and that is in regard to the long drawn out evidence brought before the court. Days and days, weeks and weeks are spent in weary reiteration. There should be some method whereby the president of the court should be able to cut out unnecessary evidence and unnecessary verbiage. One other thing required in connection with the court is that the workers of Western Australia should give it good and loyal support.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Notwithstanding what the award might be?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If the court is not good enough, I am prepared to say that this House will alter the court.

Mr. O'Loghlen: You know that some of the awards have been shocking.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, I fought against one of them. The workers of Western Australia have never given this court a fair deal, but have gone to the Federal court and, with all due respect to Mr. Justice Higgins, he has absolutely strained to breaking point that part of the Constitution which says that the Federal Government may appoint a court to deal with industrial matters which affect two or more States. Mr. Justice Higgins even allows gold mining to be brought in as an industrial matter affecting two States.

Mr. O'Loghlen: I do not know what you regard as a fair deal by the court.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Then do not have a court at all if you do not think it will give a fair deal.

Mr. O'Loghlen: But you say the workers have not given this court a fair deal.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They have not, because they have always endeavoured to get past the State court to the Federal court.

Mr. O'Loghlen: No, they have not.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Where are the timber workers now?

Mr. O'Loghlen: In the Federal court, the only court where they could get a hearing.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Where are the gold miners?

Mr. O'Loghlen: In the State court.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They have come back from the Federal court.

Mr. O'Loghlen: In desperation they had to go somewhere.

Mr. Lutey: The miners have given it more than a fair trial.

Mr. O'Loghlen: The timber workers were awarded 57s. a week and barmaids 74s. a week by this very court.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Why go to the Federal court?

Mr. O'Loghlen: Because they are starving under the State award.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Why did the miners come back to the State court?

Mr. O'Loghlen: Because they did not get a fair deal from the Federal court. They asked people to starve on 9s. 7d. a day.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I have almost finished what I have to say regarding general politics. It will be necessary to say a few words regarding that great portion of Australia—the section I represent—a part of Australia which is of the utmost importance to-day. If we are going to retain this country as a white man's country, we shall have to people the North. The first essential to the development of that country is a shipping service. The State has provided a limited service. We have heard a deal about State enterprises. We have heard a deal with regard to their failure, but I do not think anything tends to the failure of State enterprises so much as the appointment of men to positions of which they have absolutely no knowledge. I have already said that the present Public Service Commissioner seems to deem it his duty to appoint anyone in the

service to some other position in the service, quite irrespective of his ability to fill the position. He is there to find jobs for those who are fortunate enough to be in the civil service. Now we come to the appointment of a man named Bennett. The Minister, in answer to a question, told me that Mr. Bennett had been appointed to go to England to advise the naval architects in regard to local conditions for ships running on the north-west coast. The man appointed has never been on the north-west coast; he has never been on a ship except as a passenger, and he has absolutely no knowledge of the business on which he has been sent to England to advise the naval architects. Some members of this House have been on the north-west coast. They have seen the coast; they have seen its tides; they have seen some of the difficulties of navigation there, but those members have been there in the winter. They have never been there in the summer. They have seen that coast when the warm, blue, tropical sea has been as smooth as glass and shimmering like the Swan River. They have never seen it when those famous storms known as the willy-willies occur, but they might be able to imagine what would happen among those islands when a ship, having both anchors down, a full head of steam on and steaming right into the wind is blown like a cork for hundreds of miles. I presume we want somebody to advise the naval architects in regard to local conditions, and who should have been chosen but a man who had been on the bridge through some of those storms, a man who had borne the responsibility of a ship and the lives of the crew and passengers under him? Instead of that, the Government have sent a mud lark from Fremantle. He has never been on anything bigger than a river dredge. No, he has not even been on a river dredge. He has not been on anything bigger than a river launch. Yet this is the man who has been sent to England to advise the naval architects! Probably members have read that the "Bambra" recently ran on a bank at Port Hedland.

Mr. Teesdale: A dangerous place, that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: So also is Point Sampson, and worse still is Onslow. This was a question of steering gear. The ship was on at least a four-mile current and had to make a sharp turn. She had to have sufficient way to make that turn. If the steering gear did not answer immediately, the ship would be aground and the ebb tide would leave her high and dry. Who could advise the naval architects so well as a man who had been through an experience like that? Would any member put a public works pile-driver on to tell him how to get through a current of that description? I am sorry the Minister is not in his place; I have not finished with this question. If it was desired to select a public works engineer to go to England, there is no reason why the Government should not have sent the engineer for the North-West, a man whose honesty is absolutely above suspicion. I want to know

why Mr. Bennett was appointed to this position? I have been told by the Minister for Mines that the Government were satisfied that Mr. Bennett possessed the qualifications. Would the Minister for Mines have accepted that from any mine-owner in regard to an ordinary stationary engine-driver who did not possess a ticket? When the Minister for Mines was president of the engine-drivers' association, would he have allowed a man to turn a tap on a boiler if that man did not possess an engine-driver's certificate? This is an infinitely greater job than that of a mere, common engine-driver. I myself have driven an engine, and I am a pretty common person. This is a question of sending a man to England to advise the naval architects regarding the structure of ships to navigate the North-West coast. The Government have sent a man who has never been on a ship, a man who has never been on the north-west coast.

Mr. Pickering: Would not the best man have been one of the captains trading on the North-West coast?

Mr. Hudson: The hon. member is pointing that out.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The reply I received to my question as to Mr. Bennett's qualifications was that he was marine supervisor to the State shipping service. Last session I carried an amendment to the Address-in-reply in this House, and in the course of my remarks pointed out that the management of the shipping service was not efficient, and that we required more efficient service. Mr. Stevens has made many bangles, but the biggest bangle he ever made was in putting on a land lubber, who had never been to sea, as marine supervisor over ships. We have heard of the captain of the "Pinafore." The opera was a burlesque, and here it is in actual fact. We have Mr. Glyde, who has never been to sea, as manager, and we have Mr. Bennett, who has never been to sea, as marine superintendent. Mr. Bennett does not hold an engineer's ticket of any description whatever. He is a public works supervisor, a pile driver. The only thing he knows about marine life is what he learned in the Fremantle harbour. I presume he is one of the pets of the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Works: I have no pets at all.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He is sent to England to advise naval architects upon the building of ships to trade along the North-West coast.

The Minister for Works: Is he a tradesman?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, to this extent, that he was not apprenticed but worked in a foundry which made brick-making machinery.

Mr. Pickering: That ought to qualify him.

The Minister for Works: He learned how to use tools, and could do a job.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He might be able to do a job. Does he know the conditions along the North-West coast? He did not serve his time.

The Minister for Works: Is he a mechanic?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I want the Government to go into the question and give it fair consideration. I tried again and again to see the Minister for Mines and tell him about this case, but I could never find him in his office, although I tried both by telephone and personal application. Unless I get a satisfactory reply to this, I am going further. I intend to call for Mr. Bennetts' papers, and I am going to make a statement regarding his private life.

The Minister for Works: What has that to do with it?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Nothing at all, but the Minister will see after I have finished whether he likes it or not.

The Minister for Works: What has his private life got to do with it?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Minister surely wants an honest man.

The Minister for Works: Oh, well!

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Suppose it is a case of stealing from the wharf? How will that suit the Minister?

The Minister for Works: Do you say he is not an honest man?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Let the Minister inquire of the Police Department. I will ask for his papers and the Minister will find out. I am pleased that almost every speaker has had something to say about the North-West. I am also glad that we have a Minister for the North-West who, we are told by the "West Australian," can speak with the authority of knowledge. He was up there for 10 minutes—not even that. We also have before us the question of the North-West Railway and Development League. Several things can be done up there to assist production. I am not speaking as one requiring justice for my constituency. We do not want justice; we are doing very well. We will tell the Government, however, how they can improve their production. Production is the essence of the remedy for any difficulties we are in. I do not intend to speak about the railway from Carnarvon to the Gascoyne Junction. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) has tabled a motion concerning that. Such a railway, however, is not only warranted but will pay the cost of running. It will also increase the rents on the pastoral areas, it will serve.

Mr. O'Loghlen: That has been said about every railway that has been constructed.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: This is an exceptional railway. With regard to the various ports along the coast, one of the most urgent needs is the exploration of the Exmouth Gulf with a view to finding a safe port, and one in which a wharf can be run out, and ships go alongside to serve the people in the back country. I have very little to say about Port Hedland except that a water supply is absolutely necessary there. We have heard a good deal about pearl shell. The pearl shell industry is a very valuable one. Further than that, we have, including Thurs-

day Island, eight-tenths of the world's supply of the best pearl shell. Leaving out Thursday Island, we have over two-thirds of the good pearl shell supply. Notwithstanding this, shell is being continually manipulated by dealers. If the fisher of the shell could deal direct with the users we would have nothing to complain of. We have at present dealers who take this shell, and who sometimes run up the price and sometimes put it down. I undertake to say that the dealers in shell get more out of it than the fishers of shell. This can be obviated by co-operation, which can only be successful if the Government guarantee to finance the smaller men. Co-operation may seem easy under those circumstances, but it is not so easy because some of the fishers of shell are also dealers in shell. It is somewhat like a bookmaker owning a horse. If the Government could guarantee a price to the smaller men I am certain that this system of co-operation could be brought into force. After it is brought into force the pearlshers can be let go and they will win out for themselves.

The Minister for Works: The Government have already given a guarantee.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I know all about that guarantee. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) spoke about the Yampi Sound iron ore. I am afraid he was not acquainted with the circumstances. According to the State Mining Engineer, we have at Yampi Sound 97,000,000 tons of 65 per cent. iron ore above high tide level. The Queensland Government are considering the question of taking over a portion of that iron. If hon. members would look at the pamphlets issued by the Hon. Mr. Macdonald, of New South Wales, they would see at a glance the position. The Queensland Government propose to bring coal from Bowen, to build a coal bin at Yampi, to take iron back to Bowen, and treat it with the coal that they have almost on the coast line. If we Western Australians could get a good coal at Yampi, which is on the Eastern shore of King's Sound, we would absolutely alter the running of all ships on the North-West coast and on the Singapore runs. To-day our ship has to take 1,000 tons of coal from Fremantle, which was previously brought from Newcastle, to take her to Darwin and back. If we had that running round the other end of the coast she could leave here with a few hundred tons of coal, bunker at Yampi Sound, and take 700 or 800 tons more cargo on her northern trip. That is what the proposal of the Queensland Government would mean to us, over and above the question of working the iron deposits. I do not know why the North of Australia should always pay tribute to south Australia. The member for Coolgardie said the Government were absolutely lacking in their attention to the South-West because they were building works at Bunbury, instead of allowing the money to go to Bowen. I do not intend to speak at any

further great length. I desire to add that those who have spoken about the development of the North-West and the North have to a great extent missed the main essential in regard to that development. The North-West or the North or Darwin can never be developed until we have provided markets for the produce of those parts, and provided ships to carry that produce to markets. That is something that the North-West and the Northern Railway Development League has possibly overlooked. So far as the produce in the North is concerned, I can say, as one who has been almost through the whole of Australia, that when it comes to a question of irrigation, and only slight irrigation, there is no part of Australia with the productive capacity of the Kimberleys. We at one time had a Commissioner for Tropical Agriculture, Mr. Despeissis, who took a trip through the North-West and wrote a pamphlet with regard to tropical agriculture. Then he settled himself down in the Agricultural Department in St. George's terrace. He was settled there, comfortable as a bug in a rug, and then the hard-hearted member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) came along and wanted to know what he was doing. The hon. member then pushed the tropical commissioner out on to a cold hard world.

Mr. Teesdale: He was a good man, too.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He was a good man. I know of no man better able to settle himself comfortably in St. George's terrace than Mr. Despeissis. If we are going to develop the North we will have to get a man to go to the North and stay there.

Mr. Teesdale: He had no chance of staying there; he was booted out as soon as he made his report.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He was booted out when he settled himself down, comfortably ensconced in his office in St. George's terrace. What we want is a man who will stop in the North and carry on experiments there and not in his office in St. George's terrace. That is why Mr. Despeissis was put out of his position as Commissioner for Tropical Agriculture. I trust that the speeches which have been made on the Address-in-reply are an indication that members are determined to make an effort to populate the North and that they will use some judgment in doing so.

Mr. JONES (Fremantle) [9.35]: Like every other hon. member who has addressed himself to the question, I do not know whether it is worth while to criticise. Members who have spoken have offered criticisms and have called for various things to be done in different parts of the State, but no notice has been taken of them so far as Ministers are concerned. In point of fact, it seems to be almost as hard for Ministers to occupy their seats on the front benches as it does for them to remain in the State of Western Australia during recess. The only point is that it costs considerably less for them to

be absent from their seats when the House is in session.

Mr. Johnston: There was not one on your side just now.

Hon. P. Collier: Can you wonder at it after two hours of drivel.

Mr. JONES: The member for Williams-Narriagin can stand a couple of hours from me if he likes.

Mr. Johnston: We will be pleased to hear you; we will know what you are thinking of.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. JONES: It will be of advantage to find out from the hon. member what his party are thinking of. I do not believe they are capable of thinking for themselves.

Mr. Pickering: You are not much of a judge.

Mr. JONES: Not much of a judge of the thought the hon. member expresses. After the speech of the leader of the Opposition, my illustrious leader, one would have expected the Government to show some degree of shame, some degree of sorrow at the numerous shortcomings that were referred to, and the thought that they were so incapable of governing the State. But it seems that the only people who can stir a Government to any sense of shame are the members on their own side, the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) and the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington). Those hon. members indulged in criticism, and then realising that solidarity must be observed by docile members sitting on the opposite and cross-benches, that there must be no split in the Nationalist party when facing the electors, the big gun of the Ministry, the big bluff-stakes of the Cabinet, is put up to make a reply which evidently the Premier is incapable of doing if he is awake long enough to make a reply of any description. Considerable criticism has been indulged in. Some of it is worthy of notice and much of it is not. The leader of the Opposition stated a most obvious fact, a scientific fact, when he declared that there was a class war in existence. It is amazing to hear members on the Government side, men who one would think had read, and probably knew more of the matter than I do myself, endeavouring to blind the eyes of not merely this House, but the country to the very obvious fact of the existence of a class war. The member for Perth declared that such a thing did not exist. Several other members of the Country party have endeavoured to make the same statement, but I would remind those members that somewhere in the fifteenth century, a gentleman named Copernicus discovered that the earth revolved around the sun. Copernicus did not make the earth revolve around the sun, he merely discovered the fact, and pointed it out. Darwin and Lamarck and other thinkers have advanced the idea in their works that there is a struggle for existence so far as the biological world is concerned, that the principle of the



survival of the fittest obtains. To-day I believe that every schoolboy knows this. Even the member for Pilbara realises the fact. He knows that there is a law of the survival of the fittest in nature. But Darwin did not create that law. Darwin discovered and enunciated the scientific principle that the fittest in plant life, in animal life, survive in the world. The law was there before Darwin existed, and it is just as absurd to say that members on this side of the House who point out a scientific principle such as a class struggle, are endeavouring to foster that class struggle, as it would be to say that Professor Dakin of the University is creating a struggle for existence, is helping to foster the law of the survival of the fittest because he teaches obvious facts. A class struggle exists in modern society. The member for Williams-Narrogin and other thinkers in the world to-day who care to look into the things that are causing industrial unrest in the world, will recognise that they are directly the result of the class struggle which exists in modern society, and no Industrial Peace Bill and no Arbitration Court and no amount of very nicely worded speeches by the member for Perth will make it possible for a better agreement to exist between the master class and the employed class. No argument can alter the fact that between those who own the machinery of production and those who own nothing but their labour power there is a difference so wide that it cannot be bridged over even by political action or by the change of Government which will take place next year.

Mr. Johnston: You are a pessimist on that point.

Mr. JONES: I realise, and the hon. member at such a time when he was secretary of the social democratic party at Kalgoorlie realised too—if he did not he had no right to belong to that party—that that class war exists. Of course as the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) assured us during the time when he was a member of the working class, he realised that it would be much easier to be an employer instead of having to do that horrible work which members say that I never do—and I hope I may never have to do hard work. I am sorry the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) is not in the Chamber, because during the years that I spent in the North-West I had the reputation of being the laziest man there, and I am proud of it. In the exercise of this class war which the member for Williams-Narrogin knows so much of, it must be realised that it is apparent that if there is one man who owns the machinery of production and another man who owns nothing but his labour power, the law of hunger compels the man with only his labour power to sell it to the owning class—the member for Williams-Narrogin used to talk about it from a soap box in Hannan-street and endeavour to convert miners to believe that only by a revolution could the golden age be achieved—

Hon. P. Collier: He has slipped somewhat since.

Mr. JONES: My ideas regarding economics as they exist to-day may seem rather tame after the speeches with which we have been favoured by the member for Subiaco (Mr. Brown) and the member for Bunbury (Mr. Money). As a mere evolutionary communist, I feel considerably out of date after those utterances—utterances undoubtedly full of Bolshevism and of anarchy.

Hon. P. Collier: But a respectable form of Bolshevism.

Mr. JONES: The anarchic principles which the member for Bunbury has advocated in this House make my views seem, in comparison, almost as reactionary as those of the Minister for Works. The member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington), in arguing that there was no class war, brought forward an illustration as regards the wool buyer and the wool producer. If that is the kind of argument with which that eminent King's Counsel would seek to bolster up the case of his client, I have great sympathy with the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston). It must be realised that the wool buyer and the wool producer belong to the same economic class—the master class, the ruling class, call it what you will. They are members of the same class, and consequently the competition between them is just the same sort of competition as we get between the member for Perth and Ministers when that hon. member criticises the Government and immediately afterwards votes with them. Like the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson), I realise that after the speech with which the House has been favoured this evening by the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), any attempt at prolonging the debate seems almost like endeavouring to sing a glee in a cemetery. Still, something has to be done; someone must endeavour to save the country, and I would certainly like to do my bit towards that important end.

Mr. Nairn: You do not believe in doing it by work, though.

Mr. JONES: I believe in doing just the same kind of work as the member for Swan does—letting the other fellow do the work and making a profit out of it; just keeping the books and adding up the bank balance, making out the wages sheet and occasionally signing a cheque.

Mr. Teesdale: Is there any class war between you and your employees?

Mr. JONES: Undoubtedly. Consciously or unconsciously, that class war exists. Let me give an illustration. There is a gentleman who stands at the corner of Murray and Barrack-streets on Sunday nights and endeavours to convince all and sundry that the earth is flat and that the sun goes round the earth. But the fact that the gentleman in question believes this does not alter the further fact that the Copernican system is in existence and that the solar system is moving even though the member for Pil-

bara does not want children to be instructed about it at school. Similarly, the fact that the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) and those who happen to be working for him do not realise the existence of the class war, does not mean that that war does not exist. Like every other employer, if I wanted a man I would put on one who did not know these things, one who believed that there was an amicable relation between employer and employee. I would cut out the agitator altogether. If I were an employer, I certainly would not employ myself. The Government have been criticised up hill and down dale on the question of their finances. Personally I feel no regrets at the existence of a deficit in this State. More or less the deficit is just a bogey. Still, I cannot help drawing a few comparisons between the professions of the Government and their actions during the last few months. Pleading lack of funds, the Government have neglected the Education Department, have not built schools that are required, and have denied a recreation hall to the patients at Wooroloo. However, I understand that owing to the nearness of the general election a recreation hall is to be provided at Wooroloo. This may be described as an electioneering dodge on the part of the Government. Ministers allowed the public service to go on strike rather than give them a living pittance. They have held up public works, have refused to go on with works which have been passed and for which the money has been voted by Parliament, simply because the Minister for Works refused to pay a living pittance to the men who wanted employment on those jobs.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

The Minister for Works: Why do not you tell the truth?

Mr. JONES: The Minister knows it is perfectly true. He knows that he refused to pay what is in Fremantle the recognised rate as a matter of comparison with the railway arbitration rate. He knows that he has held up the waterworks and the breakwater at Fremantle.

The Minister for Works: On a point of order, is the hon. member correct in stating what is not true with regard to the wages paid by the Government to men at South Fremantle?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister for Works denies a statement which the member for Fremantle has made regarding wages paid at Fremantle.

The Minister for Works: The statement I object to was that the Minister for Works was not paying the rate of wages provided by the railways award. I say that statement is absolutely false.

Mr. JONES: I suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you are there not as a judge of the truth but as a judge of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Fremantle may proceed.

Mr. JONES: The Minister for Works undoubtedly knows that a reservoir which was

to be built in Fremantle was held up because the Public Works Department refused to pay the rate which was demanded by the men who wanted to work on that job.

The Minister for Works: That is a different thing altogether. You said that I refused to pay the rates of the railways award, and that statement is false.

Mr. JONES: I said, the rate that was worked out in comparison with the railways award; the railway award rate plus 1s., which is a fair allowance as between men employed casually and men employed in permanent service with the privileges attaching thereto.

The Minister for Works: That very remark shows that you do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. JONES: I know that owing to the obstinacy of the Minister a very necessary work was not gone on with. I know that last session money was voted for the erection of a breakwater at Fremantle, and that the work has not been done.

The Minister for Works: On account of the wages?

Mr. JONES: Mainly on account of the wages.

The Minister for Works: That is untrue.

Mr. JONES: I know the Minister is going to put up some quibble, but he knows full well that the wages question was behind the whole thing.

The Minister for Works: That statement is quite false.

Mr. JONES: I would be very pleased for the sake of the State to see the breakwater being continued.

The Minister for Works: That is another matter. Your statement is false, all the same.

Mr. JONES: I would like to see that money which has been passed by Parliament being expended through its rightful channel. I want to see that because I realise that the breakwater extension is going to be a benefit to the community. Fishing, which is practically an impossibility about Fremantle at the present time, can be gone on with directly the fishing boats have some harbour in which they can take shelter. Then the Minister for Works will be able to take a crayfish home at night.

The Minister for Works: I rise to a point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

The Minister for Works: Some statements which the member for Fremantle has made are absolutely false.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. The Minister for Works will have an opportunity of refuting those statements at a later stage.

Mr. JONES: The Minister for Works accuses me of making false statements. I would like that statement withdrawn. It is a reflection on my truthfulness and honesty.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will ask the Minister to withdraw the statement.

The Minister for Works: If you, Sir, state that I must withdraw a statement that

the hon. member's statements are false, when I know that my statement is true, of course I will withdraw it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have no opportunity of judging which statement is accurate. The member for Fremantle can make statements, and the Minister will have an opportunity later of refuting those statements.

The Minister for Works: I cannot on this debate, Sir.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Has the Minister spoken already?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The business of the House must proceed. The member for Fremantle has the floor, and I ask the Minister not to interject.

Mr. JONES: I will endeavour to let the Minister down more lightly. The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) has referred to the State steamship "Bambra." Undoubtedly the Minister in charge of the State Steamship Service is going to risk a very serious loss of life if he does not place the steering gear on the "Bambra" in the hands of engineers who are capable of attending to it. In saying that, I make no allegation against the ability of the present engineering staff of the "Bambra"; but it must be realised that she is an ex-German boat fitted with what I think is known as a telemotor steering gear, which works largely on the hydraulic principle. It is very questionable whether the average engineer, trained in the ordinary steamship, understands that class of steering gear. The Minister in charge of the State Steamship Service therefore has the responsibility of seeing that that particular steering gear is in the hands of men who thoroughly understand it. I believe that such a man is obtainable, that an engineer who has worked on that class of machinery can be found. At present it is quite unsafe for the "Bambra" to go on the North-West coast with her steering gear as unreliable as it is. Three or four times during the last year has that gear failed. It is unfair to the State Steamship Service and to the passengers travelling by the "Bambra" that lives should be trusted to faulty gear. I understand that the "Bambra" first came into the hands of the Government in some indirect way through the Nevanus contract. That being so, we would naturally expect something about her to be a little crook, and apparently it is in the steering gear. Then there is the question of the shipwrights, whom the Government compelled to cease work. Very few men were affected, but it is another evidence of the obstinacy and stupidity of the Government which came in to straighten out the affairs of the country. The Government refused to give the increases to the shipwrights, and consequently those men had to cease work, although in the meantime private employers were able to pay the increases, and even the Government, in sending a man to similar work at Mandurah, were able to pay him the increased wages plus his travelling expenses.

The Minister for Works: Do you say we paid £1 a day to a shipwright at Mandurah?

Mr. JONES: No, he was a diver, employed on a similar line of work.

The Minister for Works: We paid diver what we agreed to pay him.

Mr. JONES: The Minister did him £1 per day, but he allowed the shipwrights to cease work rather than pay what they were asking for.

The Minister for Works: Why mix that up with the divers?

Mr. JONES: Because the divers were concerned, they were on similar work. Government have refused to cash the bonds of returned soldiers in their employment; they have discontinued that infinitesimal which the old age pensioners were getting over and above their Federal pensions, they have cut down the extra rations which indigent families were receiving. All the little economies have they exercised, yet they could afford to throw away £20,000 on gentlemen who scabbled at Fremantle. Government are facing their last session a Government in this State. They will down to posterity with perhaps the most noxious name ever attached to any Government of Western Australia, namely, the scab Government. Wherever possible the Government have faithfully and truly done the work for the class they represent in the class war. In every industrial conflict that occurred they have been ready and prepared with the scabs, with special Thugs, special policemen, prepared to pay any amount of money in order to do the dirty work of the master class. If any Government ever served to be called by an opprobrious name this Government deserves the name of scab Government.

Mr. Pickering: You are trying to fasten the name on them.

Mr. JONES: I did not give them the name, but I have heard it used in many parts of the State.

The Minister for Works: It shows the company you keep.

Mr. JONES: The company of my own class, the working class.

Mr. Teesdale: But you are not a workman, you do not work.

Mr. JONES: That I do not work does not alter the fact that I belong to the working class.

The Minister for Works: Then you are scabbing on them.

Mr. JONES: That I refuse to do hard manual toil does not alter the fact that they have declined to sell my principles—as supporters of the Ministry have done—as go over to the master class, against whom we are fighting.

Mr. Teesdale: You are a master, an employer, yourself.

Mr. JONES: The hon. member is joking. Perhaps it is more merciful to say very little criticism of the Government, to look up at them more in sorrow than in anger, to leave

them to their fate, and to the will of the people in a few months' time.

On motion by Mr. Chesson, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.10 p.m.*

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

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. H. Stewart leave of absence for six consecutive sittings of the House granted to the Hon. J. A. Greig (South-East) on the ground of ill-health.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [4.33]: I would like to preface the remarks I am going to make by expressing my regret at the loss of three members who were with us last year in the House. I refer to Mr. Allen, Mr. Carson, and Mr. Millington. Those three gentlemen were with us a very long period and we must all agree that they carried out their duties, so far as this House is concerned, in a very satisfactory manner. Two of them were known to me fairly intimately personally; and by the constituencies they represented they were held in the greatest respect. They were men of high character and good positions. They carried out their duties in this House satisfactorily and were of very great service by reason of the experience they gained on account of the period in which they were able to render service to the country. With regard to Mr. Millington, his views on public matters were, to a large extent; opposed to my own, but I will say he was always exceedingly straightforward in submitting those views. We all recognise that different views should be represented in this House, and that there is nothing like having really good men to expound those views. I maintain that, amongst those whom we had here, Mr.

Millington was one of the best we have known to represent the views of his constituents. He developed into a strong, severe, and capable critic. Indeed I may add he was an exceedingly cynical critic, though he always imparted into his speeches a certain amount of humour that was exceedingly welcome in the Chamber. I can only hope that the new members—they are not personally known to me—will prove equally good men as the three whom they have displaced. I do not think I should lose this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Harris on the remarks he made in his speech on the Address-in-reply. We all of us who have gone through that experience know it is father a trying ordeal, and I think we may admit that he came through it with credit. With regard to the Address-in-reply and the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, it seems to be very full of what has been done by the Government and what the prospects are. We do not see in it a great deal of what it is proposed to do; indeed it is a very difficult Speech to say very much about, because it does not invite keen criticism and it does not open the way to a large amount of discussion. One thing I congratulate the Government on, and particularly on account of its brevity, is the list of Bills it is proposed to submit for the consideration of members. It seems to be the ambition of every Government to be able to say at the close of a session, "Look at the number of Bills we have submitted and passed; see how many have been treated in this or in that way." My idea is that we want to address ourselves more to administration than to legislation. There is plenty of legislation already on the statute-book and the great requirement at the present time is that the various departments should confine themselves to administration, so that we may get the finances of the country into a good position. The first vital paragraph in the Speech is in connection with production. It says—

My advisers, however, because of the ability of the State to produce in abundance many of the things of which the world is most in need, feel that the prospects are encouraging, and that vigour, enterprise, and goodwill amongst the people—

I emphasise this, are alone necessary to replace the material losses of war, and to inaugurate a period of expansion.

I need hardly point out to hon. members that we are able to command these three conditions, vigour, enterprise, and goodwill, we should have no trouble in increasing our production, because at the present time what we really want is vigour and enterprise, and to some extent goodwill. The two great troubles that confront us at the present time are, on the one hand, industrial troubles, and on the other, the most of living, and one is, to a large extent, consequent on the other. If we can imagine a worker and a producer sitting down together to discuss the present situation, the