

the audacity to get on my feet. I am sorry that one or two hon. members were not present when I made those remarks. I hope they will forgive me if they think I was in any way impertinent on that occasion, but having listened to the remarks of some hon. members, who have been here the longest—

Hon. J. W. Hickey: You still think you have a chance.

Hon. T. MOORE. I have come to the conclusion that I have little to learn from them. If after years of experience in this Chamber—I do not know that I shall have them—I remain satisfied to allow things to drift on in the State in the way they are drifting, I shall be disappointed with the time that I have spent in this House.

On motion by Hon. J. Cunningham debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.22 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 26th August, 1920.

Questions:	Page
Technical school instructors	310
Railway Extensions, (1) Nyabing, provision of funds, (2) Nyabing, rails and fastenings, (3) Corrigin Eastward, (4) Ajana-Geraldine, Yuna-Mullewa	310
Gold stealing, case of Whitman	311
Base metal refinery works	311
Forest products laboratory	311
St. Ives, crushing facilities	311
Assent to Supply Bill	311
Address-in-reply, ninth day	311

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

QUESTION—TECHNICAL SCHOOL INSTRUCTORS.

Hon. P. COLLIER (for Mr. O'Loughlen) asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is he aware that the part-time instructors at the Technical School were not parties to the recent strike and have not shared in any of the concessions secured? 2, Is he aware that these instructors were locked out on the first day of the strike? 3, Is he also aware that these instructors were given a holiday without pay during the Prince's visit? 4, As other services received payment, why did the Department discriminate? 5, Is he aware that a number of the students have paid fees for special instruction and are

desirous of making up the time lost? 6, As some of these instructors are disabled, owing to war services, will he agree to pay these instructors for the period they were locked out?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, The Government have no knowledge of the attitude of part-time instructors at the Technical School during the recent strike. No increases have been proposed for, or granted to, such instructors. 2, No. Owing to the absence of students, the classes conducted by these instructors could not be held during the period of the strike. Advertisements were inserted in the Press, informing instructors that their services would not be required until further notice. Payment will be made to such instructors as were listed for duty on July 12. 3, The Technical School was closed during the week of the Prince's visit, but arrangements have been made for the lessons which were missed to be given later in the year. 4, Answered by No. 3. 5, Students have paid fees for self-supporting classes. These students will receive the full number of lessons for which they have paid. Additional classes will be held later on in the year. 6, Part-time instructors are paid at a higher rate of remuneration than full-time teachers, as their services are required only for certain periods. Payments are made according to their periods of service. See answer to No. 2.

QUESTIONS (4)—RAILWAY EXTENSIONS.

Nyabing, provision of funds.

Mr. PIESSE (for Mr. Thomson) asked the Premier: When is it the intention of the Government to provide funds for the extension of the Nyabing Railway, as authorised by Parliament in 1914?

The PREMIER replied: This proposal will be considered when the railway construction policy of the Government is being determined. The Railway Advisory Board's investigations are not yet completed.

Nyabing, Rails and Fastenings.

Mr. PIESSE (for Mr. Thomson) asked the Minister for Works: When will rails and fastenings be available for the extension of the Nyabing Railway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The supply of rails owing to the existing conditions and prices is a difficult one to arrange. The Engineer-in-Chief has just returned from the East where he has made inquiries, and his report is now in course of preparation.

Corrigin-Eastward.

Mr. HICKMOTT asked the Premier: 1, Is it his intention to honour the promise he made to the people at Corrigin, to send the

Advisory Board out to inspect the proposed railway eastward from Corrigin? 2, If so, when?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, As soon as possible.

Ajana-Geraldine, Yuna-Mullewa.

Mr. MALEY asked the Premier: 1, Has any instruction been given the Railway Advisory Board to examine and report upon the proposed railway extension from Ajana to Geraldine and from Yuna to Mullewa? 2, If not, when will such instruction be given?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, The necessary instruction will be given if on further investigation the classification of the land justifies this course.

QUESTION—GOLD STEALING, CASE OF WHITMAN.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (for Mr. Jones) asked the Attorney General: 1, Was a man named Joseph Whitman convicted at Kalgoorlie of gold-stealing last year? 2, Was he sentenced to six months' imprisonment, and did he appeal against the verdict? 3, Was the decision on appeal confirmed? 4, Did he serve all or any portion of the sentence? 5, If not, what were the circumstances under which he avoided doing so?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, 2, 3, Yes. 4, No. 5, He absconded.

QUESTION—BASE METAL REFINERY WORKS.

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Have any arrangements been made with the Federal Government regarding the establishment of base metal refinery works in Western Australia? 2, Are negotiations proceeding with that object in view? 3, If so, when is it expected that some finality will be reached?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Mines) replied: 1, The matter has been discussed, but no final arrangements have been completed with the Federal Government. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, I am at present in communication with the producers with a view to holding a conference for discussion of the subject.

QUESTION—FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Industries: 1, Can he tell the House whether the Forest Products Laboratory is likely to be established within the near future? 2, Are the Commonwealth Government adhering to the contract made between them and the Western Australian Government?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Industries) replied: 1, The establishment of the Forest Products Laboratory in the near

future is practically assured. 2, The Bill in which provision is made for the establishment of a Forest Products Laboratory has been passed in satisfactory form by the Federal Parliament. Until the passing of this Bill it was impossible for the Federal Government to do more than they have already accomplished. The contract between the State and the Federal Government is being adhered to.

QUESTION—ST. IVES, CRUSHING FACILITIES.

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Minister for Mines: Have any steps of a practical nature yet been taken to provide crushing facilities at St. Ives?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Mines) replied: See my reply to the same question on the 5th instant.

MESSAGE—ASSENT TO SUPPLY BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read assenting to Supply Bill (No. 1) £1,059,000.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [4.40]: I shall not apologise for taking up some little time of the House on the Address-in-reply. Like the member for East Perth (Mr. Hardwick) I regard this as an opportunity given to private members to speak on various topics of interest to the State, and believe that it represents the bright spot in our Constitution. After having listened patiently to the views expressed by other members, I have come to the conclusion that although the financial position of the State is said to be deplorable, it is not as bad as it is painted. If we are to accept the opinion of other hon. members who have stressed this point, the country is indeed actually on the verge of bankruptcy. While thinking there is need for economy to be exercised, I am of opinion that our position here is not worse by comparison than that of any other country in the world. We have made provision, which many other countries have not done in regard to their creditors, by putting aside a sinking fund for the redemption of our loans. This stands greatly to our credit today. There is no doubt that there is need for economy and, when we assembled in another place at the command of His Excellency the Governor, I was pleased to notice that His Excellency went so far as to draw attention to that point. We have been used to speaking in millions so frequently that it came as a distinct relief to hear His Excellency go into the question of pennies. While one cannot, perhaps, be optimistic on the score of pennies, I do not think we are

going to place the State in a better position by spending sleepless nights over some of our troubles, as some hon. members apparently do. That will certainly not improve our position. I congratulate the Government on the modesty of their legislative programme for the session. In these times it is refreshing to note that a Government on the eve of a general election, when offered a couple of million pounds to spend, has had the courage to refuse the offer. I can imagine our friends on the opposite side, in view of impending events, seizing such an opportunity with avidity.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You would like to know a little more about the two millions, and so would I. What are the terms?

Mr. MALEY: The terms would not have mattered to the hon. member if he had had an opportunity of getting hold of the money at any price whatever.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is all very well.

Mr. MALEY: We have to remember that most of our revenue is supposed to be derived from the railways of the State. Bearing in mind that this is a very young State, in its initial stages of development, and that the railways are needed to open up the country, it seems to me to be ridiculous to say that our railways should be run as a commercial proposition. If they are to be made a commercial proposition, as was attempted after the close of the last session of Parliament, the State has a right to ask that the railways be run on proper commercial lines. I have here some figures showing a comparison between the one privately owned line in the State and our own railways. I am sorry the Minister for Railways is not here to listen to it. When we reflect that it cost us £437,000 to gain an additional revenue of £396,000 from our own service for the year just ended we wonder how long that sort of thing is going to last. The Midland Railway Co., on the other hand, gained additional revenue of £17,000 at a cost of £3,800. We have to bear in mind that every time the fares and freights of our own railways are increased, we penalise every settler along the Midland Railway. If we are to run our railways on a commercial basis, we should cut out all useless expenditure under "departmental administration." The figures of the Midland Railway Company for the past four years are very illuminating. For the year ended 30th June, 1916, the gross traffic receipts were £88,020, working expenses £58,963, net receipts £29,027. For the year ended the 30th June, 1917, the gross traffic receipts were £89,206, working expenses £59,674, net receipts £29,532. For the year ended the 30th June, 1918, the gross traffic receipts were £92,384, working expenses £63,566, net receipts £29,278. For the year ended the 30th June, 1919, the gross traffic receipts were £109,700, working expenses £67,376, net receipts £42,324. These figures show a consistent advance in net receipts over that period of £13,300. That is the position which has

been arrived at by businesslike management of a railway. If our own railways are to be put on a commercial basis—I hope they never will be, for the railway system is engaged in opening up the country, and its partial loss must be a charge against Consolidated Revenue—it is only right that commercial principles should be applied in every branch of the department. I do not think we can improve the position by any academic resolutions as to how to make the railway system pay. The leader of the Opposition advocates a tax on land values for the purpose of relieving the railways.

Hon. P. Collier: A fortnight ago you were pledged to it; to-day you are not.

Mr. MALEY: The night before this question came up for consideration by the farmers' conference I interjected that in my opinion the policy was going to be thrown out with a sickening thud.

Hon. P. Collier: Still, that night you were bound to it.

Mr. MALEY: Unfortunately my remarks that night were attributed to the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) in next morning's "West Australian." Perhaps I was quite safe in making the interjection, because it is altogether out of reason to suppose that 400 farmers, all land holders, would carry so foolish a proposal. Of the 400 farmers assembled at the conference when, in spite of the special pleadings of the "West Australian," the motion was put—

Mr. O'Loughlen: The "West" will fetch them all round.

Mr. MALEY: You may fetch a few votes to your side by hammering at the subject.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We will get enough votes for our purpose.

Mr. MALEY: In a few electorates, perhaps.

Hon. T. Walker: Do not be so pessimistic.

Mr. MALEY: It was ridiculous to suppose that the farmers were going to agree to such a proposal.

Hon. P. Collier: Therefore they carried a ridiculous proposal the previous year. That is a good testimonial to your delegates.

Mr. MALEY: It was ridiculous to suppose that the farmers would consent to allow themselves to be taxed directly in regard to rural lands to the extent of an additional £300,000.

Hon. P. Collier: But they agreed to it at the previous conference.

Mr. MALEY: When the proposition was given more mature consideration and the evils of it were clearly seen, it is no wonder that it was thrown out.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The "West Australian" will convert you all.

Mr. MALEY: In addition to that £300,000 direct taxation to be thrown on the rural lands, there is the certainty that the £500,000 which the town lands would have to pay under the scheme would also have to be borne by the producers, because it

would be passed on to them. If the leader of the Opposition is so keen on land values taxation, I suggest that he bring in a modified scheme limiting the operation of the tax to lands within a radius of 20 miles from the General Post Office.

Mr. O'Loughlin: That would be class legislation.

Mr. MALEY: Nothing of the sort. We in the country are creating the value of city lands and indeed of everything in the city. If this burden could not be passed on to the producers, the policy would be less repugnant to us. I suggest that the leader of the Opposition confine his proposition to the lands within a radius of 20 miles from the post office.

Hon. P. Collier: Tax the other fellow, but do not tax me.

Mr. Mullany: Do you not think the city people would pass the tax on?

Mr. MALEY: I say they will, but the leader of the Opposition says that it could not be passed on. I want to carry the consideration of this proposed land values taxation a little further. Let us apply it to the privately owned railway. Under such a form of taxation the Midland Railway Company, who at the present time own considerably over a million and a half acres of unalienated land, would be asked to pay additional taxation amounting to 13 times what they are paying at present, and we should be imposing that additional taxation on them for the avowed purpose of making them reduce fares and freights on their railway. Was so ridiculous a proposition ever heard before? We have been circularised in this House by the Midland Railway Company in regard to the manner in which they have been treated by successive Governments. One can imagine how vigorous would be the protest of that company against any policy which imposed such a burden on them as that proposed.

Hon. P. Collier: You were at the previous conference of farmers; why did you not advise them against the proposal?

Mr. MALEY: I do not think any of our present delegates were there.

Mr. Gardiner: With all its faults, the Midland Railway Company has added a new province to the State without any cost to the Government. No loan money or anything of the sort has been spent on their lands. Put that in your pipe and smoke it.

Mr. MALEY: I do not want to hear continually the old parrot cry of "Produce, produce, produce," but I am convinced that the only possible way out of our difficulties is by unfettered production. Strikes are occurring, sometimes not without justification, but there should be some method of settling these disturbances before they settle the country. If the business of the State is held up, we must go from bad to worse.

Mr. Nairn: You can always settle a strike by paying up.

Mr. MALEY: But why should we do that? The strike germ has actually pene-

trated my own electorate, and for the last three weeks three mines there have been held up owing to a demand for conditions that do not exist anywhere else in the district. I ask that some influence should be brought to bear to settle this dispute, because it seems to me that the demand is wholly unreasonable.

Hon. P. Collier: But the principle of a 44-hour week is now observed in all the other mines of the State.

Mr. MALEY: The Fremantle Trading Company are prepared to grant the conditions obtaining on the Surprise mine. This is not an unfair proposition. It could be observed until the Surprise agreement expires, which will be in a few months time, when they could all be put on the same level. A lot of the trouble could be overcome if the leaders of the Labour movement would—

Mr. O'Loughlin: Take your Tory view of the situation.

Mr. Chesson: The 44-hours week obtains in respect of underground work on the Murchison.

Mr. MALEY: Increased production is almost impossible in this State at the present time, owing to the scarcity of labour. The Government ought to strain every effort to secure agricultural labour, particularly in view of the record harvest which we hope to enjoy during the present season. I know that the farmers, encouraged by the good prices which were generally expected, strained every effort to get all the land they possibly could under crop. In one particular case there was an area of 8,600 acres cleared in one block, but owing to the scarcity of labour all that could be cropped was a miserable 600 acres. Had the requisite labour been available, 3,000 or 4,000 acres of that block would have been put under crop. The difficulty has been accentuated owing to the fact that we have settled our returned soldiers on blocks of their own. Many of these soldiers are sons of settlers and originally bore some portion of the work in our agricultural areas, but they are now holding farms of their own. It should not be difficult, under the Imperial Service immigration scheme, to get men to come out here and devote one or two seasons to gaining experience before taking up land of their own. Much difficulty has been created owing to such communications as that sent by the Assistant Secretary to the Trades Hall, who wrote to England deprecating the sending out of labourers of any description or in fact of any emigrants at all.

Hon. P. Collier: How could you get them in the last six years?

Mr. MALEY: This was not in connection with the last six years but in connection with the policy of sending any emigrants here at all. The people in England were told that this State was not prepared to take immigrants. I know that the gentleman concerned has been put down a bit,

and I think this was one of the contributing causes. He received quite a decent rebuff from his own people in the country.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You attend to McGibbon and your executive officials and leave that alone.

Hon. P. Collier: Can you unravel the tangle about McGibbon and the Minister?

Mr. MALEY: To oblige the hon. members, I am coming to the wheat position. Nobody can say that any further light has been thrown on the actual position by the various explanations given by the officials concerned in the matter.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Their explanations are as clear as mud.

Mr. MALEY: Quite so.

Mr. Pickering: They have made confusion worse confounded.

Mr. MALEY: It is remarkable that at the recent conference which consisted almost wholly and solely of farmers, the gathering was prepared to accept the statements of Mr. McGibbon, of the Honorary Minister (Mr. Baxter), and of the Minister for Education (Mr. Colebatch).

Mr. O'Loughlen: They cheered the lot.

Mr. MALEY: It seemed to me to be reprehensible that, at the end of explanations extending over a whole day at the conference, the Honorary Minister was so foolish as to try to get another spoke in by making a statement in another place.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He said some foolish things.

Hon. P. Collier: He is given to that sort of thing.

Mr. Pickering: It was the only place where he could make the explanation.

Mr. MALEY: The Australian Wheat Board have no legal ground on which to base a claim against the Western Australian Government for their refusal to supply wheat to New South Wales at the price in question. The affairs of the Australian Wheat Board appear to have been conducted in such a remarkable manner that the Board will never be able to formulate a claim against this State, and therefore, I think we have heard the last of it. There is a statement in this morning's issue of the "West Australian" which goes to confirm that impression; an impression which has been in my mind during the last fortnight. What the Australian Wheat Board have created, they can certainly destroy. It was absolutely foolish of the board to ever pass a resolution that, on a rising market or in fact on any market, we should supply wheat to anyone for a period of 12 months.

Mr. Pickering: Hear, hear!

Mr. MALEY: It was absolutely unfair to the producers of this State.

Mr. Pickering: No matter which way it went.

Mr. MALEY: Quite so. If the price had fallen below the price in question, there would have been a howl from the consumers of the State concerned that they were being

charged too much. But is there any objection to consumers throughout this State taking the farmers' wheat at one-half of its actual value? That is the position to-day. The farmers of the State are actually feeding the population for one-half of what they could receive for their wheat.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Where could you receive that price?

Mr. MALEY: The hon. member knows as well as I do that wheat is being sold and has been sold during the last six months for anything up to 16s. per bushel f.o.b. Fremantle.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Small parcels.

Mr. Pickering: What is the price in England?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Ninety-five shillings per guaranteed quarter.

Mr. MALEY: It is argued that because a nebulous guarantee was given to the farmers during the period of the war, a guarantee which amounted to practically one-half of the cost of production, therefore the farmers should be grateful; but the consumers should be grateful to the farmers because they are getting their bread at one-half of what it ought to cost them. Why is it that during the whole course of the war and up to the present time, the cost of feeding the consumers in England has been borne by the Imperial Government and not by the farmers of England? The English farmer has received the full price for his product all through, and so has the American farmer. The United States Government had the courage immediately after the armistice was signed to guarantee their farmers 9s. 2d. per bushel for a period of two years. That was good business, although many people thought the United States Government would have to find a couple of hundred million pounds to back up their farmers in this way. I have consistently urged in this House and outside it during the past two or three years that a reasonable guarantee should have been given to our farmers, if only to encourage them to keep on cultivating their land and prevent it from reverting to its natural state. It was only on the eve of the Federal elections that a sufficient guarantee and payment were promised the farmers throughout Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: Just after the general elections; not on the eve of it.

Mr. MALEY: Just before the general elections it was announced that the farmers would be paid and guaranteed a sum of not less than 5s. per bushel. Some claims had been put forward by farmers' organisations in the Eastern States, and the Federal Prime Minister was threatened with opposition by the Country party.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They did butt him to Ballarat.

Hon. P. Collier: And nearly butted him out, too.

Mr. Pickering: Perhaps it is the beginning of the butting out process.

Mr. MALEY: The farmer of this State, by reason of the war and the consequent depression, has been in a poor way for the last four years. To-day the farmer is recovering his position and the future looks bright for him.

Mr. Pickering: And for the country.

Hon. P. Collier: Oh, that follows.

Mr. MALEY: Yes, the good old ship of State has been in trouble because the farmer has been battling against the seas of adversity. To-day the farmer is coming into his own, and the development which had been arrested during the past four years is proceeding. When the farmer is in a good way, he is the fertiliser of every avenue of trade in the State.

Mr. DUFF (Claremont) [5.10]: I did intend to touch one or two subjects such as mining, but as the debate is approaching its conclusion I think those subjects can perhaps be better dealt with when the Estimates are before us. After a trip to the Eastern portion of our agricultural belt, I am pleased to say that the crops are looking exceedingly well, and the farmers are very sanguine of getting a record yield. I am pleased to say that the soldier farmers there appear to be very contented with their lot. It is a matter for congratulation to the Premier, Mr. McLarty and the staff, that they have handled the soldier settlement scheme in such a capable way. When the Premier was elected to office, all of us on this side of the House recognised that he had a very stupendous task before him.

Hon. P. Collier: You were a bit doubtful about him at that time.

Mr. DUFF: We were doubtful about getting a man to take the task on.

Hon. P. Collier: Is that how he came to get it?

Mr. DUFF: I believe that influenced me in my vote. We can congratulate ourselves that we were able to get a man of his force and optimism to take the position.

Mr. Green: Would not you give it a go?

Mr. DUFF: I might have done so. I have given many things a go, and have been successful in some of them. I hope the Federal Government will give the State every facility to settle upon its agricultural lands an unlimited number of settlers. After all, the man who tills the land is the one who is to be relied upon to fight for it in time of danger.

The Minister for Works: Hear, hear! It has always been so.

Mr. DUFF: There is another matter I wish to mention, and I hope the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) will not think I am usurping his position by bringing it forward.

Mr. Pickering: He has the same right.

Mr. DUFF: My only reason for bringing it forward is that I am mixed up in the mining portion of his electorate. Several meetings have been held in Westonia district to urge the adoption of a land scheme for that

particular area. A league has been formed, known as the Westonia Agricultural Land League. The league, which includes in its membership the most influential people in the district, is endeavouring to bring about a land settlement scheme. I am quite satisfied that at Westonia we have land which is absolutely unexcelled in this State, but the objection will always be raised, as it was raised 10 or 11 years ago when the late Mr. Paterson was managing the Agricultural Bank, that the rainfall is insufficient. That argument cropped up in regard to the Merredin district, but later on Mr. Paterson was impressed, and the area was extended to the rabbit-proof fence.

Mr. Harrison: Meckering was the limit at one time.

Mr. DUFF: Beyond the rabbit-proof fence, we have two farmers contiguous to the railway working their farms in a very big way, and making them pay better perhaps than some of us people who are farming at Merredin. We go to Southern Cross and we find there six farmers working without any assistance from the Agricultural Bank and they are making their farms pay. So that, after all, the rainfall argument must fall to the ground. But that is not altogether the trouble with the Westonia people. They have the mining regulations in the road. The mining regulations state that within two miles of the nearest boundary of any townsite or suburban area 20 acres will be allotted, and that beyond two miles from such boundary the area will be 500 acres. Those who have been farming will agree with me that 500 acres of land is not enough for a man to farm properly. He certainly cannot grow wheat and go in for mixed farming on such a limited area. - Nothing less than 1,000 acres will do. I am going to ask the Premier to cause this regulation to be amended so that the beautiful forest lands which extend from the railway for miles around the Westonia goldfields may be thrown open for settlement. I am going to advocate a combination of mining and agricultural interests, because when the areas are being cleared for farming purposes the timber cut can be used on the mines for firewood and also as mining timber. In that way the farmers will be realising something as the result of their initial labours. In other instances such timber has to be burnt. There is also a market for that class of timber at Kalgoorlie. It can be shifted at Walgoolan, where this belt of country starts. I can assure the Premier that if he will go into this matter he will be able to assist 200 or 300 people to go on the land, all of whom are waiting now to take up areas there. So far as the rainfall is concerned, records have been kept for the past five years, and the average during that period has been 15 inches. That rainfall extends from April to October, and anyone who has had anything to do with farming is aware that that is all that is required, and in the area in question it falls in the proper

months, especially in September, when it is looked for. If the Premier will only take up this matter we may in those parts create, by the admixture of mining and agriculture, a Ballarat or a Bendigo. I intend to refer to a subject which I believe is exercising the minds not only of the people of this State but of everyone in the Commonwealth, namely the prevailing industrial and social unrest, which I claim is mainly due to the non-standardisation of the cost of foodstuffs and other commodities required in our homes. To my mind it is sheer waste of time for the judges in our Arbitration Courts to attempt to fix wages when, directly they do so, up go the prices of commodities. We have started at the wrong end. What I recommend is that we immediately standardise the cost of living. It is easy to do so in a country so prolific as Australia is. It has a sparse population, and that is an advantage in carrying out such a scheme. If we can do that, we will adjust wages and thereby bring about social and industrial contentment. Such a step would, I think, overcome in an appreciable way our present industrial difficulties. Perhaps someone will say that I am trespassing in the sphere of Federal politics, but I believe, and I think everybody else believes, that this question gravely concerns us as a State and as a portion of the great Commonwealth. Australia to-day is bulging with exportable foodstuffs and other commodities. We have meat, wheat, wool, butter, bacon, and I could go on for a considerable time enumerating other things, not forgetting fruit and vegetables. We produce all these things prolifically, but they are not made available at a fair price to us Australians. Take our meat. When the Wyndham works were started by the Labour Government, was it intended that they should only export? If that was the case I am very sorry for the intention of Parliament at the time, because after all should we not look after our own first? In Perth to-day it is not possible to get more than a pound or two of dripping, a product that must, with the fat cattle we have in Kimberley, be there in tons. It seems, however, that the desire is to export everything that we are short of in Perth. It seems rather peculiar that mutton should be so cheap to-day. I think we can get meat to-day for 4d. or 5d. a pound, whereas as a couple of months ago it fetched 1s. 2d. a pound. We all remember a cable from London which told us that there was a glut in the market, and that Australian meat was selling at 6d. a pound. On the very same day sales of mutton were effected in the Midland yards at 1s. 1d. on the hoof.

Mr. Harrison: What about the pelt?

Mr. DUFF: The hon. member says what about the pelt? We will give him the pelt in. The price is too high, and the sooner the suggestion which was advanced by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) that chilling works be erected at Fremantle to receive the products of the different freezing works is adopted, the better it will be for the people of Western Australia. It would anyhow bring a little competition along, and

that would help us to get our meat at something like a fair price. It behoves every country, on account of the world's condition, to be selfish and to look after itself. I am wondering, too, why we have not more flour mills, and why, instead of exporting wheat we do not export flour. We know that to-day we are practically starving for the by-products of the mill.

Mr. Harrison: Why?

Mr. DUFF: We know why. Because they are rushing away the wheat, perhaps to a better market. I am credibly informed that a day or two ago there was not a bag of bran to be purchased in Kalgoorlie or in the sister municipality of Boulder.

The Minister for Works: We could not get it in the south-west.

Mr. DUFF: The time has come when this matter should be taken seriously in hand. Two nights ago we saw that soldiers who had taken up land for poultry farming, turned it up because they had to pay 12s. a bushel for their wheat. Fancy asking 12s. a bushel for wheat in a country where there is such a prolific growth of this commodity. When Sir Henry Lefroy submitted his motion to Parliament last session suggesting a guarantee of 5s. per bushel to wheat growers—and I am claiming to be one of them—it was thought that the price we were going to get was an extraordinarily good one. But now we are asking 12s. a bushel.

Mr. Pickering: Are you turning it down?

Mr. DUFF: No, but I have a little feeling for other people who are starving for it. Let us fix the price for home consumption on a reasonable basis, and we can export the balance to the world's markets. We can then get what is called the world's parity.

Mr. Harrison: What is it?

Mr. DUFF: I would like to know myself.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No one else knows.

Mr. DUFF: It should be our duty to provide for ourselves first and export afterwards, preferably to Great Britain. What is wanted in Australia is a cheaper breakfast table. I believe to-day we are paying 100 per cent. more than we should be paying for our meals, and I do not think it requires a knowledge of economic science to enable us to make effective suggestions such as those I have put forward. We have our pooling system, which provides the machinery for carrying it out. I believe all the difficulties can be overcome.

Mr. Pickering: By the farmers sacrificing everything.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are doing very well.

Mr. DUFF: They are sacrificing nothing. Let us provide for ourselves first. We were satisfied with 3s. 6d. per bushel at one time. I trust that some action will be taken by the Chamber in the direction I have suggested. It is the only way out of the difficulty. If we can get a resolution through the House and forward it to the Federal Parliament they will realise that we are in earnest in moving in the matter. I believe also that if the Prime Minister will adopt the suggestion I have made he will be able to bring down

with one barrel the profiteer and the Bolshevik whom he professes to be so anxious to bring to book.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [5.30]: I am not altogether disappointed at the lack of policy disclosed in the Governor's Speech. I never expected anything better from the present Government, despite the fact that last session they were continually desiring to get into recess for the avowed purpose of preparing measures to put before Parliament. We find in the Speech practically nothing of any value.

The Minister for Works: You must carry on with hope.

Mr. LUTEY: Hope is very good, but we want something more than that. From the speeches delivered, I am convinced that there are very few, even on the Ministerial side, with confidence in the Government. The only speaker who has complimented the Government on their policy is the member for Greenough (Mr. Maley). The member for Subiaco (Mr. Brown) and the member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) severely criticised them. In fact, judging by their speeches, I cannot understand why those two members are not on this side of the House. Possibly the close approach of the elections induced them to frame their speeches in the way they did. If their utterances had been made by a couple of Labour men outside of Parliament, that little Mephistopheles from Wales would have deported them from Australia. The member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) also warmly criticised the Government. I believe that if a vote were taken, and if members on the Ministerial side voted according to their utterances, the Government would find themselves in the cold shades of Opposition. I visited the House years ago when the late Hon. Frank Wilson was leader of the Opposition, and the Labour Government were in power. At that time the Opposition were continually criticising the Labour Government and asserting that there was no necessity for further taxation, that nothing but business acumen was necessary to bring about a satisfactory state of affairs. Then we had as Premier Sir Henry Lefroy, whose sole policy was 'produce, produce, produce'; and now we have Mr. Mitchell, whose sole policy seems to be expressed in the words, vigour, enterprise and goodwill. I have yet to learn that the community of Western Australia lacks vigour. Taking them generally, they are an essentially vigorous population. But it seems that any old cry is good enough for the present Government. As for enterprise, I should like some of the Ministers to let us know what form the enterprise of the present Government has taken. Last session, and indeed the session before, I had occasion to draw attention to the necessity for a largely increased output at the State brickworks. The Minister for Works at that time complained that he could not get the essential machinery. Now I am credibly informed that there is sufficient machinery at

the State brickworks to largely increase the present output, if only they had another Hoffman kiln. Yet the Minister for Works, the most enterprising of Ministers—which is not saying much for the present Government—cannot see his way clear to erect that additional Hoffman kiln in order to increase the output, notwithstanding that a number of bricklayers are walking the streets for want of bricks to carry on with.

The Minister for Works: That is scarcely correct.

Mr. LUTEY: I am informed that it is so, and I believe it is true.

The Minister for Works: I can take you to a dozen houses in course of construction hung up for want of bricklayers, not for want of bricks.

Mr. LUTEY: I am surprised to find that no steps have been taken to ensure a sufficient supply of bricks. As for goodwill, I fail to see that the Government are doing anything to create goodwill in the community; in fact they appear to be moving in the opposite direction. We find that the employers, who are the masters of the present Government, are doing all they can to foment ill-feeling. Quite lately Mr. Dunne has been down the South-West forming another union amongst the employees of the fruit-growers, notwithstanding that there is already a union in that industry. Such action will not tend to goodwill, but will be prejudicial to the fruit-growers and to the State generally. Any responsible Government seized with the seriousness of the present situation would bring down industrial legislation, but there is no suggestion in the Speech of any move in this direction. In view of the congestion of the Arbitration Court, the slowness of its procedure, and the general unrest prevailing, one would have thought something would be done to amend the Act. There is no mention in the Speech of any such intention. The public service strike could easily have been averted. Nine months ago the public servants held a big demonstration outside Parliament House. Surely that should have been accepted as an indication that those men were serious in their demands. Any Minister of business acumen, with a knowledge of industrial affairs, would have set to work to settle the trouble out of hand. I was amazed to see the public service come out as strongly as they did on that occasion and make their demands at Parliament House. One often hears reference to the riots on the goldfields, but I am convinced that the public servants of Perth, on the day of their demonstration, were more determined than those men on the goldfields who made their protest some months ago. Yet the trouble with the public service was allowed to go on increasing in strength for nine months, until at last the country was faced with a strike that might have had very serious consequences. The general public, perhaps, do not realise how near we all were to a calamity. The Premier says the country is prosperous. It may be so in a

sense, but when the member for Haanans (Mr. Munsie) was speaking, it was the Minister for Mines who, by interjection, referred to children attending school without boots. Some people, of course, believe in children going without boots altogether. I know a doctor on the goldfields whose two daughters went barefooted until they were 15 or 16 years of age. But in the great majority of cases it is not for health purposes that the children go to school without boots; it is because of the dire poverty of their parents. The best way of finding out how people are progressing economically is to interview the butchers who serve them daily. I know on the goldfields hundreds of workers with families who are not able to buy sufficient meat to provide for their children. It will be found that in some cases a family consisting of father, mother, and five children are able to purchase not more than a pound of meat per day, of which the children get but very little, for the reason that it is absolutely necessary that the father should have the lion's share, since he is toiling in the bowels of the earth. We find here talk of prosperity, whereas there is a great deal of poverty among the people. Paragraph 7 of the Speech refers to mining. One could easily believe that the paragraph had been lifted bodily from the journal of the Chamber of Mines. I have frequently seen similar paragraphs in that publication. At the present time, when the miners are before the Arbitration Court for an increase of wages, this particular paragraph in the Speech is somewhat suggestive. The Chamber of Mines employs clever officers, well able to present their side of the question to the public in such a manner that those who do not know the actual position might easily be misled. For years past the cry has been that the mines are unprofitable. At an earlier date that cry was confined to the poorer mines. Eighteen years ago it was commonly reported that the Associated mine was about to be closed down because of its inability to pay any increase in wages. The mine officials put up a good case for their side of the question, and many people believed that the mine would really have to close down. Curiously enough, that mine is still going, despite the present high cost of mining requisites. I am sorry the Minister for Mines is not in his seat. He is a frequent absentee from the Chamber. I would suggest that, in view of the new fields that have been discovered, great care should be exercised in the inspection of mining properties. It will be in the interests not only of the miners but of the companies and of the State to see that in the early stages of a property mining is carried on in a proper manner. We can see on the goldfields to-day the results of loose methods in the pioneering stages. A number of mines which have been closed down would be still going if they had been developed along sound lines. Then there is the question of shrinkage stopes. In one mine, the Perseverance, the stopes were

emptied of their ore and then left wide open, with the result that tributaries cannot work in those parts of the mine to-day because it is too dangerous. The Mines Act should contain a provision compelling mining companies in emptying stopes of that kind to see that they are properly filled up. A mine, even if the company working it have finished with it, is still State property, and it should be left safe for future working. In the mine to which I refer there are hundreds of thousands of tons of ore which could be mined now if it were not for the danger of the stopes. The question of deep boring has repeatedly come before this House, and I have advocated it on various occasions. The Minister for Mines announced recently his intention to go in largely for deep boring at the southern end of the Golden Mile. There was at one time a proposal to form a company for that purpose, and it was said that the Government were prepared to assist the company. The great need is to establish, by deep boring, the continuance of the Golden Mile towards Hampton Plains. I regret that there has not been a company formed to take up the leases at the north end of the Golden Mile. Knowledge which I have obtained from men who have worked at the north end satisfies me that there are good, or almost certain, prospects there. There can be no doubt that various propositions in that part of the field are worthy of development. Unfortunately the business people and investors who were in a position to subscribe for shares in the project neglected to do so. In my opinion they made a mistake. Had they carried the project through at the time it was mooted, they would have had the prospect of getting many shows taken up at the time of the boom. I regret the Government have not systematically explored that country by deep boring. The finding of any decent mine would have recouped the State amply for its outlay. There is a matter I wish to mention regarding the registration of leases. In that connection there has been a good deal of trouble on new fields. Prospectors discovering new shows have been unable to register promptly owing to the difficulty of getting to the office of the mining registrar, with the result that occasionally other men have come along and pegged the same ground, thus causing a good deal of irritation, and also considerable delay in the development of one of the finest pieces of gold-bearing country known to me. The law should be amended so as to give the outback prospector, who is distant from the registrar's office, fuller protection than he has at the present time. I have repeatedly mentioned the advisableness of appointing what I may term a lease ranger on new rushes. I spoke on this matter during the discussion of the Mines Estimates last session. On several new rushes that I know of people pegged all over the country. It would be beneficial to everyone concerned if an officer in the nature of a lease ranger

were appointed to take note of peggings and to advise new arrivals as to what ground was available and what ground had already been pegged. Much confusion has been caused in the past owing to the want of such an officer, though I do not say that the confusion was due to any evil intentions on the part of the peggers. Had there been a lease ranger available, the confusion and ill-feeling which were created would have been avoided; and, besides, it would have been better for the State itself, because more leases would have been taken up in likely localities, and thus the industry would have been stimulated. I hope my suggestion will not now be regarded as having been made too late. There will be further discoveries, and then an officer of the kind I have mentioned will be able to assist prospectors. I would also like to suggest to the Government that there should be annual inspection of miners and especially of those in deep workings. In 1911 Dr. Cumpston, from whom we have an interesting speech in this morning's newspaper, made an examination of the workers on the Golden Mile, and discovered that 33 per cent. of the miners working on machines suffered from miner's phthisis, and 28 per cent. of those employed on dry crushing plants. This information came as a shock to many people. Certainly there ought to be an annual inspection by an independent doctor, to let the country know exactly what is the state of health at the various mines. Doctors generally have now become so used to miners suffering from phthisis that they take very little notice of it until the disease reaches such a stage that they have to advise the sufferer to quit the mining industry. One good result of an independent annual inspection would be that the miners would receive timely warning to leave the industry, and in such cases the Government should do something on the lines of what is being done for the returned soldiers. The Government should assist those miners to go in for farming, which would be better for their health. Let me warn the Government that undoubtedly a great deal of miner's phthisis is due to the dry crushing plants. Now that new fields are likely to be opened, the Mines Act should contain a provision forbidding companies to erect dry crushing plants. New Zealand many years ago decided to make the erection of dry crushing plants illegal. That prohibition was thought at the time to be impracticable of enforcement. However, the law was enforced; and I understand there are now no dry crushing plants in New Zealand. The same position could be established in this State, and I shall regret it extremely if the Government permit any more dry crushing plants to be erected on our goldfields. It is true that the Minister for Mines has visited the new discoveries on two separate occasions, but I am of opinion that mining and the mineral resources of this State are of such vast importance that the Mines portfolio should occupy the full attention of one Minister. In the Mines Department there

is any amount of work for a Minister to do, and for the life of me I cannot see how the present Minister for Mines is able to control four or five different departments; he is Minister for Mines, Minister for Railways, Minister for Police, Minister for Industries, and several other things as well. I consider the Minister should personally visit the different mining fields—not only the goldmining fields, but also the iron and manganese districts. The Government speak of encouraging immigration. The history of the Australian States shows that it is gold-mining that attracts population. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) has stated that at present it is almost impossible to secure immigrants from Britain, where the conditions are better than possible immigrants would obtain in Australia. They will not come to Australia while present wages and conditions continue in Britain. I believe that if goldmining were booming now, we would experience a state of affairs somewhat similar to that which prevailed in Victoria about the middle of the last century, and here in the nineties. A mining revival would, I believe, attract population more quickly than anything else would. Turning to the new finds, I believe that the St. Ives and Mt. Monger districts, which are situated in the Kanowna electorate, will develop several good shows; and the same may be said of Hampton Plains. Possibly I know more of the St. Ives field than other members of the House, as I have spent a week at a time on that field. I believe it will prove one of the best fields this State has known, apart of course from Kalgoorlie. I do not wish to boom any particular show, but I think the Ives Reward is going to turn up trumps. It is developing very well indeed at the present time. The same may be said of the Coo-ee mine in the Jubilee group. In fact, in that locality there are several very promising shows. They are distributed over an area six miles long by two miles broad, and the State will be very unfortunate if quite a number of good mines are not developed in an area of that extent. Next, I wish to refer to the increase in railway fares and freights. The Government did wrong, I consider, in not taking Parliament into their confidence on this subject, instead of waiting until the Houses went into recess and then raising fares and freights. The Minister for Railways has said that there has been no protest against the increase. But this is the first opportunity we have had of making a protest. Moreover, there have been protests all round the Chamber. The increases would not be so objectionable if the Government had been right up against it and had had no other means of raising revenue. But at that time the taxation of unimproved land values was advocated by the farmers and settlers, and the Legislative Council had carried a resolution that in the interests of the State there should be taxa-

tion of unimproved land values in order to relieve railway fares and freights. Nine days before the House rose the Minister for Railways, on the 26th November, 1919, said—

I have not consulted the Government in this, but it is as well that I should state my opinion.

This remark will be found in "Hansard," page 1724. I do not believe the statement of the Minister was correct, and I do not know whether it was a false statement or merely something that the Minister might call political dishonesty.

The Premier: You can have access to the files.

Mr. LUTEY: Either the Minister for Railways or the Minister for Agriculture is telling a falsehood.

The Premier: I do not think you have any right to say that.

Mr. LUTEY: The Minister for Agriculture informed the Farmers' and Settlers' Conference that Cabinet had for weeks been considering the matter of raising fares and freights. Either the Minister for Agriculture was saying something which was false, or the Minister for Railways was telling the House something that was false.

The Premier: We will give you access to the files.

Mr. LUTEY: Either one Minister or the other has made a false statement; I am not prepared to say which it is.

The Premier: They will probably prove that you are wrong.

Mr. LUTEY: Perhaps if the Minister were here he would deny the statement he made at the meeting of the farmers' and settlers that Cabinet had been considering the matter for weeks. At all events, we have two conflicting statements from two responsible Ministers. It has been said that the Government should have consulted the House before raising freights and fares. They had the opportunity to do so, for the House was practically pledged to unimproved land values taxation in order to relieve the fares and freights.

The Premier: That is the point, is it?

Mr. LUTEY: Yes. There was no excuse for the Government. I should like to remind the farmers and settlers that if they do not put on the statute-book an unimproved land values tax, and raise revenue in that manner, there is no guarantee that the Government will not make a further increase in freights and fares. I believe it is at the back of their minds to do that. God help the farmers and settlers and the producers after the next election.

Mr. Johnston: An increase has been forecasted already.

Mr. LUTEY: Yes.

The Premier: The farmers suggest a very easy way out.

Mr. Johnston: We suggest economy for a start.

Mr. LUTEY: I should like some Minister to give us the truth of this matter.

Mr. Pickering: Do you say we were pledged to an unimproved land tax?

Mr. LUTEY: The hon. member's party affirmed the principle, but I do not know how much they wanted. If a conference affirmed a principle I should feel bound to advocate that principle before the House. The St. George's-terrace farmer will have to work solidly. There was a time when the Government had the opportunity to raise revenue if they had wished to do so.

Mr. Johnston: Conferences have affirmed many principles which have not been brought forward.

Mr. LUTEY: The Government could have obtained revenue from other sources and so relieved the primary producers. Some 19 years ago the Ivanhoe Progress Committee endeavoured to prevail upon the Government to put sidings along the Brownhill loop line, especially on the Ivanhoe crossing. They failed, however, to persuade the Government to study the convenience of the travelling public in this way. After this lapse of time we find that the Government have now put in the sidings, and I compliment them upon the step they have taken. I regret that it was not done many years ago, for it would have put into the coffers of the State many thousands of pounds, which have gone to private tramway companies. Furthermore, the result of the delay has been that the population, instead of remaining close to the railways, has moved out along the tramway routes; and the probability is that the State will never obtain that amount of passenger traffic which would have been obtained if the siding had been erected when the suggestion was first made. Shelter sheds should also be erected at the half-way, and some of the other more populous centres. In the heat of summer it is awkward for women and children to have to stand out in the broiling sun, and it is similarly awkward in the winter when the weather is wet. I hope the Government will erect shelter sheds in these particular localities. The Government have announced that they have called for tenders for three oil-driven motor engines. I hope when these arrive that the Government will give them a trial on the Brownhill loop line. Possibly no other line in the State would be more suitable for such a trial than this line, and their use on this line will popularise it and be of benefit to the State. The Government should take steps to popularise and get more revenue from that line. Owing to the concessions that have been given to the woodline people, very little revenue is at present derived from it. Practically all the traffic goes round the other way, and the Kurrawang Woodline Company gets the benefit of it instead of the State. Our railways could be popularised in many directions. Outside the Flinders-street Railway station, Melbourne, are dials indicating to the public the time when trains will depart for the various centres. In Perth the

travelling public are afforded no such facilities. If dials of this nature were erected in front of the verandah, outside the Perth railway station, the travelling public would be able to see at some considerable distance the time of departure of the trains to those centres to which they desire to travel. Inside the station there are indicators, but one has to go inside in order to see them. I hope the Minister for Railways will look into this small matter, and see whether the convenience of the public cannot be studied in this way. I also hope that if further railway carriages are built they will be built with sliding doors, such as are used on the suburban railway system of Victoria. The other day a lady on the Perth railway station received a nasty knock on the elbow through a carriage door flying open. It is dangerous for the public to have the carriage doors opening in the manner they do on our local trains. I hope that it will be found possible to introduce the sliding door system here. The Minister for Railways has intimated that there will be another rise in freights and fares. The increase was not necessary last time. If the Government wished to raise revenue they had means of doing so without this extra impost upon our primary producers, but this is not their policy, because it is not suitable to the farmers who live in the metropolitan area, the men who own the large properties. They are really the people who are opposed to unimproved land values taxation. That form of taxation has my support. I have seen examples of the monopolisation of land in this State as well as the other States, and I hope that something will be done in this direction in the near future, although one can hardly expect it of this Government. If it were brought forward here I am sure it would receive the whole-hearted support of this side of the House.

The Premier: I am afraid the support would not be quite sufficient.

Mr. LUTEY: I believe a case can be made out, if Ministers wish, that will convince even the doubting members of the Country party.

Mr. Pickering: It would require a strong case.

Mr. LUTEY: I believe they would be convinced, and that they would go out as missionaries amongst the farmers, even if they had to call a special conference of the primary producers to reconsider the matter.

The Premier: You pay your share on the unalienated land?

Mr. LUTEY: I do not own any. That belongs to the State. I am in favour of unimproved land values taxation. I have been here for 24 years, and know the evils of land monopoly. In the early days a Mr. Bunbury, from whom is taken the name of the port in the South-West, landed there with his servants, his chattels, his farming implements and the rest of it, with the intention of taking up land and settling in Bunbury as a baron of the soil.

Mr. Pickering: Don't you think he deserved to get land?

The Premier: He did not get a big area of land.

Mr. LUTEY: What happened in his case was that his servants took up the land; and did very well out of it. His servants are now the backbone of Bunbury, and even the late Lord Forrest's father was one of the retainers of the late Mr. Bunbury.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. LUTEY: Before tea I was referring to the question of imposing taxation on unimproved land values. The other evening the Minister for Mines stated by way of interjection that such a land tax had nothing to do with railway finance. I for one cannot understand how he arrived at that conclusion. I consider that it is bound up with railway finance. When we remember that something like £672,000 has to be paid by way of interest on borrowed money every year, money which has been expended to construct those lines and create the values and the unearned increment in the city as well as in the country, I think it will be admitted that taxation of unimproved land values is the proper source from which to get revenue to pay such interest at least. We are told that there is some 20 million pounds worth of unimproved land values in Western Australia, though I believe there is more. If a tax of 6d. in the pound were imposed it would bring in a revenue of £500,000 to the Treasury. The Minister for Works looks shocked at the suggestion of a tax of 6d. in the pound, but I for one would advocate it right away. The time has come when the land monopolists, not so much in the country as in the city, should pay for the values which have been created, and of which they have been reaping the benefit for many years. Let us take, for instance, the Duke of Westminster, the richest landlord in England.

The Premier: We will tax him if you like.

Mr. LUTEY: Hundreds of years ago the Duke of Westminster was granted about 600 acres in what is now Westminster and, right down through the ages, the people of Great Britain and its dependencies have been contributing indirectly to the wealth of the Duke of Westminster.

Mr. Underwood: All right, tax him.

Mr. LUTEY: Unearned increments have been created by the workers and the great mass of the community has not reaped the benefit.

The Minister for Works: Do you know there are many road boards which will not rate at more than 1d. in the pound?

Mr. Underwood: What about the Federal tax?

Mr. LUTEY: The exemption under the Federal law is £5,000.

Mr. Underwood: That would not affect the Duke of Westminster.

Mr. LUTEY: I am not concerned about the Duke of Westminster now.

Mr. Underwood: You were, quite recently.

Mr. LUTEY: I quoted him only to show what might occur in Australia if we were all like the member for Pilbara. I would not be surprised if before long the Federal exemption was struck out. If the State Government will not impose an adequate tax on unimproved land values, I would welcome action by the Federal Government in this direction. The Minister for Works need not look so cross.

The Minister for Works: I am not cross; I am only astonished.

Mr. LUTEY: Last session, when the Government were absolutely poverty-stricken, they increased the railway fares and freights throughout the State. They could have raised the additional money required through the medium of an unimproved land tax, but they would not take advantage of this opportunity. The Government had a majority in this House, and another place had passed a motion affirming that it was in the best interests of the country that such taxation should be imposed. If the Government persist in refusing to introduce this form of taxation, I should like to see the Federal Government strike out their exemption altogether. The Premier told us the other evening that the Government were buying land for the soldiers. If an adequate tax on unimproved values were imposed, those people who are holding up the land for speculative purposes would either use it or sell it at a fair valuation, and the soldiers would be able to get farms at a reasonable price.

The Premier: So they are.

Mr. LUTEY: Then the price would be more reasonable.

The Minister for Works: Yes, if wholesale robbery were resorted to.

Mr. LUTEY: The Premier, while travelling in South Australia, probably noticed the soldiers' holdings along the railway line. The South Australian Government paid about £7 an acre for that land. If there had not been a railway, which railway had been built on borrowed money on which the whole of the people of the State have to pay interest, that land would not have been worth more than £1 an acre, whereas the soldier has to pay £7 an acre. These values should belong to the community as a whole.

Mr. Underwood: What would it cost to clear that land?

Mr. LUTEY: I am speaking of unimproved land values taxation. If a farmer had £1,000 worth of unimproved land and spent £4 an acre on clearing, fencing, and other improvements, he would be liable, under this scheme of taxation, to pay on only the £1,000 value. That is a fair proposition. If the farmer paid 6d. in the pound on land of a value of £1,000 it would not amount to much, compared with what he pays in freights to get his products to market.

Mr. Johnston: The tax should be more than the land rent.

Mr. LUTEY: Taxation on unimproved values would benefit the farmers. The opposition comes chiefly from St. George's-terrace farmers, not from the men who are actually engaged on the soil.

Mr. Pickering: You would not say that those who attended the conference were St. George's-terrace farmers?

Mr. LUTEY: A large number are interested in the farming industry, and strings can be pulled, and I believe were pulled, for months beforehand, in order to get annulled the principle which had been affirmed by the farmers and settlers at their previous conference. I have been informed that the land monopolists in the city were particularly keen that the farmers and settlers should rescind the resolution in favour of this form of taxation. They realised that they themselves were the people who would be hit by such taxation, not the genuine farmer who uses his land and does not hold it for speculative purposes. I have been asked by the party Whip to cut my remarks as short as possible, but there are just one or two other matters to which I wish to refer. We have complained for years about the charge for meter rents, and it is time the people on the goldfields who have been paying this tax since the inception of the water scheme, were relieved from it. True, the Minister allows excess water to an equivalent amount. I know of people in receipt of pensions who have to pay this meter rent. One is a widow with eight children receiving assistance from the State Charities Department. Such people at any rate should be relieved from what is recognised as an unjust charge.

The Minister for Works: Why not bring those particular cases before me?

Mr. LUTEY: I could bring a number of them before the Minister. If he will tell me that people in receipt of charity through no fault of their own—

The Minister for Works: I will inquire into every case, but I cannot act on any ex parte statement.

Mr. LUTEY: The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) referred to the progress of aviation. It will not be many years before this form of transport will be popular in Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: Have not you formed a union for the employees yet?

Mr. LUTEY: No, but I have been thinking that probably Brearley or someone else will be wanting to monopolise the air. According to a statement recently made by Mr. Churchill, the Allies had taken over 18,000 aeroplanes from Germany, and had destroyed a large number of them. He said that England had built 300 new aeroplanes while Germany was building 60. I cannot see any reason why the State Government should not apply for some of these aeroplanes for use in Western Australia. Numbers of our soldiers made names for themselves as aviators, and I believe it would be easy to get

some of these machines and give our men a chance to earn a livelihood. It would be of immense advantage to the State if we could provide facilities of this description to bridge the space between the settled areas and the remote parts of the State. For a considerable time past we have heard it rumoured that there is to be a Federal convention. If such a convention is held I hope that the representatives of Western Australia will be elected by the people instead of by Parliament.

Mr. Underwood: You have no confidence in Parliament.

Mr. LUTEY: I certainly think that, with the general elections coming off in a few months' time, the representatives of Western Australia at the Federal convention should be elected by the people.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [7.47]: It is not surprising to me that the speech delivered by His Excellency contains very little. As a matter of fact, I have failed to notice any difference whatever between His Excellency's speech and those delivered by his predecessors. The Governor's speech is used by the Government of the day in an endeavour to impress Parliament and the people of the State with the belief that the administration is in safe hands, and that no change is desirable. Hon. members do not need reminding that His Excellency is in no way responsible for the compilation of the Speech with which Parliament is opened, but is merely the mouthpiece of Ministers. The general public, perhaps, are not so well aware of this.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I think they know pretty well.

Mr. MULLANY: The outstanding feature of the Speech is the impression it gives that, notwithstanding we are told we have stable administration, and that confidence has been restored to the people, yet the annual deficit is still there, and has been increased during the past 12 months to a greater extent than in any previous 12 months. Other members, possibly more competent than I, have criticised the Government and pointed out that the deficit is continually growing. I do not intend to go into detail, but the Minister for Mines, as chief spokesman for the Government, has endeavoured to explain the reasons for the drift during the past 12 months. To a large extent he was on sound ground when he pointed out that the loss on the railways was largely due to increased wages under an award of the Arbitration Court. He touched upon a point to which the general public do not pay sufficient attention when he said that the largely increased cost of commodities affects the administration of the State as a whole in much the same way as it affects all of us in our own households. Whilst agreeing with the Minister for Mines on that point, I think he failed to prove to the satisfaction of members that due care and thought has been given to, and sufficient check kept upon, the expendi-

ture in the various departments. On the contrary, I think the Minister's speech proved that on almost every occasion the Government are prepared to accept the decision of the heads of departments as to what expenditure is necessary.

The Minister for Works: Oh dear, no.

Mr. MULLANY: At all events that is my opinion. While responsible Ministers are prepared to accept the decision of departmental heads in matters of expenditure, the deficit will always be with us, and the revenue will never meet the expenditure. I am not speaking in any carping spirit, nor do I suggest the existence of anything dishonourable, but I think the replies given by the Minister for Railways to questions asked by the member for Cue (Mr. Chesson) concerning the acquiring of a printing machine from the "Sunday Times" Company eight years ago, and its recent disposal, clearly proved that Ministers are not keeping sufficient check on matters of this sort. The member for Cue asked what price had been paid for the Hoe printing machine, and for what sum it had been sold; and the Minister replied that the machine had been acquired from the "Sunday Times" Company by the Railway Department in 1912 at a cost of £5,800 and had recently been resold to the same company for £500. There is too great a discrepancy between those figures. The Minister, holding out the file, declared that no member of the Cabinet had known anything about the sale of the machine to the "Sunday Times" Company until the transaction was completed. I say that Ministers should have known all about it. I am not suggesting that there is anything wrong in the transaction. At the same time how did this huge discrepancy occur? We know that the cost of all commodities, particularly machinery, has increased enormously during the past eight years.

The Minister for Works: By pretty well 100 per cent.

Mr. MULLANY: Has this deal been fair to the State? Either far too much was paid for the machine when it was taken over, or, alternatively, it was resold to the company at far too low a price.

The Minister for Works: The machine is obsolete.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not think it is obsolete.

Mr. MULLANY: The Minister for Railways explained that advertisements offering this machine for sale were inserted in many newspapers in Australia in 1912. But he did not tell us that any attempt had been made to dispose of the machine since that date; indeed, he boasted that Ministers knew nothing about it. The Commissioner of Railways has very great powers, almost supreme powers, in the carrying on of the business of the railways; but as reasonable men we cannot be expected to accept the theory that, in the disposal of Government property acquired in the way this machine was acquired, the Commissioner of Railways should be the

sole judge. I say that Ministers should have known all about it.

Hon. P. Collier: The fact that the Commissioner afterwards submitted the transaction for the approval of the Minister shows that the Minister's approval was necessary.

Mr. MULLANY: I am making no charges against anyone, but I say that if departmental heads are to be permitted to deal with the property of the people of the State, the deficit will always be with us. Most members have read the poem entitled "The Man with the Hoe." Some years ago a prominent American artist painted a picture illustrating the subject of that poem. I believe the original picture was destroyed in the earthquake at San Francisco. Many members of this Assembly have seen reproductions of that picture, and know that in the countenance of the only figure in the picture, the man holding the hoe, all the worries and miseries of the world are concentrated. But I think that if the artist who painted that picture were asked to paint another picture, one illustrating the feelings of the man who now has possession of that Hoe machine, he would lend a very different expression to the countenance.

Mr. Johnston: It is the taxpayer who will wear the look of woe and misery.

Mr. MULLANY: I do not know whether the member for Cue is satisfied with the reply he has received; but, without making any charge against anybody, I certainly think this matter should be further inquired into so that the House and the country may have some idea of how the administration of public affairs is carried on. The discrepancy is too great between £5,800 for a machine eight years ago, and £500 for the same machine to-day.

Mr. Teesdale: The Government offered the machine everywhere.

Mr. MULLANY: I do not know whether they did. Inquiry would probably disclose that.

Mr. O'Loghlen: It is eight years ago since the Government offered the machine.

[The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Foley) took the Chair.]

Mr. MULLANY: Further inquiry is necessary to discover whether the assessors of eight years ago who put the price of £5,800 on the machine are wrong, or whether the people are wrong who now dispose of the same machine at the seemingly ridiculous price of £500, at which the Minister for Railways assures us, it has been sold. Turning now to the deficit, I consider that the time has arrived when all members of this Assembly, irrespective of party, should face the position fairly and squarely. To trace the history of our present very large deficit, it had its birth or origin or start in 1912; that is, as far as the official figures tell us. I am quite prepared to admit that official figures are not always accurate; but, so far as we

can see now, the deficit started in 1912 under the administration of the present Minister for Mines and Railways, who was then Premier and Treasurer in the Labour Government. During the first few months of his Premiership the hon. gentleman had the nickname "Happy Jack" applied to him. Not long afterwards, on account of the finances continuing to go backward, the term "Gone-a-Million Jack" was applied to the then Premier and present Minister for Mines and Railways. Things went on, and in 1916 a change of Government occurred, largely through members then sitting in Opposition attacking the administration of the Labour Government and charging them with incapacity to control the finances of the State. The late Hon. Frank Wilson thereupon took office as head of a Liberal Ministry, but still the deficit continued to grow. It continued to grow steadily under the administration of the Liberal Government. Then, in 1917, owing to various causes, among them the strenuous times which we were then experiencing and through which we are still passing, a Nationalist Government came into power with Sir Henry Lefroy as Premier. And still the deficit continued to grow. Last year we had another change of Government, when the man who had refused to take any part in the Nationalist Government, who stood absolutely out because he could not get quite all that he desired, was made Premier and Treasurer. Here we are at the stage when the present Premier took office. Notwithstanding that we have in power the member for Northam, who we are assured has restored the confidence of the people, the deficit continues to grow. It reminds me of the old song which described a man who had a very strong growth of hair upon his face, and whose whiskers continued to grow all the time, no matter what he did, or how he attempted to clip them. The deficit seems to grow just like that man's whiskers grew; and unless we are prepared to sit down and think of some way out, the deficit will entangle the State in such a way that eventually we shall be overwhelmed by it. The special point I wish to make is that the time has gone by when any party capital should be made out of the condition of our finances. In the first place we had a true blue, if I may so term it, Labour Government, under whose administration the present deficit first appeared. Following them, we had what may be termed a true blue Liberal Government; and still the deficit continued to grow. Thereupon we had the Nationalist Government under Sir Henry Lefroy, and the deficit continued to grow under that administration. To-day we have a Government under the leadership of the member for Northam. I do not know quite what term of description to apply to that Government, but still the deficit continues to grow. So that, even from a party point of view, no Government is more

blamable than another; and we members of this Assembly must be prepared—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No Government is more blamable than another, with this exception, that one Government was refused taxation, while another Government was granted it.

Mr. MULLANY: That is quite so, but I am not going to set about illustrating what one Government did or another Government did. I do not think the country is very much interested in what one Government did or another Government did. The fact that is plain to-day is that under every form of administration that is conceivable under the party system, under every change of Government that we have been able to think of, the finances have gone back and are still going back. We have arrived at a stage when party should no longer come in, when we must face the position and endeavour to find a way out of the State's financial difficulties. So far as this debate has proceeded, there has not been very much criticism, even from the Opposition benches, and certainly there has been no undue criticism; of the action of the Government with regard to the financing of the deficit. But, as a sort of interlude to the Address-in-reply debate, the leader of the Opposition, upon the second reading of the Supply Bill which was introduced by the Premier, took what is, at all events in my experience of this Chamber, the somewhat unusual course of discussing that Supply Bill at considerable length. He was perfectly justified in doing so, absolutely within his rights in doing so. But the point of the criticism which the leader of the Opposition directed at the present Government was that he had some doubt whether the House should grant the supply asked for, in view of the fact that the Government had extended a State trading concern and for that purpose had spent money without the authority of Parliament. The leader of the Opposition knows perfectly well that the Labour Government of which he was a member did exactly the same thing. But the special point which the hon. gentleman endeavoured to make was that the Labour Government had been very severely, and perhaps unfairly, criticised for their unauthorised expenditure. He sought, and as I think successfully, to convict the present Government of inconsistency inasmuch as they had done the very thing for which they, when sitting in Opposition, had condemned the Scaddan Government. Up to that point the criticism of the leader of the Opposition was perfectly just. But where I think the hon. gentleman failed was in that he did not express an opinion, and so far as I am aware he has not up to now expressed an opinion, whether the action of the present Government and also the action of the Scaddan Government in appropriating money, in one case for purchasing sawmills, in the other case for purchasing steamers,

was constitutional or not. I say again that the time has gone past when this Chamber should be used, as it has been used for the last eight or 10 years, simply for electioneering purposes. It was so used by members now occupying the Treasury bench, and it is now being so used by those sitting in Opposition; and the country is suffering at the present time.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a poor old argument. I admitted that the expenditure of the money was not unconstitutional. If the hon. member will read my speech in "Hansard," he will find that admission there.

Mr. MULLANY: I listened to the speech, but I did not hear that statement.

Hon. P. Collier: I said I did not agree that the action was unconstitutional. I merely contrasted the two actions.

Mr. MULLANY: Quite so. I did not quite follow the hon. member in that. He made the point that the present Government had done exactly what they had condemned when it was done by the Labour Government.

Hon. P. Collier: That was the point of my argument.

Mr. MULLANY: I am pleased to have that expression of opinion from the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P. Collier: It is in "Hansard." You will find it there.

Mr. MULLANY: I am pleased to hear that. I must have missed that statement while listening to the hon. member's speech. Turning now to the mining industry, let me refer to paragraph 7 of the Governor's Speech. The leader of the Opposition has already criticised that paragraph, and to a certain extent I agree with his criticism. The paragraph reads—

The position of the mining industry—which has played and is playing so big a part in the affairs of the State—is occasioning my advisers serious consideration. Difficulties have arisen amongst the mines chiefly responsible for the State's large gold production. The exploitation of the lower levels of these mines has been attended by increased costs and lower values, whilst the scarcity of labour and the shortage of and high price of fuel are causing anxiety. The declining premium on gold is a factor that also has to be taken into account. These matters are receiving the attention of the Government with a view to ascertaining what steps may be taken towards keeping down the costs of the requirements of this and other industries.

I want to know whether that paragraph conveys all that we are going to get to assist the mining industry? The paragraph tells us that "the position of the mining industry is occasioning my advisers serious consideration." Why, I remember perfectly well that we—other members and myself—as far back as three years ago, did our utmost to point out to the Government then

in power the serious position of the mining industry of this State. We pointed out then that the extremely high cost of commodities was hampering the great industry which has done so much for Western Australia. We have it in the Governor's Speech that the position is causing his advisers serious consideration. Have we not got to the stage when the country should be told what the Government propose to do to get over this most serious state of affairs? Have the Government really given the matter any consideration, or is it simply a platitude in the Speech? I regret that the Minister for Mines had not something to say, when addressing the House, as to the nature of this serious consideration. Upon what lines are the Government considering, and what do they intend to do to assist the gold mining industry? I do not agree with the contention of the leader of the Opposition and the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie), who have taken the view that this particular paragraph in the Speech has simply been put there to influence the judge in the Arbitration Court in a case that is now coming on. That was a narrow-minded and petty sort of view to take, and one that is certainly not worthy of the leader of the Opposition. That the position is serious there can be no doubt. I would tell the Government that but for the premium on gold, the price of which was fixed for so long at, I think £4 2s. 6d. an ounce, and is now £5 13s. according to the latest reports, gold mining would practically cease in this State. There is, indeed, no guarantee that this increase in the price of gold will continue to hold good. Something very much more than this platitude, that the position is giving the Administrators of the State serious consideration, is needed.

Hon. P. Collier: It is worrying the Minister for Mines very much, I am sure.

Mr. MULLANY: We want something more than that if the gold mining industry is to be kept going. We have had references to the developments at the new goldfield at Mt. Monger. I have no idea as to the value of this field. It is some 30 miles east of Kalgoorlie. In April last the Minister for Mines took a flying visit to the field, and was there two days in all. He visited Kalgoorlie, as well as the new find at Hampton Plains and Mt. Monger during those two days. He returned to Perth, and we saw his report published in the "West Australian." The report was headed, "Gold mining," "The new fields," "Minister for Mines impressed," "Mount Monger the best outside Kalgoorlie." This report was given after a two days' visit to those extensive fields which are now being prospected and which the leaseholders are endeavouring to open up.

Hon. P. Collier: He was at Mt. Monger for about two hours.

Mr. MULLANY: His whole trip only occupied two days. He visited Hampton Plains and all round those fields on that occasion. A gentleman holding such an extremely responsible position as that of Minister for Mines should have had a better

grasp of the position, as it existed there, than to have expressed any opinion as to whether it was the best or the worst field outside Kalgoorlie. The sequel to that the Minister should have foreseen. As a result of his statement cables were sent to England.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I was there at the time.

Mr. MULLANY: The name of the Minister for Mines was used there to boom this new Mt. Monger goldfield. Whether that was right or wrong, time alone will show. This is what the "West Australian" reports as having been said by the Minister:—

Speaking of his visit, the Minister said yesterday that the general feeling in Kalgoorlie was that there was to be an era of progress within a radius of from 50 to 100 miles of Kalgoorlie. That was due in his opinion in no small measure to the new method of prospecting. Most of the fields had been worked before, but fortunately for those at present engaged on the areas the work had been largely confined to the leaders and not to the lode. "As to the Mt. Monger field," the Minister continued, "it certainly looks the best thing I have seen outside Kalgoorlie, and impressed me very much regarding its possibilities. The developments, of course, are insufficient to permit one to express a definite opinion, but from instances of where holes have been sunk in the lodes, and from appearances on the surface, to that extent, at least, it seems to present the best prospect of anything outside Kalgoorlie."

These remarks were boomed by those who were interested, not only in the development of legitimate shows at Mt. Monger, but by those who were interested in outside blocks, in the way of trying to induce the general public to invest and speculate in the Mt. Monger field.

Hon. P. Collier: That was to be expected after a statement like that.

Mr. MULLANY: There is no question about that. This, however, did not suit those who were playing the same game at Hampton Plains. They took umbrage at the booming of another field on the part of the Minister, and they proceeded to get to work. A few days afterwards we saw in the "West Australian" the following:—"Mining news," "McCahon's Great Hope," "Melbourne investors abandon option," "A sensational cablegram," "Kalgoorlie, April 26th." The article under these headings contains the following:—

The option held by Messrs. William Orr, Gordon Lyon, and other Melbourne investors on McCahon's Great Hope lease at Mt. Monger has been abandoned. This is the mine spoken of so highly by the Minister for Mines (Mr. J. Scaddan) in a recent interview, and which, it is stated, was featured with the Lass o' Gowrie in a sensational cablegram published by the authority of the State Government in the London Press a week ago. The values disclosed by the sampling of the option-holders' representatives were much below those hinted at by Mr. Scaddan. In fact, where

ounces were supposed to be in abundance only a few dwts. were obtained.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Premier sent a cable Home counteracting the effect of that.

Mr. MULLANY: I am not concerned about the effect. I want to deal with what actually occurred in this State, and especially at Mt. Monger. Evidently, when the Minister for Mines saw what a storm these indiscreet remarks of his had raised, he became panic stricken. He thought to himself, he would have to get out of this somehow, and he would have a sampling of the Mt. Monger field. This accordingly was done. The Assistant Geologist, Mr. Blatchford, was sent up to sample the field. I happened to be at Mt. Monger at the time. Accompanying Mr. Blatchford was the Chief Mining Inspector of Kalgoorlie, Mr. Greenard, another inspector, Mr. Gourley, and another inspector, Mr. Phoenix. They were sent out to sample whatever pothole they could find at Mt. Monger in these early stages of its development, notwithstanding that the Minister in the interview in Perth had said that the developments there were so small, and that so little had been done, that no one could express a definite opinion as to the value. As one who has had considerable experience in prospecting, sampling and mining generally, I felt sorry that these departmental officers were sent up on such an errand. It is not fair to the officials to ask them to sample a series of potholes, covering two or three miles of country, and make a report upon the field generally.

Hon. P. Collier: And of course we got no results.

Mr. MULLANY: That is so.

Hon. P. Collier: We could not expect any.

Mr. MULLANY: We did get a report of a certain character and I have it here. It says, "Mining development," "Result of Government sampling," "Mt. Monger values," "No present sign of continuity." That is the gist of the report, which also contains a long string of geological terms of no practical value to the everyday prospector, let alone to the person who has no mining knowledge whatever. How could these officers expect to see any signs of continuity when the deepest shaft they were sampling was 30ft. in depth. We have the sequel to that published in the "Daily News" today—

"Lass o' Gowrie." A Mt. Monger correspondent of the "Kalgoorlie Miner" writes: Developments on the Lass o' Gowrie G.M. have been watched with considerable interest for some time. Obviously the policy adopted by the management, in the face of unwarranted adverse criticism, has been to allow development work to prove, on its merits, the continuity at depth of the gold deposits located on the surface. The Assistant Mining Engineer's official "opinion" that the gold would not live down caused incalculable injury to the young field of Mt. Monger. Geological reports of this character when proved to be erroneous should be subjected

to the severest censure, and the official responsible for such a forecast on a budding goldfield should be relieved of all the responsibility of reporting upon any future gold finds in the State.

Hon. P. Collier: That is foolish. It is not the fault of the officials.

Mr. MULLANY: That is so. This goes on to give the details of development work at something over 100 feet. I do not intend to read those details to the House. When I was reading from this article that the official responsible for such a report should be censured I heard the Minister for Works say "Hear, hear." The Minister responsible for sending these officials to sample the field under such conditions is the man who should be censured, and the man who is wholly and solely to blame, if blame is attachable to anyone.

The Minister for Works: I misunderstood you.

Mr. MULLANY: He is trying to find a way out.

Mr. Duff: He was not there long enough.

Mr. MULLANY: No man with a practical knowledge of mining, and possessing practical common sense, would come to Perth and make such a statement as the Minister for Mines made on that occasion. I do not altogether agree that a great amount of injury has been done to the mining industry there. If the gold is there these people have sufficient grip and perseverance to be able to get it out. Blame should not be attached to these departmental officials, and the Minister should never have made the statements he did, which led up to these men being sent there to do impossible jobs. They had no chance of doing their work properly because the field was quite undeveloped. I feel sorry for them, for they are practical men and should never have been sent out upon such a task.

The Minister for Works: I did not say they should be censured I said they would not inspect my gold mine.

Mr. MULLANY: I will put in an application for the job of mining expert, myself. The great question now largely exercising the public mind is that of industrial unrest, and there can be no doubt that it exists. We have heard members on both sides of the House offering solutions. I was sorry to hear the leader of the Opposition make the statement that the interests of employer and employee must always clash.

Mr. Pickering: Under existing conditions.

Mr. MULLANY: Under existing or other conditions. I agree with the leader of the Opposition in this view, that the direct interests of the employer and the employee in a particular industry must clash to this extent, that the employer wants to get all that he possibly can get out of the employee, and on the other hand the employee wants to get, and he is entitled to get, all he can for the labour which he sells to his employer. To that extent the interests of both

parties will clash, but we must all agree that there are wider interests. Take, for instance, Kalgoorlie or Boulder, or any mining town on the goldfields. There are men in those towns who have been employed in the surrounding mines for many years past. Those men have their homes in the towns.

Hon. P. Collier: They have their graves there, too.

Mr. MULLANY: They have, unfortunately. I know the disabilities they are labouring under, but whilst the industry is going to be continued, there is no clash in the interests of the employer and employee in this way, that whilst the employer's interest is that he wants the man to continue producing profits for himself, the employee has his interests there, he has his home and his family there, and if the mine should close down the interests of both the employer and the employee are lost. There is also to be considered the viewpoint of the prosperity of the State. Both employer and employee have an equal interest there. Notwithstanding that a man is selling his labour and whilst interests clash just there, they have the wider interest in common. The Arbitration Court has been very much criticised, and perhaps rightly so.

Mr. Davies: The Arbitration Act.

Mr. MULLANY: And the Arbitration Act. It is said that the Act is out of date. I remember when amendments were brought forward in 1912 the Act was claimed to be the most up to date and effective in the world. But even at that time the constitution of the court was criticised by Labour members supporting the Scaddan Government. They held the view that a judge of the Supreme Court was not necessarily the best fitted person to occupy the position of president of the court. That obtains to-day. I do not think that a judge is the only person capable of carrying out the duties of president of the court. Further than that, I believe that the system under which employers and employees have the right to nominate each one member of the court is also wrong. The Arbitration Court, to my mind, should be the same as any other court. To-day we have a judge as president and two partisans sitting with him. I am making no reflection upon the representatives of the employers or the employees who sit on that court. The gentlemen who have filled the positions in recent years were fully qualified to do so, but hon. members will agree that the president of the Arbitration Court from his very training and environment right through life cannot be expected to go into the details of industrial grievances which exist. He may be able to judge the value of evidence, but he cannot get down to detail, and he has no one to whom he can go for advice. I venture to say that if either the representative of the employer or the representative of the employee were to do anything that their nominees disagreed with, their term as members of the court would be cut short. The judge

is hampered because there is no one to whom he can go for advice, and we come down to this, that the president must decide for himself. I believe that an amendment could be made in that direction. Discussing arbitration brings us to the question of the cost of living and price-fixing. It is a fallacy to appoint price-fixing boards in Australia to fix a fair price or say what shall be a fair price for a commodity here, and at the same time claim that the producers of Australia have a right to the world's parity or the best price they can get. The member for Claremont (Mr. Duff) dealt with this subject earlier this evening. He referred to wheat, but there are other commodities that we could mention. Let me illustrate the position as it is to-day. We all know that abnormally high prices which are obtainable for various commodities throughout the world to-day are the direct result of conditions arising out of the war. Had the war not taken place these extremely high prices would not be obtaining. The farmers' representatives, or some of them, claim that the farmers are being robbed to a certain extent because they are not getting the world's parity of the wheat being used for local consumption in Australia to-day. I say they are not being robbed. It is at least only a small contribution towards the welfare of the community of Australia which they are making. This should go further. We have wheat for local consumption in Australia, and the farmers are not getting within 5s. a bushel of that which they could get if it were exported. But do they think they are fully entitled to that? I want to put forward this proposition: I have never been one to indulge in flag-flying or to use the soldier's return, or even while he was fighting, to make a point. But let me instance the position of two men, a returned Australian soldier, one whose pre-war occupation was the raising of wheat, and another—this, I believe, would be the most apt illustration—a gold miner. These two men left on absolute equality as Australian soldiers. They went away and we cheered them for going. We told them they were going to fight to keep the horrors of war away from Australia. Take the relative position of those two men now that they have returned and are following their pre-war occupations. The wheat grower is receiving a price for the commodity he is producing which he never dreamt of getting in pre-war days. When members of this Assembly went on what was termed Mr. Mitchell's business trip in the wheat areas last September, the Premier was able to announce to the farmers that they would be paid 5s. a bushel for their wheat at sidings.

Hon. P. Collier: And that was met with cheers everywhere.

Mr. MULLANY: Collectively and individually I have heard farmers say, "Now we are going to get 5s. for our wheat at sidings, we are all right. This will see us through." So far as the farmers were concerned that was all right. Contrast the

position of the returned soldier who was a miner before he went to the war and who has returned to his occupation of mining for gold.

Mr. Pilkington: Should he not get the world's parity for his gold?

Mr. MULLANY: I do not know what he should get, but do not forget that the miner does not sell the gold, it is the company that employs him that sells it. Without the shadow of a doubt, and the fact cannot be contraverted, that as a direct result of the conditions arising out of the war, the wheat grower on returning to Australia after fighting for his country is making more money than he ever dreamt of making, while the gold miner has to return to his employment and be satisfied with the wages he was receiving before he went away. The gold miner to-day is in a condition perilously close to starvation.

Mr. Hickmott: He can go on the land.

Mr. MULLANY: Of course they can all go on the land, and perhaps it would be better. But I am just contrasting the positions of the two men who have returned, the farmer and the gold miner. Both men have done their duty to Australia, but the one is getting a great deal more by the sale of his produce than he ever thought he would receive. If we are going to have industrial contentment, if we are to have a satisfied population in Australia, the kind of thing which I have related cannot go on.

Mr. Hickmott: We are paying much more for our labour.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. MULLANY: Quite so, and the same applies to gold mining.

Hon. P. Collier: It is being made up to you.

Mr. MULLANY: That is so, but I think the members of the Country party will admit that there is a good deal of justice in my contention. I say they are not entitled to get the world's full parity price for their produce, because it would mean that they would export the lot and starve the people of this State. I put this to the member for Pingelly (Mr. Hickmott) as a practical farmer. If he could get an abnormally high price for the fodder which I suppose he has on his farm to-day, would he be farming on sound practical lines if he sold the lot and allowed his working horses to starve?

Mr. Pickering: No, but you must remember what he has to pay for farming requisites.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. MULLANY: I apologise, Mr. Speaker, but I particularly wanted to address the members of the Country party on this point.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must address the members of the Country party through the Chair.

Hon. P. Collier: Your argument does not seem to appeal to them.

Mr. MULLANY: In my enthusiasm to drive the point home, I had to keep my eye on members of the Country party.

The Colonial Secretary interjected.

Mr. MULLANY: The Colonial Secretary, one of the most successful farmers in the State, has interjected, and perhaps I can speak to him and keep my eye on you, Mr. Speaker, at the same time. I would like to ask the Colonial Secretary if there is not a great deal of truth in the contention I have put forward. I would like to ask the Colonial Secretary, would he consider he was farming on sound lines if, because of abnormally high prices ruling, he sent the whole of his fodder to market and allowed his horses to starve? The Colonial Secretary knows he could not do that. Yet he, a responsible Minister of the Crown, helping to carry on the administration of affairs in this State, says it would be sound because, in the interests of himself and his constituents, if they can get this increased price, which is blood money—that is what it amounts to—they are entitled to it and the other workers may starve.

The Colonial Secretary interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. P. Collier: He does not like that.

Mr. O'Loghlen: It is good medicine such as he does not get as a rule.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MULLANY: Take our mining industry. Can we continue the mining industry under these conditions? The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) stated the other night that, under present conditions, the men working in Kalgoorlie must, to do justice to them, receive £1 per shift. I would like to see them all get £1 a shift or more, if the industry could stand it, but we all realise that the mining industry could not carry such an increase.

The Colonial Secretary: Do you agree that the farmer should have £1 a shift?

Mr. SPEAKER: Hon. members must keep order or I am afraid some of them will be getting a shift.

Mr. MULLANY: Yes, the farmer should have £1 a shift if he could get it. I am serious on this point without wishing to infer that the farmers are unduly selfish. The wheat-growers are not alone concerned. We have butter producers, or let us take another commodity—leather. Can anyone tell me that the cost of the production of leather has gone up in recent years in proportion to the increased price of that commodity? We know perfectly well it has not. While we have arbitration laws, and while the worker has to go to the Arbitration Court, and the basis on which the court works is the cost of living, so that the worker can keep himself fit and able to do his work, we would be putting no undue handicap upon the producers if we said we were prepared to give them a fair and reasonable profit on the cost of producing their commodity for Australian requirements, at which price they must supply; but that they could get whatever was

possible for the surplus in the outside markets of the world.

Mr. Pickering: But what about the things the farmers have to buy?

Mr. MULLANY: We have no control over the cost of commodities which have to be imported into this State.

Mr. Johnston: What about locally manufactured machinery?

Mr. MULLANY: I wish to drive home this point. Members talk about industrial unrest. Can we expect anything else? Every member of this Assembly knows perfectly well that wages men in this State, and probably all over Australia, are receiving wages which do not leave a sufficient margin of comfort for themselves, their wives and their families. That is the position as it exists to-day. There is no possible doubt about that. As many members know, I do not approve of many of the methods adopted by the workers and the unions in these days in seeking to redress their grievances, but undoubtedly the grievances do exist. Possibly the point to which I am referring could not be effectively dealt with by the State Government, but the Federal Government could have done more.

Mr. Pickering: Hear, hear!

Mr. MULLANY: And I believe the Prime Minister of Australia would have done more if he had been assured of the support of the Country party.

Mr. Johnston: Poor Country party!

Mr. MULLANY: The Country party have entered politics and said they were going to be the dominant party in politics in Australia, and therefore they must be prepared to take their share of the responsibility. I do not wish to transgress any further, but as a citizen of this State, one who has lived here for 24 years, I wish to emphasise that we are not going to get stable industrial conditions in Australia while we admit world's parity prices for commodities purchased in Australia. That is the whole point. The price-fixing commissions are a farce. As the member for Pilbara pointed out, there never was a time when the producer in Australia got a bigger percentage over the cost of his commodity than he is getting to-day. What is the use of appointing price-fixing commissions in Perth, in Melbourne or anywhere else, when they are not allowed to work on the cost of producing the commodity? What is the use of saying that men in Perth must sell wheat at 7s. 9d. a bushel, or meat at 6d. per lb., whatever might be a fair and reasonable price based on the cost of production, if someone else can come along and, taking advantage of abnormal conditions existing elsewhere, offer 2d. or 3d. per bushel or per lb. more for the commodity and export it instead of it being made available for local consumption? We wish to see, our people well fed and well clothed. If we are going to take as a basis for prices here the world's parity for commodities produced in Australia, it is most unfair, and the farmers' representatives are taking a very short-sighted view if they think they are going to

collect these enhanced prices, and at the same time enjoy industrial stability and content.

Mr. Johnston: What basis would you substitute?

Mr. MULLANY: If the world's price fell below the cost of producing the commodity in Australia, I think we should be prepared to guarantee that the quantity required for the consumption of Australia would pay a fair and reasonable profit on the cost of production. The Colonial Secretary, like everyone else, desires to see stable conditions, so that we can all settle down to our work, but we cannot expect to get stability while our producers attempt to charge world's parity prices for commodities which the workers of this State are producing and which they must have in order to subsist.

Mr. ROCKE (South Fremantle) [8.56]: I am not able to discover why the dominant note of this debate should be one of hopelessness. It appears to me that if the view taken from within Parliament is one of hopelessness, it cannot help the people outside who are responsible for bringing the State out of the difficulty in which we find it to-day. It must reflect upon them and they will receive no inspiration. I believe, however, that if we accept the view of the economic conditions of this State as they exist, and take into consideration that this State is one of vast area and in need of very careful administration, we might look forward to the future as one full not of dependency but of hope. I believe in this State and I believe that it is going to be one of the finest States of the Commonwealth, but I am not able to see that development as it should take place can be accomplished by showing a credit on the right side of the ledger all the time. Like governmental operations, criticism is apt to follow along a defined track which quickly becomes a rut. To my mind the failure of Governments, as of individuals, is due to the inability to take a broad view of a public question as it arises. If we take note of the administration by various Ministers representing various Governments, we will find that very much attention is paid to matters of comparatively small importance, while matters of greater importance are sometimes given consideration which is lacking both in sincerity and ability. As proof of what I have just said, we might throw our minds back over the space of a few years and try to ascertain what really has been done. The conditions of to-day, as has been pointed out many times during this debate, are due to circumstances over which the general public have no control. These are circumstances which have arisen out of new economic conditions, which are influencing not only this part of the continent of Australia but the whole world in general. For instance, there is the depreciation of the currency, over which we have no control. But there are factors assisting in the opposite direction to that in which we would have events trend. One of these, and not the

least, is the fact that people deal largely in non-essentials, and thus play into the hands of the profiteers. Many things which are not essential could be done without, and because we do not do without them we create a flow of money which enlarges and consequently cheapens the amount in circulation, and the more plentiful it is, the less will it buy. Stress has been laid on the position of the railways, and as a remedy taxation on unimproved land values has been proposed. I believe in that taxation, but I am not able to see how it is possible to prevent the owners of city properties from passing the tax on. If this tax could be applied so that it would bring into productive occupation land which now lies idle, the problem of the railways would be partially solved. Some economists say that a land tax cannot be passed on, but for my part I cannot see why.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It has been passed on.

Mr. ROCKE: I think the problem of the railways was lost sight of a few years ago when the electric power house was established at East Perth. That plant should have been established at the Collie coalfields. The loss of current along the journey would be more than outweighed by the loss we have in the cost of haulage, and the very great loss to the industry by the dehydration of the coal.

Hon. P. Collier: That question was carefully investigated, and the authorities were against your contention.

Mr. ROCKE: I believe the leader of the Opposition is right in saying that it was considered, but unless my memory is at fault the contract was signed before the report was considered.

Hon. P. Collier: No, we investigated the question, and got all the advice we could before action was taken.

Mr. ROCKE: I am glad to hear that, but I am still of opinion that had a large distributing station been established at the pit's mouth, we should have been very much advanced in respect of the railways, because we could have electrified the whole of the metropolitan-suburban system.

Hon. P. Collier: We have power now to electrify the system right up to Chidlow's Well.

Mr. ROCKE: I am pleased to hear it, because the electrification of the suburban railways in Melbourne is proving a great success, and it would be even a greater success here, because the Collie coal industry would benefit considerably.

Mr. Pilkington: The only cheaper system in the world is, I think, that in Sydney.

Hon. P. Collier. And as consumption in cheaper, our system will become cheaper still.

Mr. ROCKE: Ministers in charge of departments are to a large extent dependent for advice and direction on the permanent heads. Take the matter of the steamer "Penguin," which was brought under notice in this Chamber in a previous session. She was converted into a trawler. Unfortu-

nately she was sent south and was lost. I am sorry she was lost so quickly, because I would rather have had my original contention proved in another manner. I contended that the ship was not suitable for the work she was sent to do although over £3,000 was spent in reconditioning her.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Was she insured?

Mr. ROCKE: I do not know. When I mentioned the matter last session, the Colonial Secretary said there was no intention of sending the boat south, that she was to go north into smooth water. However, she was sent south to her doom in trying to accomplish a task for which she was not suited. We have a reformatory prison established at Rottneest in accordance with the Act passed last session. The intention of the Legislature was that men who had become inmates of the Fremantle prison and classed as criminals should be given an opportunity for working out their own salvation in circumstances which would be helpful to them. I do not know how much money has been spent at Rottneest, but the total result is that men are sent there to be taught how to quarry stone. That is not going to elevate any man. In New Zealand they are introducing the Borstal system, under which men are sent into country districts to be taught farming, so that they may see some result for their work. To send men to Rottneest to teach them to quarry stone is reducing a very great reform to a paltry farce. Now let me give an instance in which expenditure is attacked in a way which brings suffering to indigent people without materially helping us out of our financial difficulties. A little time ago a Mr. Simpson was appointed business manager to inquire into departmental operations. One of his first acts towards squaring the ledger was to go to Fremantle and cut off the bread and meat supplies of indigent aged people in receipt of Commonwealth or invalid pensions. The pension amounts to about 15s. per week. The Colonial Secretary, in reply to questions asked the week before last, informed the House that this was a result of the activities of Mr. Simpson. Mr. Simpson has thus proved himself a man incapable of human feelings and absolutely unsuited for the position to which he has been appointed. The issue of extras, such as milk and jam, to widows with little children has been stopped. It is one of the cruellest things I have ever heard of. One woman was told that she was too well-dressed to require assistance. When I inquired into the facts of the case I found that she was a very respectable woman who lost her husband some years ago and has since struggled to keep her little home together and take great care of her two small children, thus making of them good citizens. Her being well dressed was brought about in this way: She told me she had a serge frock which she had worn for eight years. Being handy with the needle she had pulled it to pieces, turned it and rebuilt it, and so was able to appear on the street, and at the police court for her

dole of charity, in respectable garb. Had that woman wasted her money around the hotels and neglected her home and little children, she would have been considered a fit and proper person for assistance from the Government. On the 11th of this month the Colonial Secretary, replying to a question by me, said that no charge was made at the Fremantle hospital for the medical certificates which are now demanded before people can obtain Government relief.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That demand by the department is a ridiculous one.

Mr. ROCKE: It is, but I am told that it is enforced. The Colonial Secretary said he had been in communication with Dr. Stubbs, who said that no such charge had been made. I have here a sworn declaration made by the woman in question and dated noon Tuesday of this week, in which she declares that Dr. Stubbs at the Fremantle hospital told her that the charge of 2s. 6d. was payable to him for a medical certificate which was necessary to enable her to obtain assistance from the Government on account of the ill health of her husband. This declaration is sworn to by a woman thoroughly conversant with the penalties attached to the making of a false statement. The first certificate that woman secured was prior to the strike. Up to the time of the public service strike she received 24s. She then received a letter, dated the 15th August, which reads as follows:—

Kindly call at the court house, Fremantle, on Tuesday afternoon—

That was last Tuesday. The letter continues—between 2 o'clock and 3.30 o'clock for a further payment of 32s. The medical certificate from Dr. Williams has been received and your case is now forwarded to the Colonial Secretary for approval. Up to 12 o'clock on Tuesday of this week no money had come forward, although this letter was written on the 16th of this month. I do not think the Charities Department is entirely to blame in this matter; I believe that on inquiry the fault will be found in the Treasury Department, where very much delay is caused in the sending out of cheques to people who are sadly in need. Four certificates have been sent, and this was the response: Twenty-four shillings before the strike and nothing since, or at all events not until after Tuesday of this week. The woman has three children, her husband is an invalid suffering from heart strain and lung trouble, and is subject to fits. I understand that, last Monday, Dr. Williams issued a certificate to cover three months. So it will be seen that very much attention is being paid to these matters which are small to the Government but which really mean a great deal to those people who are suffering. The Colonial Secretary said that it was possible for these aged persons to apply to one of the two homes for admission if they were not able to obtain sufficient food with their pensions. But I would like to ask any Minister, or any member of this Chamber,

whether it is likely that any person would yield up his home, "be it ever so humble," if he was able to obtain a crust of bread. Would anyone, if he was able to avoid it, enter a Government institution? I say, no. Everyone adheres to his own home as long as he possibly can, rather than enter a Government institution. Now, if greater attention were paid to departmental administration, especially in the public service, much saving would result. I believe that the public service can be reconstructed without inflicting injustice on even one individual. There are men in the service to-day who are not receiving an adequate sum in return for the services they render. There are others in the service who are not giving a fair return to the State. I think the public service should be reconstructed from bottom to top, and so started on a new course. It is only fair that civil servants should give to the State a proper return for the money they receive. Those who are giving a fair return should be paid in accordance with the services they render. It is said that production is the means of overcoming the drift. But production is dependent upon certain factors, and one of those factors is continuity of industrial activity, which in turn is dependent upon the contentment of the producing class. If we are going to have a contented producing class, which is essential to proper production, the first thing necessary is to make the line between want and the ability to obtain necessities a broader one. For instance, if a man has to spend all his high wages in order to obtain the necessities of life, that is not going to make for contentment in the producing class. How to bring about the alteration is, I admit, a problem. Our Prices Regulation Commission cannot deal with production which takes place outside the State. It cannot deal with production even in the other States of Australia. So how the position is going to be remedied by a State Price Fixing Commission I am unable to say. The decision of men and women to-day appears to be that it is hardly worth while to struggle through life and accomplish only the staving off of starvation. A better distribution of the fruits of labour is essential to the well-being of the people, and I believe that one of the chief factors responsible for the high cost of commodities to-day is the middleman. I am of opinion that if the middleman could be abolished we should see the prices of commodities tumbling down. If there is any phase of our industrial organisation to which consideration could be given by the Government regardless of what the political opinions of the members of the Government may be, it is the task of distribution. We find men in the distributing class making huge fortunes. And when I speak of the distributing class I do not mean the retailer; I mean the man who stands between the producer and the retailer, and who does

his work entirely on paper. I recently met in Flinders-lane, Melbourne, men who were making from £150 to £200 per week merely by buying and selling goods that they never saw, goods upon which they never once set eyes. At each turnover the cost of those commodities was increased—not their value, but their cost. We find the same thing in our midst as regards the buying and selling of land. Every day land is changing hands and increasing its cost but not its value. It fails to increase its value, simply because nothing is produced.

Mr. Johnston: Some of it goes down in price.

Mr. ROCKE: Very rarely nowadays. Until land is made to produce something, it has no right to be given an enhanced price.

The Minister for Works: How are you going to stop it? If you want a piece of land and must have it, you will pay any price for it.

Mr. ROCKE: I do not know how it is going to be stopped. I have been merely drawing attention to what is going on.

Mr. Teesdale: How are the seller and the purchaser to come together if there is no middleman, no agent?

Mr. ROCKE: If there is a seller and if there is a buyer, the one will find the other without the assistance of any middleman. I always contend that the middleman renders a service which is superfluous.

The Minister for Works: You consider that the middleman is getting too much.

Mr. ROCKE: Far too much, all the cream, from whichever angle one looks at the matter.

The Minister for Works: But the middleman is absolutely necessary in some cases.

Mr. ROCKE: I consider that the Government ought to take over that phase of our industrial activities. I believe it is a function that the Government could easily carry out.

Mr. Johnston: Act as commission agents?

Mr. ROCKE: Call it what you like. During the war period it was urged that men should be prepared to lay down their lives for their country. After our soldiers returned, the repatriation problem came along; and now we want land on which to settle our soldiers. High prices have had to be paid for that land. Now, if it was right for a man to risk his life for his country—and I say that it was right—it would be equally right for the man who stopped at home and retained his acres to give so many of those acres towards the scheme for the repatriation of the men who made it possible for him to hold his land. I think that is a fair proposition, and although I do not know that it has been tried by any Government I fail to see that any injustice would result from it to any man holding land.

The Minister for Works: Would you apply that principle to other descriptions of property as well?

Mr. ROCKE: No, I would not say that. But we have so much land in Western Aus-

tralia that is not productive; and my suggestion at least offers a means of bringing such land into production.

Mr. Johnston: I call attention to the state of the House.

[Bells rung, a quorum formed.]

Mr. ROCKE: Speaking of bringing land into productive use, I wish to congratulate the Government upon having purchased the Peel estate, which for very many years has been lying idle and almost useless. I understand it is the intention of the Government to use that land in the first place for the purpose of repatriation. That is a scheme which I think will prove a payable proposition from the outset. During a tour I made of that portion of the country a little time ago, I was surprised to find that the land was of such a high productive value. With the construction of a light railway through it, I believe an immediate return of the initial cost would be assured. I am told there is sufficient timber on the land to make a light railway payable even from the aspect of firewood traffic alone; and I believe that if all that country were settled it would be a means of reducing the outflow of money from this State in the purchase of various lines of produce. If we could stop that outflow by building up a producing community in our coastal areas, a step in the right direction would have been taken, a step which would assist very materially to overcome the financial difficulty which now exists. Federal extravagance has been touched on by various speakers. Such extravagance is to be expected in existing circumstances. We have the duplication of services, for which the Commonwealth is entirely responsible. I am of opinion that if the various services can be amalgamated the State is the right medium for rendering the service which is required. I feel that the Commonwealth Government, although they are always speaking piously against extravagance in governmental operations, are entirely responsible for the extravagance that exists. If they would exercise just a little forethought and common sense, the difficulty could be overcome, and this State, as well as the other States which are partners in the Commonwealth, would receive material benefit. There is one other item I wish to touch upon, and that is the stoppage of waste in whatever quarter it may be found. The most serious waste in this State is, I believe, that which is caused by the liquor traffic. I have noticed that whenever this subject is mentioned a smile is to be seen upon the faces of members. But when the question is looked upon in the light of an economic problem, I fail to see that it is a joking matter. Again, I fail to see that it is a joking matter when we realise that nearly 2¼ millions of money are absorbed by that traffic, from which very little return is received except in the shape of additional burdens to be carried and increased taxation to be borne from that cause. I cannot see that it is a joke when we find this traffic, which is licensed by the Government, imposing on the people of the State an extra bur-

den in the care of those in sickness and in poverty, some of the poverty and the sickness being undoubtedly caused by the liquor traffic. And then there are the large institutions which have to be kept up partly as an effect of the same traffic. I do not think it is a joking matter when we realise that little children are prevented, as an effect of this traffic, from obtaining a fair start in life.

Mr. O'Loghlen: There is no one joking about it to-night.

Mr. ROCKE: The other day I went through the Government Receiving Home and saw the shocking sight of little children only a few months old suffering from syphilis, which it is reasonable to suppose would not have been in their systems had it not been for the liquor traffic—a medium for the spread of that disease. I repeat, the traffic is licensed by the Government; but we do not know whether it has the sanction of the public, and that is all I ask in this matter. I ask that that question be put before the people in a proper way, and that the people be allowed to express their opinion as to whether the traffic should continue or should cease. I think that is a fair proposition. We have the 1911 Act, which will be put into operation next year; but it is absolutely useless for the purpose of ascertaining the opinion of the people. After all, the opinion of the people should be of paramount importance, and receive every consideration.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you think it is absolutely useless?

Mr. ROCKE: I think so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you not think it is useful when it sets out whether new licenses are to be granted or not?

Mr. ROCKE: The Act provides that a certain percentage of electors must attend the poll. Those who are supporting the traffic only have to stop away from the poll to gain their ends. In any other question that is put before the people those who are either for it or against it have to attend the poll and record their votes. In this connection we find that the opposite holds good, that one side need only stay away from the poll to gain the day. I hope the Government will be fair enough to give consideration to this measure, and amend the Act in the direction asked for and desired by a large section of the people. Whether or not it is carried into effect depends on the people. If the people wish it to continue it must continue, but let the people have a fair chance of saying what shall be done in the matter.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [9.31]: It is now nearly 30 years since I entered this House. I am here now to speak through you, Sir, to hon. members and not to the country. I regret there are not more members in the Chamber. It would give me more pleasure—I am sure hon. members would like to give me pleasure—if there were more present here, though it may not give hon. members the same pleasure to listen to me. The Address-

in-reply is a useful means of letting off some of the steam, which has been generated during the recess by the fire of politics. Consequently, I do not believe that the Address-in-reply debate is a waste of time. We have a greater range of subjects to traverse on such an occasion than we have in addressing ourselves to any other motion that comes before us. We should all desire, therefore, to retain this old-fashioned procedure. I know that some hon. members opposite think I am too anxious to retain old-fashioned principles, but in my opinion this old-fashioned idea of discussing things generally on the Address-in-reply is a good one. The first question to which the Government devoted themselves in the Speech, which they placed in the hands of His Excellency the Governor, was an expression of pleasure and of pride in the fact that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales had visited Australia. I am one of those—and I think it is inherent in all human beings—who think we must have something to lay hold of to keep us together and to keep the Empire together. The Prince of Wales was here as heir apparent to the throne of the Empire. He came to see the people of this country, and expressed to them his gratitude on his departure for the manner in which he was received here. The King is the symbol of our nationhood. Behind the King is something we cannot see, but something we all feel. Behind the King is the soul of the Empire. In the past there have been good kings and bad kings, but still behind that symbol is something greater and grander than that, namely, the emblem of our Empire, and the feeling that all humanity requires something which will embrace all and keep all together. For that reason we ought to rejoice that the heir apparent has been able to visit Australia. From this subject my mind comes to dwell upon the question of the late deplorable situation which arose in the civil service of this State. The civil service should be alongside the throne. They should be as much a part of the government of the country as is the army of the country. I was born in the civil service of this country, and never in any part of the Empire have I known of a civil service losing their prestige in the same way that they have recently done in Western Australia. I cannot believe for one moment that the majority of the civil servants of this country were disloyal to the Government. They were led away, and the young men perhaps followed those who were prepared to rise in rebellion.

Hon. P. Collier: I think it was the young men who were the leaders, and the old ones who were following.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: Young men do not make the best of leaders. Hon. members opposite know full well that it is almost as difficult to get a civil servant out of the service under our Public Service Act as it is to get a sinner out of purgatory. Although the Government are unable, under the law

of the land, to take direct action, and although in the face of that attack they were prevented from taking this action, members of the civil service, who ought to be beside the Government at all times, took the most deplorable step that has ever been taken by any civil service in the Empire. I feel ashamed of them, ashamed that they should have taken up a position of that sort. They ought to set a good example to the other workers in this State, but they set a bad example, and I hope the time will come when they will see that they must alter their ways, and that they must feel it is their duty to hold to the Government just as it is the duty of the army to remain alongside the Government in times of difficulty. From this subject I am led on to think that we will never have proper government in this country, or an economical government, until the civil service are housed more closely together. That is one of the things I always had in mind when I occupied the position of Premier. I regret that owing to the exigencies of the times I was not able to do anything in that direction. Our civil service and public departments of State are scattered all over the city. I am bound to say there are some Ministers here who, if asked where a certain department was, could not give the necessary information. I asked a Minister the other day where the Fisheries Department was.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You would have a job to find it even if you were told where it was.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: I was told that it was opposite the police station. I went there this morning and was told that it was somewhere buried behind the Colonial Secretary's Department. I found it eventually, but am certain it would have been difficult for any hon. member to find it unless he got someone to point it out to him.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is in a lane at the rear of old St. George's Hall.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: We will never have effective or economical government unless the offices of the civil service can be brought together and housed in one great building. If that were done we should not require to have one little accountancy department for every tiddly-winking branch of the service. We should be able to have one big accountancy department dealing with all the accounts of the public service. It would be the means of enabling officers in the service to do their work, without having to gravitate all over Perth when they wanted to discuss matters with each other.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We had plans drawn and estimates made out, but the House rejected them.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: A lot of time is lost by officers of the department going to other departments to secure information they require. An officer of the Water Supply Department in James-street may want to consult the Crown Law Department, and he has to come all the way across Perth to do so. When people come from the country to do

business with the public offices they have the utmost difficulty in finding where they are. If we had all our Government officers housed in one great building people would know where to go in order to get the information they required. This afternoon when I was coming to the House I met a high official of the Agricultural Department, who had doubtless been to the Works Department to get some information. That should be unnecessary. There are some officers in the service who, perhaps, will not be too expeditious when making these little journeys.

Mr. Pickering: It is a temptation for them.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: It is a bad thing. Temptation creates character. But these temptations are not always made use of in that way. I hope the time will come when we will be able to do something more. During my term of office we were paying £5,000 a year for the rent of buildings, and this money would have paid interest on £100,000.

Mr. Pickering: It would take more than that to provide the necessary accommodation.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: The money for the building of the offices would not be going out of the country, but would remain here.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You must blame Parliament and not the Government for that.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: It would not only remain here, but would be of great advantage in the economical management of our public offices. Our financial position is certainly one which warrants the gravest anxiety. I am not one of those who consider that we should do nothing simply because our financial position is a difficult one. This country cannot be developed without the expenditure of money. I have often been twitted for holding the view that production is the great work this country should have before it, that production is the only thing that can bring Western Australia into such a position that will enable the State to straighten its finances. There is no other way of doing it. Everything should be done to encourage production. We must have our means of communication, so that production may be carried on as easily as possible. Moreover, we must endeavour to make the country more attractive to those who have to settle in it. The people in the country are not satisfied to lead the lives that they were accustomed to lead 40 or 50 years ago. They require something better, and it is right that they should do so. In these modern days a farmer requires more comfort, and he also needs better means for getting about than he did years ago.

Mr. Pickering: He wants telephones, too.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: What I want to see is every farmer in the possession of a motor-car.

Mr. Lutey: And a flying machine.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: I think the farmer will be quite satisfied to remain on the earth. The motor-car would not be required for joy riding; it would be of great use on the farm, and would enable the owner

to see his neighbours more frequently. Years ago a farmer could not move about and mix with his neighbours. Mankind wants that. Man is a gregarious animal and likes to get about, and mix with his fellow beings. Consequently, I would like to see the facilities of transit increased in every possible way. The district I represent is one of the finest in the State, but of late years it has been looked upon almost as a foreign country. I am safe in saying that the people on the land in that district, by their taxes, pay interest on the expenditure of all the public money in the district. I do not think any other district in Western Australia can make a similar boast. Hon. members talk about taxing the land and of that being the panacea for all ills. But let me point out that the people who hold areas on the Midland railway line have paid for the enhanced value of that land, enhanced by reason of the fact that a railway runs through it. They have paid up to £3 an acre for it, while in other parts of the State it has been possible to get land for between 10s. and £1 an acre. We require to have some assistance to further develop that part of the State. The Midland line is the only one that runs through that part of the country, and there are people who are growing wheat 25 miles away from it. The Labour Government some years ago expressed their intention of constructing other railways, recognising that it was not right that people should be compelled to farm under such big disadvantages. Of late years a railway running parallel with the Midland line has been constructed into the heart of one of the finest districts in Western Australia, and from which district an enormous amount of wheat can be produced. I sincerely hope that the present Government will continue the Bolgart extension, which is now in the middle of a sandplain. The extension, if carried out, would help considerably to make the whole line pay. I know, however, that this is not an isolated case. There are numbers of such instances in the State where the settlers are in a similar position. The hon. member who leads the Country party represents a district many of the farmers in which live a considerable distance from the railway, and he too has been anxious to see the railway further extended to reach those people. I hope that the hon. member will be able to go to those people before long and tell them that the construction of the line will shortly be taken in hand. For works of this description, however, we must have money. But we must not close our windows and declare that we shall not do anything more. That would be a suicidal policy to follow in Western Australia. I admit we have a big burden of indebtedness, but I have great confidence in the country and believe that if we do not continue the policy we have followed in recent years we shall stop progress. Unfortunately, we have not the population we should have. I agree with the member for North-East Fremantle that there is a doubt as to whether people can be induced to come from the Old Country to Western Australia. Those are the

people I would like to see come here as immigrants, and I hope they may after all come here to help us to develop this far-off dominion of the Empire as it should be developed. Unless Australia is more thickly populated than is the case at the present time, it will be a menace to the Empire. Surely hon. members do not seriously advocate that when a man is not improving his property it should be taken from him, that he should be forced to disgorge it so that someone else might make use of it. When we apply this to the outside world then it will come home to us. The world was not made for one section of the people, it was made for humanity as a whole, and there are countries which are so filled with people that they no longer have the elbow room that they require. They see a country here undeveloped and sparsely populated which would be capable of settling a hundred million people and they may say, "We will force the holders of that country to disgorge it, so as to allow us to go there and populate it with some of our teeming millions." The future of this country depends on work and increasing our population by immigration. To wait for that to be brought about by a natural process will be dangerous. I am looking to the time when people will be encouraged to come to this country to help us develop it and to fill its waste spaces so as to make it, instead of a menace, a help to the Empire. The member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany) considers that the wheat growers should contribute something towards the rest of the community. Why should the men on the land be selected for that? The community have the advantage that there are people who are able to produce wheat with which to make bread, the bread that is required. In some countries they cannot produce that wheat to make the bread that is wanted to sustain life. Here we have it, and to say to the farmers, whom we want to encourage, that they must contribute towards the maintenance of the remainder of the community, is a strange proceeding. Why, they contribute towards the maintenance of the whole of the community. Not only do the farmers do that but those engaged in the primary industries contribute towards the support of the remainder of the community, and it is most ungenerous on the part of people who live in the towns to make the demand that the farmers should supply wheat at a price below the world's parity.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What is the world's parity?

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: It is the price of the commodity in London less the freight and insurance and the cost of getting it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is the London parity; I want to know the world's parity.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: London is the world.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Wheat in London is 95s. a quarter, that is 12s. a bushel.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: Wheat is cheaper here than in any other part of the world. In South Africa they were buying wheat recently for 25s. a bushel. In Belgium the Government tried to induce the people to grow wheat by offering a guarantee of 10s. a bushel for it, but the people there found it paid better to grow flax, and they ploughed up the wheat and put flax in instead.

Hon. P. Collier: That is no argument. It is not a wheat producing country.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: I see no reason why the producers in this State should not get what is obtained for the produce in the Old Country less the cost of getting it there.

Hon. P. Collier: What about when the world's parity goes right down, say, to 3s. a bushel?

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: If it goes down to 3s., the unfortunate farmer will have to suffer.

Hon. P. Collier: No, we guarantee him a minimum of 5s. 6d.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: I have not heard anything about that.

Hon. P. Collier: We are doing it. You cannot have it both ways.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: Some hon. members might argue that, when we have had times, the Government will guarantee the farmer a little more than he would get in the outside markets.

Hon. P. Collier: We are doing it still.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: I do not think that is likely, and I think the farmer is too wary to trust to anything of that kind.

Hon. P. Collier: If we fix a reasonable minimum, we are entitled to fix a maximum.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: One hon. member contrasted the difference in the position of a returned soldier who went on the land and the position of a returned soldier who engaged in mining. The man who produced wheat might get a good price for it and he ought, according to the hon. member, give something to the soldier who engaged in mining and did not receive so much. I do not think human nature will submit to that. Moreover, I wonder whether the returned soldier, who went prospecting and made a good discovery and sold his mine for a very large amount, would be prepared to hand over some of his profits for the benefit of other returned soldiers.

Hon. P. Collier: I think that was a very shallow argument.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: It is not human nature.

Hon. P. Collier: And not logical either.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: I do not think we are likely to arrive at such a position as that. It is not my intention to detain the House at any length, but I wished to take the opportunity to say a few words on the Address-in-reply, because I realise that it affords a useful means to ventilate our views in gen-

eral on the condition of the country. The position of Western Australia should not make us depressed so far as the future is concerned. The outlook is bright. During the time I had the honour of presiding over the Cabinet, we were passing through one of the most distressful times this country has ever experienced. As soon as the war was over, a great change came about, and with the cessation of hostilities came better seasons and certainly prices have been very considerably higher. When we remember that the revenue of this country last year exceeded that of the previous year by nearly a million pounds, it surely must show that there is something going on in this State to place it on the up-grade. Although the Government always take to themselves the credit for everything of this sort—I know my late chief, Sir John Forrest, used always take credit for the good seasons—

Hon. P. Collier: Wise Governments always do.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: Quite so. I am not here to give credit to the Government altogether for the fact that the revenue increased by nearly a million pounds last year. The settlement of returned soldiers, I understand, has gone on satisfactorily. There is a number of them in my own district, and they are doing good work and settling down with vigour to their undertakings, and I believe they will be successful. But I would like to point out that the Government of which I was the head did a lot of the spade work in connection with the settlement of returned soldiers, and got no credit for it. We did not go about the country advertising the fact. I did not have a newspaper at my back to advertise the fact.

Hon. P. Collier: That was your weak point.

Mr. Pickering: You ought to have had a few shares in it.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: Members might appreciate the fact that we did a considerable amount of the spade work required for the settlement of returned soldiers. The point is that the soldiers were not returning at that time. I made arrangements with the Federal Government for the money required, and it is that money which is being worked on now. I am sure we all wish the returned soldiers every success and I believe those men who have taken to the land have had a training which will be most useful in sustaining them through the difficult times of pioneering on the farm, which certainly are nothing like the hard times they had in the trenches and on the battlefields in France and elsewhere. I am full of hope for this country. All of us should be full of hope. The man who has not hope is lost. I believe that, with proper and economical government and the proper expenditure of public funds for the benefit of and to stimulate production in this coun-

try, Western Australia will before long get out of her financial difficulties. We will, I hope, continue to produce more and more and be able to induce people to come here by the very attractions which we will be able to offer them, and will thus succeed in building up a State second to none in Australia.

On motion by Mr. Foley debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.8 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 31st August, 1920.

	PAGE
Bills: Prices Regulation Act Continuation, 12. ...	338
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 12. ...	338
Address-in-Reply, ninth day ...	338

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

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Prices Regulation Act Continuation.
Introduced by the Minister for Education.
- 2, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.
Introduced by Hon. J. Duffell.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Ninth Day.

Debate resumed from 26th August.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (North-East) [4.36]: It is not my intention to deal with the question of finance. It is well known that we have a deficit of over four million pounds. That in itself should be sufficient to set hon. members thinking, and to force the Government to do something in the direction of making the revenue and expenditure come more closely into line. I was struck by the following paragraph in His Excellency's opening speech—

In common with every other country in the civilised world Western Australia is faced with grave problems of reconstruction following upon the disturbances of trade, commerce, and industry during the war. 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 good will amongst the peo-

ple are alone necessary to replace the material losses of war and to inaugurate a period of expansion.

I agree that it is essential to have good will amongst the people. During the last five years we have had a world war, from which we have been led to believe we issued successful. Still, it must be realised that there is not that measure of good will obtainable throughout the country which is necessary to bring about the best possible results for Australia. We have had a number of industrial disputes. In that we are not alone throughout the civilised world there have been industrial disputes of great magnitude. We in Australia are rather fortunate in having had so few of these disputes. We have had our strikes, even here in Western Australia; but after all, when we take into consideration the reasons that force the worker into revolt against the conditions under which they work, we see that they are not without justification. Among those reasons we have the heavy increases in the cost of living which are in themselves sufficient to force the workers to demand, not only more money but improved conditions. If the Government of Australia are prepared to allow prices to continue increasing, and thereby reducing the standard of living, it follows that the workers, in defence of the standard they have attained in 1914, must fight for the retention of that earlier achievement. We have our Arbitration Courts, but I think sufficient has been said during the last few months to show that, after all, those courts have not proved the success which, a few years ago, many of us hoped they would. Personally I believe in the principle of arbitration for the settlement of industrial disputes; but I am faced with the fact that the efforts of the workers to get to the court have been combatted so forcibly by the employers that it has taken months, sometimes even years, for the workers to reach the court. The worker is out to retain the standard of living which he had attained in 1914. If he were not prepared to fight for that standard he would not be worthy of the name of man. Workers to-day realise that it is necessary that they should combine in an endeavour to bring about such a state of affairs as will enable the bread-winner and his wife and children to live in a reasonable standard of comfort. He must have food and clothing and housing, and sufficient to enable him to educate his children. That is what the workers are desirous of obtaining to-day. They also realise that they are hard put to it to combat the actions of the profiteer in forcing up the cost of living. That is one of the causes of industrial unrest, namely, the increased price of necessary commodities, which has reduced the purchasing power of money, and consequently the standard of living which the worker has enjoyed in the past. As a result the worker is forced to take whatever action he deems necessary to establish his claims. If it is desired to bring about a better state of affairs the employers must do something in the direction of meeting the wishes of the workers. It is much to be re-