

Hughes in the Federal Parliament are the very people who lauded Mr. Hughes for the stand he took. I cannot understand such people; I contend that in both cases the leader took the wrong course. The instant Mr. Hughes learned that he had not a majority of his party behind him, he should have submitted to majority rule, and on the other hand, the instant the member for Sussex knew he had not a majority he should have done likewise.

Mr. Nairn: Hughes had a majority of the people of Australia behind him, that is the difference.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not think he had. It is all very well for the hon. member to say that Mr. Hughes had a majority of the people behind him. At the last Federal election the people of Australia were gagged, and while the Cook-Forrest-Irvine party did secure an overwhelming majority throughout Australia, the Hughes party went back one fewer in number than when they left Parliament. The Hughes party had one more member in the House when the dissolution took place than they had after the elections were over. Therefore, Mr. Hughes did not get an enormous victory at the election. That election, too, comprised one of the gravest scandals of any electioneering campaign in this or any other State. I realise that the present National party in this State proposes fighting the forthcoming State elections on exactly the same cry; but I would warn them that they will not succeed in fooling the people of this State with the cry of nationalism unless the Government show some sincerity, show a desire of doing something which will stamp them as National, something in the interests of the people of the State. And the one small thing I ask the Government to do is to introduce legislation for the fixing of prices, so as to give the working people of the State a reasonable chance of living decently.

Mr. LUTHEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [8.5]: I read His Excellency's Speech with some surprise, although I have known for years past, having taken an interest in public affairs, State and Federal, that the opponents of the party to which I belong have had a particular catch cry at each general election. The cry on this occasion was that we must have a National Government

in the interests of the State. When there was a previous change of Government some months ago the cry then was of business acumen and economy, but we find that after 12 months that Government made a worse list of the job than any Government up to date in this State. So far as the party to which I belong is concerned, we shall do everything possible, provided an attempt is made in a proper manner, to right the finances of the State. We have the Treasurer speaking of retrenchment, and although he has sitting alongside him Ministers who have been in office for some months, we find that he is going to take the reins now and economise. One economy which he has mentioned is his intention of doing away with *Hansard*. In my opinion *Hansard* is very essential for the information of the people generally. Through the newspapers the people are given only that which the newspapers wish to give them, but in *Hansard* they get the truth, and the whole truth, and without *Hansard* many matters upon which the people should be informed would never come to light. For that reason I think *Hansard* should be left alone. At the present stage in our history the Government should act carefully in the matter of retrenchment. They might follow the lead given by the late Sir George Grey in New Zealand. He found retrenchment operating in his time but he took a different attitude; he taxed the land and raised wages, with the result that immediately New Zealand began to forge ahead. On the other hand, in Victoria Sir George Turner cut down expenditure in every direction. I was a resident of Melbourne at that time, and I can assure this Chamber I have no desire to see a similar spectacle in Western Australia as was presented at that time in Victoria. I think there are other ways in which we might retrench. The civil service, the teachers, and other Government employees, will be interested to know what the Government really intend to do, and I think we have now arrived at a stage when the people are entitled to know the Government's intentions in the direction of economy. If the Government are in earnest on this question of retrenchment opportunities are offered by the State Governor and State Government House. When we en-

tered into the Federation, it was understood that it was intended to do away with State Governors and State Government Houses, leaving one Governor-General for the whole of the Federation. We have found on different occasions when the Governor has been absent from the State that a Lieutenant-Governor, or a Chief Justice, has been able to satisfactorily carry out the duties. That is one avenue of expenditure which might be easily cut out, and one which should be immediately tackled. It was also thought, when the Federation was formed, that the six Agents General, and their staffs, would be cut out, and that they would be replaced by one representative of the people of Australia. But we now find that, instead of six, we have seven representatives, including the High Commissioner. If the much talked of business acumen were made use of, I think it would be easily possible for one High Commissioner in London, with a competent staff of officers, to do all the work necessary for the $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions of people we have in Australia, instead of having seven different officers and seven different staffs as at present. I should like to refer briefly to the question of the cost of living. On the goldfields this cost has been rising month by month. Despite the figures quoted by Mr. Knibbs, and by Mr. Justice Powers in the Arbitration Court, we know from practical experience that the cost of living is increasing every month. The late Government raised the freights to the country and goldfields by 10 per cent., which meant an increase of 11s. 2d. per ton to the people of Kalgoorlie, and thereby added an indirect burden on the people of the goldfields. That burden was not only on commodities of life, but on mining requisites also, such as fracture. machinery, cyanide, and articles of that description. That increased cost of requisites was a heavy burden on a number of mines just about paying their way, and if the Government are really anxious to do something for the benefit of the industry, here is a direction in which something might be done. Gold, we are told, is at present more essential even than men to the winning of the war, and here is a direction in which the Government can assist the production of gold. On the subject of taxation I note that £47,000 only is derived in revenue from

the land. That is a question which must be grappled with. There should be unimproved land values taxation immediately imposed, and without exemption. Twenty years ago I was in the south-western districts, and on going down there a month or two since I find that the country is in practically the same state to-day as it was 20 years ago. Yet during that time we have been building railways, as referred to by the member for Northam in his excellent speech last night, when he said that millions had been spent in railway construction. I believe that, had there been adequate unimproved land values taxation in this State, those millions need not have been spent, and we would have been able to settle the people close to railways without sending them out into the dry areas where the Government have found to their sorrow that the settlers have become bankrupt. People have come from the goldfields to take up land in the agricultural district, and in their case history has repeated itself. Instead of their being given decent land on which to settle, they have had to go into country subject to drought, and realised later they had made a mistake and had to leave their holdings. Yet in the South-west, where the good land is to be found, there are numerous instances of country held up. That position arises from land monopoly. The same thing obtained in Victoria—from which State I come—at the time when the miners left the Ballarat and Creswick goldfields to make homes for themselves. They had to go away into the dry areas, the mallee country, to obtain land. The statistics of Victoria show that during the past 30 years the population of the dry areas has increased, while that about Warrnambool and in the Western district, which contains some of the finest land in the world, has actually decreased. History is liable to repeat itself on those lines here in Western Australia, unless the problem is grappled with at once. That is desirable if only from a financial point of view, in order to impose direct taxation and make those who obtain the benefit of the unearned increment pay their share towards the upkeep of the State. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) mentioned that the Commonwealth were taking by hook and by crook anything and every-

thing they could obtain in the shape of revenue. Let me throw out the warning that the State Government, if they wish to tax land, must proceed to do so at once, because the Commonwealth Government also have the power to tax land, and they may strike out the exemption of £5,000, and take everything in the way of land taxation. Then the State Government would receive only the paltry forty odd thousand pounds Western Australia derives from the land at the present time. Something of the kind is, I believe, contemplated by the Commonwealth. If that position is brought about there will be an outcry against the enormous burden of indirect taxation thrown on the people. In regard to the mining industry, the Government should strike out the concentration of labour provision, so that a number of leases in good auriferous centres may be made available to the people. For years past hundreds of acres right in the heart of the Golden Mile have been held up, and miners have been unable to work them except on the heavy tribute demanded by the mining companies. With regard to boring, I know that some 18 years ago the Great Southern Development Company went in extensively for boring in the south of the belt, and spent some thousands of pounds in putting down a shaft to a good depth. If the records of those operations were looked up and made public, a continuation of the Golden Mile might be found in that quarter. I observe that my opponent in the Brownhill-Ivanhoe election complained in the Press regarding the electoral law. I, too, had a good deal to complain of. Although the police and the electoral officers went through the district within ten days prior to the election, I know of people who have been living in the one house in my electorate for 20 years and who found themselves struck off the roll when they desired to vote at the election. The electoral laws ought to contain a provision that any person who can prove to the electoral officer that he or she is entitled to a vote should have a vote, and not be struck off the roll, as was the case at the last election.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [8.20]: I have a few words to say on the Address-in-reply.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Are they all done on the other side of the Chamber?

Mr. GREEN: I regret that some of our late friends, who sat with us on this side of the Chamber during the last session, have seen fit to absent themselves altogether from the Chamber this evening. Their absence goes to show that the idea of fusing with the present Coalition Government for national objects has not impressed itself upon their minds as being of sufficient urgency even to induce them to occupy their seats in this Chamber. Let us examine and discover, if we can, what is the reason why, in the words of the Premier at Moora, the present Government was born into existence. Again to use the Premier's own words—

Well-nigh three years ago the god of battles flung the dice of destiny from his hand, and the time has arrived now when parties should be swept aside.

Nigh three years have elapsed since the commencement of the greatest war in history before it was considered necessary by the present Government to form a coalition. I say, the present Government, because the alteration of the Cabinet is very slight indeed, as I shall presently show. Or I may put it that three years had elapsed since the commencement of the war before either the late Labour Government or the present Government considered a coalition necessary. What do the present Government propose? What is the reason alleged for all this sinking of partisanship? For the Premier himself as a man I have the highest esteem. I have never for a moment doubted his politics as long as I have been in the Chamber. I have recognised the Premier as a worthy exponent of Liberal politics. Speaking at Geraldton no longer ago than the 11th April last, at a conference of farmers and settlers, who have been termed by one of their present friends "the Bulgarians of politics"—

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The member for Cue said that.

Mr. GREEN: I was not going to accuse any member in particular. The interjection of the member for Williams-Narrogin shows that, as the immortal William says, "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." Mr. Lefroy's remarks at Geraldton were that—

He had every sympathy with the Farmers' and Settlers' Association, and he