

## Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 26th September, 1916.

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

### QUESTION—HARBOUR WORKS, GERALDTON.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Whether the present works being carried out at the port of Geraldton are recommended by the experts and engineers as being the best scheme for providing a safe and commodious harbour, including the Point Moore proposal; or, 2, Whether the present scheme is the best alternative after excluding the Point Moore scheme?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes, having regard to economy of construction and cost of future maintenance. 2, Answered by No. 1.

### QUESTION—PIPE MANUFACTURE, COST.

Hon. J. DUFFELL asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What is the price the Government are paying to Messrs. Monteath Bros. for 12in. cast-iron pipes? 2, What are the Water Supply Departments in the Eastern States paying for similar pipes?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, The contract was made in July, 1914, for five years for sizes up to 18in. at £10 15s. per ton, based on price of pig iron at inception of contract, viz., £4 4s. 6d. per ton c.i.f. Fremantle, prices to fluctuate according to fluctuations in cost of pig iron. The price being paid to-day is £14 17s. 10d. per ton. 2, Victoria—Cast iron pipes 9in. dia. £11 6d. per ton; cast iron pipes 12in. dia. £10 7s. per ton; cast iron pipes 15in. dia. £11 10s. per ton. Adelaide—8in. and upwards £9 5s. per ton. (Note.—Made at the State works. Prices about to be increased to £11 5s.)

Queensland—9in. and upwards £11 10s. per ton. (Old contract price. Anticipate considerable increase shortly due to rise in pig iron.) Sydney—£9 8s. 6d. (New South Wales is operating under a contract made in January, 1907, which expires in December, 1916, so that their price cannot be regarded as applying to the present situation. To-day's quotation is £10 10s. per ton f.o.b. Sydney. Freight and charges would amount to £2 1s. 3d. per ton Fremantle.)

### QUESTION—WHEAT POOLING SYSTEM.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY asked the Colonial Secretary: Is it the intention of the Government to continue the pooling of wheat during the coming season under the same conditions as last year?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The Commonwealth and the four wheat-exporting States are favourable to continuing the pooling of the wheat for the purpose of marketing the 1916-17 harvest, and it is contemplated holding a conference of State Ministers early next month with a view to determining the necessary conditions.

### QUESTION—STATE FERRIES.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What were the total receipts from the ferries for the year ended 30th June, 1916? 2, What was the total expenditure for the same year? 3, What sum was paid for the purchase of the ferries? 4, What was the cost of the s.s. "Perth"? 5, What was the total capitalisation on 1st July, 1915, and 30th June, 1916, respectively? 6, What sums were written off as depreciation or otherwise for the year ended 30th June, 1916, in respect of—(a) the boats originally purchased; (b) the s.s. "Perth"?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, £5,596 16s. 11d. 2, £5,952 12s. 4d. 3, £4,295 (including plant and equipment, and excluding s.s. "Perth.") 4, Contract cost, £7,958 2s. 11d.; cost at 30th June, 1916, £8,268 9s. 11d. 5, 1915, £12,758 10s. 9d.; 1916, £12,758 10s. 9d. 6, (a) £292 8s. 1d.; (b) £301 7s. 5d.

### QUESTION—WORKERS' HOMES, LEASEHOLD CONDITIONS.

Hon. H. CARSON asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, How many workers' homes under leasehold have been given up by original holders? 2, How many workers' homes under leasehold are now without tenants? 3, What was the cost of such untenanted homes, if any?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, \$1. 2, 3, £438, £476, £418.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Plans and reports of Mr. Ramsbotham's proposals for the Bunbury harbour (ordered on motion by Hon. J. Ewing). 2, Papers, reports, and recommendations in connection with the preliminary surveys and inspection regarding a better grade for a railway from Collie to Bunbury (ordered on motion by Hon. J. Ewing). 3, Vermin Boards Act, Amendment of Regulation 37.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Fifth day—Amendment.*

Debate resumed from the 21st September.

Hon. J. E. DODD (South) [4.40]: I wish to join the other members in congratulating the Colonial Secretary and Dr. Saw upon obtaining Ministerial promotion. I can say without any flattery that Mr. Colebatch is certainly well qualified to lead the House, and I am sorry that Dr. Saw is not present to assist him, although I feel sure that we all acknowledge and appreciate his action in going away as he has done. Dr. Saw would have been of great assistance to the Medical Department at the present time, especially when the administration of the new Health Act is taken into consideration. It is to be deplored that there have been so many deaths of hon. members of this House in recent years. During the last six years these have numbered no fewer than eight, a position which is somewhat saddening to all of us. In looking round about me I find that, although I have been in this Chamber for about six years only, I am standing something like ninth or tenth in order of seniority. With regard to the Ad-

dress-in-reply, I for one would like to follow the direction that you, Mr. President, gave, namely that our criticism should be devoted towards the good of the country rather than that it should be in the direction of personal advantage. There is one thing I regret and it is that we have not had anything like a statement justifying the action of the two parties in combining to oppose the Labour party. We have read the statement of the leader of the Country party in another place and so far as I can see, he did not say anything to justify the course his party took in allowing themselves to be swallowed up by the Liberals, and so far as hon. members who have spoken in this Chamber are concerned, it seems to me that the only excuse they offered was that some injury had been done to someone by the Industries Assistance Board. One hon. member stated that the Labour Government had been tried and had failed to make good, but only the bare statement was made, no figures were given to show in which direction the Labour Government had failed to make good, except in regard to some letters written by the Industries Assistance Board. If the gentleman who received those letters had interviewed the Minister, he no doubt would have received some satisfaction. I thought that the change which lately came about would have been justified in Parliament. The real leader of the Country party admitted, in the course of some remarks, that there was not a solitary member in his party who was qualified to lead. That seems to me to be the justification for allowing the Liberal party to swallow them. The leader of this House stated that the Liberals had sacrificed no principle in allying themselves to the Country party. It seems to me that they have sacrificed almost every principle, and the principle of independence. The Liberals are absolutely at the mercy of the Country party and the Country party has had the courage to tell them so. Mr. Prowse, who is one of the executive of the Country party, stated at the conference which was held some time back, that they were now the dictators of the Government, a statement which called forth an objection from Mr. Allen. It seems to me to be the most sordid political partnership I know of. I have heard of a good many

political partnerships but I have known of very few as bad as the present one. I desire to refer to the remarks of the leader of the House when he stated there had been an increase of Liberal sentiment throughout the country. I do not know where that comes in. I have tried to analyse it and tried to find out where it comes from. In the May elections of the Legislative Council the only party which lost seats was the Liberal party. This party lost two seats to the Labour party and one to the Country party. My hon. friend, Mr. Ewing, did not stand as a straight out Liberal candidate, but was partly independent in his views. Possibly had he come straight out on the hustings as a Liberal candidate, he also might have lost his seat to his opponent. What has happened in the case of Mr. Hamersley's election? Before the Liberal Government took office, despite the fact that Mr. Hamersley has sat here for something like 12 years, he could only win the election on the casting vote of the returning officer. The Colonial Secretary has stated that, because of the increase in the number of votes received by Mr. Hamersley on the second occasion of his going up for election, after the Liberal Government had taken office, this showed an increase in Liberal sentiment amongst the people. I think that the attitude of the Government in abolishing terminal charges, and in reducing freights, had a good deal to do with the election. The farmers would certainly have been foolish if they had turned down the Liberal candidate after material efforts had been made to improve their lot, I am inclined to say at the expense of the country. But I cannot for the life of me see where any justification exists for saying that there has been an increase in Liberal sentiment throughout the country. Let us turn to the Coolgardie election. We are supposed to have lost ground there, but we find that the Labour candidate was returned with a bigger majority than ever before. The Labour party has been increasing that majority from the time when a Liberal candidate held the Coolgardie seat until the last election, when a Labour candidate was returned with a bigger majority than ever before. With regard to the mining industry, the leader of the House tells us that it is still our greatest asset. It may continue to

be our greatest asset for many years to come if the industry is fostered in the right direction. I do not think that much more could be done in the direction of fostering the mining industry than was accomplished by Mr. Collier, the late Minister for Mines. If the Liberal Government can do as well as he did, we shall not have very much to complain about. The primary industries of the State may be said to be in a very precarious position, but I do not think that is altogether the fault of State politics. In my opinion the making or marring of the primary industries of Australia is in the hands of the Federal Government or the Federal Parliament. I am not going to mention any one party or another, but I do say that the Australian policy in reference to primary industries is absolutely a ruinous one. I am inclined to think that unless some change takes place during the next few years, there may be something in the statement that farming and mining will not pay, and perhaps some of the other primary industries will not pay either. Speaking about the mining industry, I, for one, am very glad indeed that the Minister for Mines was able to effect a settlement of the recent trouble on the goldfields.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Has he settled it?

Hon. J. E. DODD: I was one of those who waited on the Premier and the Hon. R. T. Robinson, and strongly advised the latter to visit the goldfields as soon as he could. Whatever Government may be in power, it is due to the Minister who has under his control any particular industry, to endeavour personally to settle any dispute that may arise in connection with such industry. I would point out that the Labour Government did this and settled quite a number of disputes. There is a very great difference between the publicity which has been given to the settlement of this dispute by a Liberal Government and the settlement of other disputes of the kind by a Labour Government. I am sure that no one desires to take away from the Government any credit in connection with the particular trouble I refer to, but matters reached this pitch that it appeared that no issue of any newspaper could be made without some reference to the settlement of the trouble being contained in

it. I could detail quite a number of troubles that were settled during the 4½ years the Labour Government were in office, troubles that were equally as great in importance as the recent trouble, but of which very little was heard. For instance, there was a great difference between the attitude of the Chamber of Mines in Kalgoorlie in connection with this strike, and the attitude of the Employers' Federation here in connection with the carpenters' strike. In the former case the Chamber of Mines met the Minister and discussed with him what could be done, and agreed to a conference. On the other hand, when the carpenter's strike took place, the Employers' Federation absolutely refused, even at the request of the carpenters, to see whether or not the trouble could be settled. That is the difference between the two organisations. I would like to say a word or two in reference to enemy subjects. It seems to me, since the publication of the evidence, that the men were absolutely justified in the stand that they took. A good many people are of opinion that they were not so justified, but since the publication of the evidence as a result of the inquiry, I think every right thinking person must be of opinion that the men were justified up to the very hilt in the stand they took. What can we say of the mine manager who, when the foreigners themselves went to him and told him that certain of their compatriots were disloyal, still refused to dismiss them. I think an employer of labour who is responsible for this sort of thing is just about as disloyal as he could be, because he must know perfectly well that in persisting in employing such persons he was only courting trouble and disaster. In connection with a good deal of the other evidence which has been taken, we find that quite a number of foreigners who have been giving evidence have stated that it was immaterial to them which side won, whether the Allies or the Central Powers. To ask men to work with such persons who are so manifestly disloyal as these men, is, I think, asking a little too much. In regard to this matter, there seems to be a curious likeness between the independent workers of the world and this Chamber. I am curious to find out where this exists.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What do you call that species of crime, a mare's nest?

Hon. J. E. DODD: I am not going to say that they may be compared from the standpoint of slowing down, but might with some justification say that, however. Where I want to compare the independent workers of the world with this Chamber is in regard to the following. The independent workers of the world when we endeavoured to restrict the foreigners from working on the mines, tried to the utmost of their ability—and they had a considerable amount too—to show us where we were wrong, and they certainly objected to anyone trying to restrict any nationality whatsoever from working in the mines. We find in this Chamber that we also tried to make that restriction in the Mines Regulation Bill. What do we find happened here?

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Do you mean during the war?

Hon. J. E. DODD: No.

Hon. J. Cornell: We were preparing for war time.

Hon. J. E. DODD: We were told exactly in the same words as the independent workers' used, that we were cowardly, un-British, unmanly, because we tried to limit the number of workers in the mines. In *Hansard* members will find where I said that this Chamber, as sure as we were sitting here was courting trouble. We have had trouble and we are likely to have more before the question is settled. That is the only comparison I wish to make regarding the two institutions.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: I am relieved.

Hon. J. E. DODD: In connection with the Esperance railway, as a member for that province through which the railway was going to run, I feel very keenly the action of the Government in stopping the work. Personally I can see no justification whatever for their action. I resent the statement which has been made that there has been concealment regarding the nature of the soil. There has never been any concealment regarding salt in the soil or the alleged presence of salt. Mr. Cullen said in his last speech in the House that there were 13 rows of samples shown in the precincts of the House giving the analysis of the soil. As Mr. Drew has pointed out, this

circular I now hold in my hand was sent to every member of the House. I think there were something like 5,000 or 6,000 printed drawing attention to salts in the soil and reviewing some of the statements made by Mr. Mann. It is curious to note, especially coming from the Hon. R. J. Lynn, that Mr. Mann is now a thoroughly competent chemist in every way when he is dealing with the question of soils. In the last speech I made prior to this one, I was trying to show that Mr. Mann was a competent chemist in connection with the whisky standard. Mr. Lynn, however, was one of those who objected on the score, I think, of Mr. Mann not being an efficient analyst.

Hon. J. Cornell: Did not the present Colonial Secretary also object?

Hon J. E. DODD: I cannot well remember now. The report which I have here is one by two departmental officers, Messrs. Middleton and O'Brien, who were sent down to examine and classify the land of Esperance. They said that the report of the Agricultural Advisory Board, appointed by the Moore Government, recommended the construction of a line 60 miles north of Esperance, that Mr. Paterson issued a minority report in which, without condemning the country as unsuitable for farming—he said he was not long enough in the district—he felt quite satisfied as to its quality and also as to its holding capacity for water conservation. The point which was used and emphasised against the construction of the Esperance line for many years was that the Esperance soil would not hold water. That bogey was thrown up against supporters of the line time and again, but we now find that it has been dispelled and that the land will hold water just as well as in any other portion of the State. That is proved. We find, even after so many years and at a time when the hopes of the settlers were likely to be fulfilled, that, despite the fact that authority for the line had been passed by both Houses of Parliament, and by large majorities, the Government stepped in on the plea that salts have been found in the soil and stopped the railway. I am not going to tire the House by reading many of the extracts from this document, which was sent to every member of both Chambers and to

various newspapers. There are, however, one or two points which I wish to make. In dealing with Mr. Mann's report it is stated here that Mr. Mann said—

I have throughout adopted the standard of .05 per cent. salt as being, in my opinion, a reasonable one, although there is a considerable amount of variation amongst authorities on this subject; the limit of endurance of crops being stated at from .03 per cent. to .5 per cent.

There is no fixed hard and fast standard as to the quantity of salt in the soil which would condemn it for wheat growing purposes, and members who would like to read this would find that various authorities are being quoted and various arguments put forward which do not coincide with those of Mr. Mann's. The report goes on to say that these analyses were made largely from soils taken after a considerable portion of the season's rain had fallen, and that some of the salt on the surface must have been there when these samples were taken. I would like to say here that Mr. Rogers, who is a well known settler in the Esperance district, met me in the street not long ago and I had a talk with him upon this matter. He told me that as far as his land was concerned, the samples of the soil were taken right down on the lagoon on the worst part of his property, and that he had deliberately asked that the samples should be taken from this portion of his land in order that he might ascertain the highest percentage of salt in his land. Mr. Rogers is prepared to vouch for the truth of this, but he could not tell me at the time who took the samples.

The quantity in our soil samples compares favourably with the "limit of endurance for wheat" given by the American authorities, and a few samples are down to and below the standard adopted by the Government analyst (Mr. Mann). To this must be added the fact that hay and some wheat has been grown on the mallee belt. In salty soils so much depends on the quantity of moisture and other conditions that it seemed to me impossible for anyone to say how much salt (between .03 per cent and .5 per cent.) wheat will stand in different parts of our agricultural areas. Yet we are accused of deliberately concealing Mr. Mann's report. The figures dealing

with the very worst samples that Mr. Mann took are shown in this report and that has been sent round to every member of both Houses. Surely members would not expect the Hon. Mr. Drew to go into every detail in connection with this railway. I remember that when I had charge of the Railway Surveys Bill, members told me that they were prepared to pass a survey, as they stood, without any further information on the subject. The hon. member who introduced the Bill gave a very lengthy speech, and it seems to me that almost every point that could be raised for or against the measure was taken by Mr. Drew at that time. Now, I would like to point out that this area of country, which in some of the older lands, would be looked upon almost as a kingdom, the Government is prepared to condemn for all time, this huge tract of country which we have at Esperance. I have heard references made by the Hon. Mr. Kingsmill and the Hon. Mr. McKenzie, who have known the district for very many years, admit that Esperance is the best harbour in Western Australia from any point of view. From the point of view of beauty there is nothing to compare with the Esperance Harbour, and the Hon. Mr. McKenzie has contended that there is no difficulty in making it the best harbour in Western Australia. Yet we find that a tract of country such as this, similar to many large tracts in other parts of Australia, is to be condemned and a Commission appointed on which hardly an individual is known who has occupied any public position. I am not going to say one word about the Commission, as men they may be possibly the best; but to take a clerk out of the Taxation Office, a squatter and a farmer from the South-East, and ask them to report on such lands as Esperance and condemn it for all time, I think is an action worthy of condemnation. If the Government wanted a fair and impartial Commission why did they not go to the Eastern States and there get hold of some of the men who know the mallee lands? Personally I can say I have had a good deal of experience with mallee lands in Victoria and in New South Wales. In Victoria, at Warracknabeal, on the Wimmera, I remember that for years and years no one would take them,

for the same reason as the Esperance lands, there was no water, there was not sufficient rainfall, there was too much salt, and the lands could be taken up at £3 a square mile. To-day these lands are the most prolific wheat producers in Australia. And the same thing applies to the mallee lands on the western side of Spencer's Gulf in South Australia; the returns which have been secured from those lands have been equal to the returns from any other part of the State. I hope that, even now at this late hour, something may be done by the Government to give more fitting representation to the settlers of the mallee country on that Commission. Whatever the report of that Commission may be, I am inclined to think that it will fail to give satisfaction. There is nothing further I can say in connection with the Esperance business. I do sincerely regret that the opponents of the line, who have opposed it year in and year out, should have seen fit to take the action they have done in appointing such a Commission to deal with it. Now, I would just like to refer to the question of education, which has been touched upon by the Colonial Secretary and hon. members, who stated that the Government were prepared to go on increasing secondary schools in the State, establishing secondary schools in various country centres, and do all they possibly could to encourage education. I am sure, if they fulfil their promises, there will be very few members of Parliament who will take exception to them. The Labour Government initiated the system of free education, which the Liberal Government have stated they are going to follow and carry out, and the Labour Government initiated the scheme of secondary schools and made education free at the University. We established a secondary school at Kalgoorlie, and at various other centres, and endeavoured to encourage education in every possible way. I would like to refer to the criticisms regarding the money spent in charities. A certain amount of money may have been misspent. I do hope however that the Government will be very careful in all they do in limiting the amounts they pay to the widows on behalf of children. Although the amount may be somewhat large it is better to spend a little in helping

children than in many other directions. May I be permitted to refer to the question of redistribution, that is, the Redistribution of Seats Bill. We are somewhat in the dark as to what the Government's proposals are, but it is understood that they will appoint a Commission. The Liberal party has learnt a lesson in regard to redistribution, and the fact that they are going to appoint a Commission is an open secret. I would like to know why the Government does not reintroduce the Bill which was introduced by the Labour Government. I know the Hon. Leader of the House was responsible for the wrecking of that Bill. No Bill to my mind could be fairer than the Bill that was introduced by the late Government—a range of 1,200 was allowed in a quota of 3,000 electors. If the Government are going to take a wide range then they will not be in a much better position to obtain support for the Bill. The hon. member was prepared to place Northam in the category of the smaller electorates.

The Colonial Secretary: And will do so again.

Hon. J. E. DODD: Northam, Bunbury, Toodyay, and many other towns some 60 or 70 miles away from the metropolis, making them a lesser quota to Kalgoorlie and the seats on the Goldfields some 400 miles away. If this were the scheme of the redistribution it will meet with very bitter opposition. I have been wondering whether the proposals will provide for the straightening out of the Sussex boundaries. We hope so. These boundaries, to my mind, are most undignified, but perhaps the proposals now being made in the Bill will provide for an amendment of the Sussex boundaries. In regard to the votes for soldiers, I am inclined to agree with the Government, provided sufficient safeguards are made. The man who is fighting for our country is entitled to every consideration, and if we can give him a fair chance then I for one will do so. In reference to the taxation proposals of the Government, we find they propose to institute an amusement tax to meet the expenses of the repatriation of soldiers. Now, I do not know that anything can be urged against an amusement tax in connection with other taxes, but if the Government were going to propose that an amusement tax only shall

be placed on the people of this State to meet the expenses of the repatriation of soldiers, it seems to me to be very wrong indeed. The amusement tax is going to hit at the poorer class of the community, and it will hit them to a very much greater extent than the wealthier class, and if we are going to leave the men in receipt of high salaries and business men and others go scot free in the way of taxation and simply impose a tax upon the amusement of the people, well, I am rather inclined to think that this House will have something to say about it. I was somewhat interested in the different opinions of some of the members of the Ministry in regard to taxation. We find that the Premier some time ago, in dealing with the question of taxation, made the following statement—

Many people objected to the carnival and such forms of competition for raising money. He did not desire to say much on that score, but the people who were howling for increased taxation did not know exactly what they were aiming at. No one wanted to pay by direct taxation, but they would pay willingly through such methods as the carnival. They could get far more by voluntary contributions than by taxation, provided the objects were put before the public attractively so as to entice money from their pockets.

These were his sentiments and the statement was made some weeks ago. Apparently when introducing taxation you may tax a man to any amount you like indirectly, but so soon as you ask him for something out of his pocket he will fight against it. That was Mr. Wilson's attitude at that time, he does not believe in taxation of the people directly. The Hon. Mr. Colebatch has also expressed an opinion on this question, but he stated that he believed in direct taxation, in going to the people straight-out, just as the Y.M.C.A. has done. I believe that Mr. Colebatch has stated his belief in such methods pretty freely. Personally I am inclined to follow Mr. Colebatch rather than the Premier. How they will square their differences of opinion when they come to the consideration of taxing measures I cannot say, but doubtless it will be arranged satisfactorily to the Government if not so satisfactorily

to the Labour Party. Personally, I believe in taxing all, whoever they may be, according to their means. Reference has been made to the deficit, but while there has been much criticism on this point, very little indeed has been said as to the causes contributing to the deficit. I think that the Labour Government, which was entrusted with the administration of the affairs of this country during a period of drought and war, came through the ordeal very well indeed so far as finances is concerned, and if the present Government do as well I shall not find very great fault with them. A good deal of criticism has also been indulged in regarding the losses supposed to have been made by the trading concerns. Attention in this connection has been directed to the ferries. It has to be remembered that the Government took over the ferries owing to the unsatisfactory nature of the service under private enterprise.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It is worse now.

Hon. J. E. DODD: And that the Government made every endeavour to improve the service on what it was when taken over. Had it not been for the national trouble which this country struck in common with the rest of the Empire, I have no doubt that the ferry service would have paid very much better than it has done. The hon. gentleman who has interjected disputed a statement made by the Colonial Secretary in this regard.

The Colonial Secretary: That was an official statement; not mine.

Hon. J. E. DODD: And I suppose the statement made by the Hon. Mr. Drew in regard to the fish supply was also an official statement. Some of the officials of the Colonial Secretary's Department are somewhat at a loss just now to know where they are. With reference to the Implement Works. Here again is an enterprise which was founded by the Labour Government for the benefit of the farmer, and yet we have been told by the Hon. Mr. Baxter that the Labour Government did nothing for the farmer. The same may be said with regard to the brick works. Had these brick works not been established it is beyond question that consumers would have been paying more than twice as much in recent months as they have for the bricks used. Many of the other State enterprises

can be enumerated in the same way. There are one or two figures in regard to finance which I think I should be in order in quoting, to show the amount of money which was spent by the late Government in the interests of the farming industry, which various members have told us the Labour Government did nothing for. I find that prior to 1911 the amount advanced in the three previous years by way of loan by the Agricultural Bank amounted to £1,015,000 and the amount repaid to £458,000; so that the amount of new capital found by the Liberal Government in that period amounted to £656,000. During the term of the Labour Government the amount advanced was £1,820,000; the amount paid back was only half of what had been paid back during the term of the previous Liberal Government, and amounted to only £238,000. Therefore, the Labour Government had to find in new capital in a similar period £1,582,000, as compared with the £656,000 found by the Liberal Government. Yet we are told that the Labour Government did nothing for the farmer! Here, it may be remarked, is to be found one of the contributing causes to the deficit. Then again, in regard to loan funds, it may be interesting to members to know that of the £32 per head by which the public debt was increased during the term of the Labour Government, £10 19s. was expended in the construction of railways; the Agricultural Bank accounts for £6 12s.; agriculture generally, including assistance to settlers, for £2 8s. 6d.; and water supply and sewerage, £2 10s. 8d.—or a total of £23 out of £32, which has been devoted to what may be called the agricultural industry. And yet the Labour Government is charged with having done nothing for the farmer. Then again, in regard to the Industries Assistance Board there are one or two details regarding the assistance which has been given to settlers to which I will refer. First of all, cash advances amounted to £243,000; stores, wages, etc., £29,000; fodder, £267,000; seed wheat, £137,000; fertilisers, £139,000; twine, oil, bags, and machinery, £155,000; insurance, £27,000; horses, £14,000, and agistment for starving stock, £1,000. The total advances under the Industries Assistance Board amounted to £1,281,000. I think these figures speak for themselves, and prove conclusively that the Labour Government had



at heart the interests of the man on the land and did all they possibly could for him. The Colonial Secretary has told us that a Bill is to be introduced to provide that the owners of leasehold lots under the Workers' Homes Act shall be permitted to make their holdings freehold. Here again I think the Government is making a mistake. The reasons advanced by the Hon. Mr. Drew appeal also to me. The principal reason is that as surely as we are here, if this be done these lots will gradually revert back into the hands of a few men. That has been the experience in many other places. I remember that at Broken Hill under this class of land tenure for a year or two everyone became possessed of a freehold lot and became the owner of the land and house in the course of a few years. When bad times struck them, these holdings gradually came into the hands of speculators. I think it will be found that if these now holding leasehold workers' homes blocks are permitted to make them freehold, the same thing is likely to occur here. I hope very great consideration will be given to the wording of the proposed Bill. There are one or two matters of which the Government omitted to make mention. First of all the Liberal Government has not intimated to the House its intentions in regard to the control of trade. I do not find anything promising that the Government will take steps towards reducing the cost of living, which is so high at the present time. In almost every country of the world the legislatures are legislating in the direction of doing something to control private profits. In England almost ever since the war first broke out Bills have been introduced and passed through the legislature limiting the prices of food. Last year in England the increase in rent was also stopped by legislation; and I think the Imperial Government are now bringing in a Bill to take over almost entirely the control of trades. Yet we find in Western Australia, where prices have risen so very high since the war began, no provision at all is being made by the Government to legislate in that direction. Another omission is in regard to the liquor trade. There is nothing more pitiable than the abrogation by the Premier of his authority to deal with such a question as the liquor traffic. He is not even willing to bring in

a Bill as a Government measure to give to the people the right of saying by referendum at what hour the hotels shall be closed, but would rather that the responsibility for such a measure should be taken by a private member. This attitude I believe is owing to the fact that the members of the Government themselves are not at one in regard to the proposals affecting the liquor trade which should be put forward. No provision is to be made to bring about a liberalised franchise for this House. The Leader of the House stated at Northam some years ago that the franchise for this House should be made more liberal. I hope that the Minister's opinion on this matter will have some influence with the other members of the Government. One remark was made by Mr. Cullen during the course of the debate to which I would like to refer. From the tenor of the hon. gentleman's remarks it would seem that he considers it to be beneath the dignity of this House to concern itself with such two-penny half-penny matters as fish stalls and that the only thing worth consideration is wheat. But I want to say that if the people of this State could get more fish they might do with less wheat. Nor do I see that it is undignified for this House to discuss such matters as fish. I remember the late Hon. Frank Connor bringing into this Chamber a large piece of meat in connection with a discussion then taking place, and I do not see that it is any more undignified for this House to discuss fish than to discuss meat. But if one adopted the hon. Mr. Cullen's standard, one would think that wheat was the only commodity in the world to be discussed. I was very much struck at the mildness of the hon. member's criticism with regard to the Government's action towards the Esperance railway. It struck me, as it also struck the Hon. Mr. Drew, that he would have been much more severe in his criticism had the Labour Government made a similar proposal regarding Esperance as has been made by the present Government. The hon. member would not have found in the dictionary words strong enough to express his indignation at the Government for taking such a step. The mild charge he brought against the Colonial Secretary augurs well

for the peace of mind of the hon. member. Let me refer to the statements made by Mr. Lynn. I do not know that I have ever heard a more parochial speech than that which the hon. member delivered. He condemned Esperance, he condemned Bunbury, he condemned Albany and Geraldton, and every other port in the State, except Fremantle. Had the hon. member been consistent and taken his criticism right into Fremantle, one could have understood it. But the hon. member said, "Do not spend any more money on Albany; do not expend any more on Geraldton. Esperance is right out of the question." Then the hon. member invited us to spend as much as ever we liked on Fremantle. There is a stand for a politician to take!

Hon. R. J. Lynn: It is the correct one.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I do not wonder at Mr. Carson's reference to the centralisation bogey. There was one point which Mr. Lynn missed. I want to know what he has to say in respect to the two million pounds to be spent in bridging the Swan, the million to be spent in shifting the filter-beds, and the enormous amount involved in projected tramway extension all round the Canning electorate. He said nothing at all about these things.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Somebody else did.

Hon. J. E. DODD: The only thing he could think of was the futility of spending money in our outer ports.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: You do not take the tramway extension seriously, do you?

Hon. J. E. DODD: The member who was responsible for making the statement in the House did. I do not think the hon. member objected to any of the expenditure.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: I do not take the proposition seriously.

Hon. J. E. DODD: We shall see after the war. I do not wonder at Mr. Miles taking exception to these statements. I think he is to be congratulated as a new member on the breadth of his views. He is going to be an acquisition to the House. One thing he mentioned I might perhaps help to clear up, namely, in regard to the medical service. It is almost impossible at present to secure a medical man. I think the leader of the House will be able to convince Mr. Miles of that. It is impossible to

get medical men except for military service. Of course they are to be congratulated on their patriotism. Even when two or three medical men can be secured we find that they have one of the strongest unions in the Commonwealth, and that they know how to look after themselves. In regard to the trolley for the Marble Bar railway, the question first came before the late Government. Just before we went out of office it was brought under my notice, and I am not sure now whether I authorised the purchase of that trolley or whether I asked that an estimate of the cost should be obtained. I do not know what may have been done since, but I hope the Government will do something to afford relief to these outback centres. It is certainly needed. The leader of the House made reference to the question of conscription, and to our attitude in regard to the war. This question must give everyone very serious thought. It is hard indeed for many of us to know what to do. I want to make this perfectly clear: When, at a time such as this, it comes to a question of country or party, I am going to stand by the country. We are faced just now with a position never previously known in the history of the world, and, whatever our former views, it seems to me there is at present but the one issue, namely, the winning of the war. If it is absolutely necessary that we shall have conscription for Australia, I will not hesitate to advocate it, in order that we may come out on the right side. I could never tolerate the abandonment of our fellows at the front, and I am inclined to think there are but very few in Australia who would tolerate it. The reception that was given to the proposals of Mr. Hughes in respect to the referendum when first they were made was sufficient to arouse the indignation of all right-thinking people. There went up a howl over the supposed downfall of Mr. Hughes. I think that almost everyone can now realise the difficulties with which Mr. Hughes was faced. I have always taken the stand that the Federal Government know best what we require in regard to our forces at the Front. They know things which we cannot know, and I am prepared to trust the Federal Government and support the methods they may employ in winning the war, provided that due allowances

are made in respect to taxation and the looking after of the dependants of those at the Front. In regard to taxation, we know perfectly well what is required, because we know that the Government have had to borrow money at five per cent. or six per cent. in order to carry on the war. But in regard to the number of men required, we are not so well informed, and I am prepared to trust the Federal Government in that respect. What alternative to conscription has been proposed in the event of our not getting sufficient men under the voluntary system? There are in Australia hundreds of thousands of anti-conscriptionists thoroughly conscientious in their ideals. I have no fault to find with them. I myself have been anti-conscription all my life, and it is only the absolute necessity of the case which has caused me to alter my views. What alternative, I ask, is proposed in the event of voluntarism failing?—and it has failed. It is significant that right through the State, in many of the country districts and some of the suburban areas, there have been passed resolution after resolution opposing the taking of any further men from the respective centres. But we have not been shown any alternative. Those who have passed those resolutions and declared "You shall take no more men from us" have never said "We are willing to pay, as an alternative." If people would but look a little more impartially on the question, they would not carry such resolutions, resolutions which have resulted in the display of a good deal of animosity towards conscription. Personally I believe we should make every effort both in men and money, to come out on the right side of the war. In respect to the suggestion that harm will be done to the country by the conscription proposals of Mr. Hughes, I am of opinion that the proposals of Mr. Hughes and others to carry on a retaliatory and revengeful trade war after the close of the military war are infinitely more dangerous to the country than the proposal for conscription. We have an imperative need to take steps to put an end to the aggression of the Central Powers; but if we are going on a policy of revenge and retaliation in commerce we are proposing to do something which will bring about another military war very shortly after the declara-

tion of peace. It has been said on many occasions that there are in Australia but very few people who are making money out of the war. I was interested in reading an extract from an American paper, an interview with the manager of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, a gentleman who stands very high in the commercial life of the Commonwealth.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Is that Mr. Conley?

Hon. J. E. DODD: Yes. This is what Mr. Conley said to the interviewer—

One of the results of the war shown in Australia is that it has made a crop of newly rich men, the same as war orders have added scores of millionaires to the list in America. Many wool-growers have made fortunes on account of the war. When the war began they thought they would be ruined, instead of which they have been made wealthy.

That being so, surely those men made rich by the war could pay something more towards the carrying on of the war than they are paying at present.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: The Federal Government have the necessary power to tax them.

Hon. J. E. DODD: Yes, and I want them to take that power and to institute a better system of taxation than they have at present. In this connection I may remark that I have received a telegram from Mr. Hughes, stating that his financial proposals will be laid on the Table of the House of Representatives to-morrow. He also agrees that very much better provision will have to be made for the dependents of our soldiers, and a better financial method evolved for carrying on the war. We will all be glad when those financial proposals are made public, in order that we may know just where we are. I have been somewhat indignant at times at the very one-sided attitude adopted by the newspapers in regard to strikes. Time and again we have had leading articles on the enormity of men striking during war time, and we have found politicians going about unequivocally condemning strikes. No doubt they are right in the attitude they adopt, but why do they stop there? Why not give the other side as well, and show where the other fellow

is making thousands of pounds out of war profits? Why do they not show what is being done in connection with frauds worked by army contractors? We hear nothing about those things. But when a union goes on strike with a view to securing a little more of the world's goods, the newspapers of Australia thunder at the enormity of their action. It is only recently that we have heard of a number of men sentenced to terms of imprisonment in London in connection with Army contracts. Personally I think those men should be hanged. For any man who would deliberately set himself to put forward an inferior pair of boots or something inferior in connection with the clothing of our soldiers, the only fit penalty is to hang him. We have heard very little from the newspapers or from the politicians in regard to these establishments. I do not know that I have anything more to say except that I would like to repeat that every-one of us, no matter who we may be, will endeavour to fulfil our obligations in regard to this war, and if these obligations need compulsory service—and it is absolutely necessary—I, for one, will advocate it.

#### BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £648,000.

##### *All Stages.*

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

##### *Standing Orders Suspension.*

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch) [5.47]: I move—

*That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Supply Bill to pass through all its stages at this sitting.*

Question passed.

##### *Second Reading.*

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch) [5.48]: I move,

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

The object of the Bill is to provide supplies.

The PRESIDENT: I have to say that the Bill has to be passed by an absolute majority of the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

##### *In Committee, etcetera.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and *passed*.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

##### *Debate continued.*

Hon. H. CARSON (Central) [5.50]: I desire to congratulate the hon. member, Mr. Colebatch on attaining Cabinet rank. If he is as good as an administrator as he is as a critic, then the State will be fortunate in having him as an administrator, and I believe he will be that. If he is as courteous and considerate as our late leader we will be very well satisfied, and I do not think we have any misgivings in that respect. Regarding Dr. Saw, I know every member regrets the necessity for his departure from our midst. He was a very great acquisition to this Council Chamber, and whilst we may regret his departure from amongst us our regrets will be tempered by the fact that he has gone on a very creditable mission to relieve the sufferings of our brave soldiers. References have been made to the recent elections, and we have heard different deductions from various members. Now I disagree with the hon. members with the deductions they have arrived at. I consider that the loss of the Eastern Province election by Mr. McCabe was due to the fact that the Country party had decided to support the Liberals; not as the Hon. Mr. Drew contends, that the country did not agree with the attitude the Country party was taking towards the Liberals, but because they were instrumental in driving the late Government from office. Neither gentlemen who have referred to these recent elections have referred to the Ministerial victory. I think these elections very strongly prove that the country is very glad indeed to have the present Administration in office. It is only natural that the Labour party should be annoyed, and they say that the Liberal party have bought the Country party, or as one hon. member puts it, taken them in. Hon. members will know that I, as member, for Geraldton in the Legislative Assembly supported several Liberal Administrations, and I have no regrets

on that score. They made mistakes and now they are endeavouring to make amends for those mistakes. We have not been bought. They have realised their mistakes, and the Hon. Mr. Drew has referred to one of them which they have realised, and which I trust they will amend. I may say, as a country member, that the last few years has more than ever convinced me of the need of a Party to represent the producers of Western Australia and to safeguard their interests.

Hon. J. Ewing: Did not the Liberals do that?

Hon. H. CARSON: Is it not right and have they not full justification in having a combined force in the Legislature of Western Australia, but I realise that if the Country party is to properly represent the people of Western Australia they must be prepared to take a share in the administration. I really believe that the producers themselves will eventually turn down the Country party unless they do take up such an attitude. We know what an Independent party means, and I was never in favour of an Independent party. I wish to mention that in one stage of the history of the Labour party they took up the very same attitude as the Country party has taken up, and the very same language might have been used towards them on that occasion as they use towards us at the present time. They call us bushrangers, and the Labour party then were bushrangers to the same extent as the Country party is now. I was never an extreme party man and I hope I never shall be. I desire to briefly refer to some of the Government proposals. I think the country is quite in accord with the Premier's Policy Speech as delivered some short time back in his own electorate. I am personally in accord with the intentions of the Government to do away with these fish and meat stores. It is a very different matter to talk fish and deal with it, and I am quite with the Government in its intentions to do away with these stores. I hope they will do away with all business concerns that are not up against monopolies. Language is not strong enough to express what one thinks in regard to the attitude of the Government in respect of fish and meat stores. Why should one section of the community be catered for at the expense and disadvantage of other sec-

tions? I do think that our Ministers have a far more important work to do in the administration of the great affairs of this State than going into such businesses as fish and meat stores, which only tend to interfere with the progress and prosperity of the State generally. I am very pleased that the Government intend to make it easier for the country scholars to get better education and the highest and best of education. The Colonial Secretary in speaking some while back as leader of this House referred to the intention of the Government to start high schools in the provinces. Now I am quite in accord with that, but I do hope that more will be done in regard to agricultural education. I think it is a great shame that in a huge State like this where we are looking forward to the agricultural industry doing so much for the State, there is so little being done in regard to agricultural education. I do hope that these schools will be established, and that agriculture will be taught not only in theory but in practice and on the best lines. At the present time we have an agricultural school at Narrogin. Now the Government have several State farms, and I think they might reasonably, with good effect, establish similar school farms throughout other portions of the State in order that every part may be catered for. I live 600 miles north of Narrogin. I have my boy at the Narrogin State Farm, which is being run well and doing good work. Regarding primary education, I know that the supplying of schools in outback places is a very great problem. I am glad the Government have already reduced the average necessary to establish schools in outback places. I believe at the present time the number is eight, but I am sure there will be great difficulty with that average for every child to receive education. I have a long letter in front of me from a person in the most northern agricultural area asking that the Government should establish board schools at the nearest populated centres. At the present time it is impossible for a child to receive anything like a fair education in these way-back schools, and the reason is the difficulty in obtaining teachers, more especially qualified teachers, and it is a crying shame that the department should send out to these places young girls of 18 or 19 years to carry

on educational work. While this suggestion might be a good one I do not think it would be generally accepted by the people out back. I recognise it is a problem to give every child an education along these lines. Regarding the Esperance railway, I may say I was very much surprised and also disappointed that the Government should stop this work. It is really a very serious matter and a very great responsibility for any Government to take on their shoulders after an Act has been passed, to stop such a work. There may be very good reasons for so doing. Certainly the latter portion of Mr. Mann's report is not very favourable, but I do not think we can take Mr. Mann as an authority on wheat growing. He may be a very good analyst, but in the concluding portion of his report he says that it would be hazardous to profitably grow wheat. That portion of his report is certainly serious, and the returns from that portion of the State give some credit to his report. I am not altogether pleased or satisfied that the Commission which has been appointed is the right Commission, or that the gentlemen are capable of making a report on this matter. I am quite in accord with Mr. Dodd when he said he thought it advisable for the Government to get an expert from the Eastern States to report on this matter. It is only natural that persons should take exception to Mr. Dempster being appointed on the Commission, especially as chairman, when we know he is a pastoralist. We know that pastoralists are against closer settlement, especially when that closer settlement approaches near to their own runs. It is a very great pity that the recommendations of Mr. Paterson and other experts were not carried into effect. The Government should have established experimental farms and tested the country properly by working the same. I should be very sorry indeed if the report is unfavourable. It is very hard to think or realise that such a huge tract of country is unfit for profitable cultivation.

Hon. J. Ewing: What is the rainfall?

Hon. H. CARSON: The rainfall is satisfactory, 12 or 14 inches. Regarding the salt, there is a great deal of land in Western Australia with very much salt in it, and I do not know that the land at Esperance is likely to be much worse than that in other

portions of the State. I do not know any of the gentlemen who have been appointed on the Agricultural Commission, but as far as I can gather they are men who are capable of undertaking the work. We all realise the agricultural industry is in a very parlous condition, that it is necessary to find out the cause and if possible to remedy it. There have been several things against the prosperity of this industry. Our land policy has been wrong; secondly, we have had abnormal conditions prevailing for two or three years, and the tariff deeply affects the industry. Then, again, our railway charges (which have already been referred to by Mr. Cullen) and other matters have placed the industry in this parlous condition. Men have gone on to the land without much capital, some without any at all. They have not had stock, and some people state that wheat growing is not profitable unless there is mixed farming or stock is carried as well. I sympathise with the Government. Mr. Dodd envies the Colonial Secretary because he says he will not have much criticism, but I do not envy the Government in the task of putting the finances in a satisfactory condition. I am quite satisfied we have a country rich in natural resources, and with increased population and capital, working harmoniously, we should have the most prosperous State in the Commonwealth. I am a firm believer in co-operation and the Government should give assistance to any co-operative movement for the production of wealth and the distribution of the same. There is another matter that has been brought before the Government and both Houses of Parliament, and I hope the Government will give immediate attention to it—an amendment of the Agricultural Land Repurchase Act. How the Government will do it I do not know, but it is imperative that this matter should be taken in hand at once, the Government either accepting the interest and allowing the principal to remain as they do with workers' homes, or extending the leases for 30 years. I do not know how, but something must be done quickly. Reference has been made to the Avon and Yandanooka estates, and these should be dealt with at the same time along the lines I have indicated. Like Mr. Dodd, I desire to congratulate Mr. Miles on his return without opposi-

tion and on his very fine address to the House. There was nothing parochial in it and I can, after that speech, refer to the Victoria district without appearing parochial. Mr. Miles advocates the establishment of freezers at the port of Geraldton, which would be a wonderful asset for the State. Not only will it increase the number of stock but it will cheapen meat, and the country in the Victoria district would be developed much better. Just recently we had the South-West Commissioner visiting the Victoria district.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: You banquetted him well.

Hon. H. CARSON: Not only did he indicate to the settlers in that district that he had been sent to the wrong district to establish bacon and dairy industries but he said he would report so to the Minister. He said the Government had made a mistake in not sending him to the Victoria district rather than the South-West. It was admirable country for dairy and bacon industries. At the present time the people are endeavouring to form a co-operative freezing works at Geraldton, and I would sooner see a co-operative institution there than a Government institution. I hope the Government will give the matter every consideration. The Government will have some gentlemen from that portion of the State waiting on them soon asking for a gift of land, and the land that they will ask for is of very little value now, but it would be of great assistance to the formation of this company, and I hope the Government will give the request favourable consideration. How unlike Mr. Miles was Mr. Lynn. I am glad Mr. Dodd referred to Mr. Lynn's speech. He was really the spokesman of centralisation, which is the great curse of Australia.

Hon. J. EWING: That was the justification for your party.

Hon. H. CARSON: Mr. Lynn was against all ports excepting Fremantle because goods could be exported cheaper at Fremantle. The port charges at Fremantle are cheaper than those at the outports, but the producers have to pay higher railway freights, and the people at Geraldton are paying  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel more handling charges for wheat than at Fremantle. Mr.

Dodd has referred to the Country party not giving reasons for allying themselves with the Liberal party. The Country party had very good reasons for deposing the Labour Government. Who is going to bear the financial burden? Is it not the producers of Western Australia? and our deficit is enormous.

Hon. J. E. DODD: Who are the producers?

Hon. H. CARSON: There are several branches of producers. There were other reasons for the Country party and Liberal party joining forces. What was the attitude of the Premier when a deputation wished to interview him in regard to superphosphates? He refused to hear them. I regret some of the things done by the Labour Government. I will give an illustration; it is a very small one, but I know of others. Near my place there are some people who bought wheat from neighbours and they carted it themselves. These people were charged 4d. a bushel for doing this work and 6 per cent. on the money. That is not fair, but this is the sort of thing the farming community have had to contend with.

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

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [7.35]: I quite agree with the remarks made by Mr. Carson, and also by Mr. Dodd, that we should not pay too much attention at this stage to party considerations. At any time party considerations are of minor importance, but there never was a time in the history of the Empire when party considerations should weigh so little as at present. In the remarks I intend to make it is not my desire to in any way embarrass the Government; they may be taken rather to give expression to the views I hold and which I believe are held by a majority of those I represent for the successful government of this State, the interests of which I trust we all have at heart. I would like, at the outset, to call the attention of the new Ministry to the fact that the Trans-Australian railway is approaching completion. The distance between the eastern and the western railway heads has been gradually diminished, and now it is but little more than 200 miles. The western rail head has passed out of the territory of Western Australia and is now in South Australia, and the line is almost certain to be completed

within the next six or seven months. With the completion of that railway a new era will be entered on so far as the history of Western Australia is concerned. It will bring the people of the capital some days nearer to the Eastern States, and, when the line is finally ballasted, and when the speed that it is expected will be reached on the railway, is travelled, the Eastern goldfields will be brought within less than 30 hours' journey of Adelaide, and they will be placed on one of the world's main roads. What I desire to call the Government's attention to is the fact that that project will complete a railway through 450 miles and more of Western Australian territory. That territory has hitherto been regarded as useless and has been neglected because of its inaccessibility, but now that it is traversed by a railway, the position is altered materially. Last year I had occasion to travel all over that country, far ahead of the then western head of the Trans-Australian railway, to a distance of some hundreds of miles into the territory of South Australia. I do not profess to have any knowledge of pastoral lands, and would not venture to offer any opinion of my own regarding the value of that country for pastoral purposes, but I refuse to think that it was ever intended by the Creator that it should remain unoccupied and undeveloped. The character of the country is limestone well covered with salt bush and blue bush, and some people, whose knowledge of pastoral matters is very considerable, say that it is undoubtedly an asset to the State, and that at some future time it will carry a considerable number of sheep. At the various railway camps at the head of the line, sheep are to be seen waiting for the butcher, and growing fat on the natural feed. One man who may be known to many members of this House, an old goldfields prospector, Mr. Talbot, some 20 years ago went out into that country and took up land some distance south of the railway line not far from Eucla. He has successfully carried on pastoral pursuits there for the whole of that period, and he has been doing so under great difficulties. His place was isolated and his nearest market was Kalgoorlie, which was between 300 and 400 miles distant. Around Fowler's Bay, in South Australia, there is somewhat similar country to that, and I

understand there has been considerable development there of late so far as the pastoral industry is concerned. I mention these facts in the hope that the Government will do something for that vast area of country, an area in extent as great as the whole of the settled area of Western Australia. There has been built 450 miles of railway through pastoral territory at no expense to the State, and surely the Government can do something towards the utilisation of this territory. Just now the State is so much overrun by royal commissions and boards of inquiry that I hesitate before suggesting an additional body of that kind, but I will say that I think there is no better subject for inquiry in this State than an inquiry to see whether or not that territory can be put to some useful purpose. What I understand is necessary is a water supply. That is essential. The Commonwealth authorities have been doing a good deal to solve that problem, because it is a problem that they themselves have been interested in, as they require water for their trains. They have large dams, while they have also been experimenting by means of sinking. I understand that in many places they have struck good stock water. If an inquiry of the kind that I suggest be held, if it will do nothing else it will advertise the pastoral possibilities of that country, and therefore will do some good.

Hon. J. Duffell: Is the water all brackish?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I was told it was good stock water in some of the places, while in others it was impregnated with salt. I know this much, and I saw it for myself, that on the Nullabor Plains, the Commonwealth authorities have sunk many galvanised iron tanks. These were intended mainly for travellers, and every tank that we came to we found full to overflowing with fresh water. I understand that the rainfall is sufficient to fill any tank that may be there and the rainfall is fairly good from a pastoral point of view. It may be said that we shall be opening up the country to provide traffic for the Commonwealth railways. The reply is that the Commonwealth railway is a feeder to the State railways. Even if it were not so, I do hope that no such narrow spirit will actuate those whose duty



it is to develop the whole of the State of which they have charge. I would also like to mention that I hope the new Government, in its desire to make good in the estimation of the people, will do something with a view of promoting efficiency and economy, especially in the matter of lessening the duplication of the Commonwealth and State services. Why should there not be one set of officers to collect the State and Commonwealth land and income taxes? Surely one set of forms could be prepared to give all the information that the Commonwealth Government would want, and all that the State Government would require, and the taxes in each case could be calculated accordingly. If that were done, it would be a big convenience to the taxpayers, who would be saved a great deal of trouble, while the cost of collection would be materially reduced. The same argument applies to the State and Commonwealth Electoral Departments. Why should not one department be able to do the Commonwealth and State work? We are told there are difficulties in the way of these matters, that the boundaries of the electorates—State and Federal—are not the same; and we are also told that the franchise for the State and Commonwealth is not identical. It is quite true that these difficulties exist, but surely none of the difficulties is beyond the ingenuity of man to overcome. I know that the late Government endeavoured to do what it could in this matter, and I hope that the new Government will push on the work that was begun by their predecessors, and endeavour to bring it to a completion. These matters of the duplication of the Commonwealth services are, after all, of very small moment in comparison with the question that before everything else faces us at the present time. The war has been touched upon by other speakers here, and it is not our province to deal with it, but what I particularly want to refer to is the state of the finances as they have been affected by the war. Our finances are part and parcel of that great question and are particularly within the province of those of us in this Chamber and in another place who have to deal with State matters. The burden of the war overshadows every other question, and every proposal we make. It

is in no carping spirit that I say that, judging by the remarks made in another place, the Treasurer seems hopelessly to have failed to grasp the seriousness of the financial position that faces this State. I do not say that the last Government fully grasped the seriousness of the position. The last Government might probably have done a great deal more than they did in that respect, but when the late Ministry was in office, those at the present time sitting on the Treasury benches were ceaseless in their cry that the Government must straighten the finances. With that cry I had a good deal of sympathy. Now that the critics of the late Government have got into office, I ask the House to consider what the Government propose to do, so far as we know. At the end of December last, the 31st of that month, the net indebtedness of Western Australia was over £106 per head. Since then the net indebtedness of the State per head has gone up. The Commonwealth war loans which have already been floated have increased our indebtedness £10 per head, and that is not nearly the full extent of our war liabilities. Furthermore, the war is not yet over. No one can say how long it will last, but it is fairly certain that before the war will have ended the Commonwealth liabilities will have greatly increased. If we take the most optimistic view of the war these will directly be double what they are to-day. That we will win the war there can be no possible doubt, but I do not think that the Commonwealth can look for payment by means of an indemnity. The Central Powers will be so impoverished by the war that I fail to see how they can pay any indemnity, and if they had any means by which to pay an indemnity those countries whose territories have been ravished by the war, namely, Belgium, France and Serbia, will have claims prior to our own. This makes the conviction certain that it will be necessary for the Commonwealth to impose taxation that will be practically crushing. The Hon. J. E. Dodd has referred to what the financial proposals of the Commonwealth are going to be. I understand they are to be introduced on Wednesday. I did hear in Kalgoorlie that

a man who was in a position to make inquiries from the Commonwealth Government received a telegram to say that something in the form of a conscription of wealth was to be introduced this week, that is, to-morrow. There are, of course, various forms of conscription of wealth. All taxation is conscription of wealth. What that really means one does not know. At any rate, we can safely assume that the proposals, whatever they be, will be very drastic, but I do not think they will be more drastic than circumstances warrant. In considering the affairs of this State we cannot lose sight of the fact that there will be the payment of the interest and of the sinking fund on the loan indebtedness of the State and in addition to that we will have to pay interest—and it is a rather high rate of interest compared with the interest paid in the past, namely,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.—which has been charged on the Commonwealth loans. Furthermore, we will have to pay the taxation which is to be introduced to-morrow, and probably if the war lasts, it will be but an indication of what we will have to bear later on. If ever there was a time when we should live within our incomes, surely that time is the present.

Hon. J. Duffell: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The Government propose to fund the deficit. That is a time-honoured plan of getting rid of the deficit. I do not object to that proposal, but what I do think one has a right to know is what will happen then. After the deficit is funded what guarantee have we that the Government are going to live within their income? The proposal rather indicates that the contrary will be the case. As I read the Treasurer's speech it implies that not only the deficit for the existing year, pre-supposing that there will be a deficit for the existing year, would be funded, but that he would make provision for the funding of the deficit for future years. That is a most objectionable proposal. What does it mean? To my mind it savours of a temptation for future Treasurers to spend more than their income. If they can simply go on by the automatic process which this Bill suggests, namely, fund the deficit, it will certainly mean that Treasurers, as we have known them in the past, will go on regularly fund-

ing their deficits. That is what is implied, at all events.

The Colonial Secretary: There is no intention of that sort.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I am very glad to hear it. The Treasurer was very sketchy in his proposals, and it was in reply to an interjection in another place which led me to suppose that is what he meant. He certainly made a remark that the deficit for the existing year would be funded. I read it two or three times, and endeavoured to make it out, and then I think Mr. O'Loughlen made another interjection which led to the remark that it would be for future years. However, I accept the Colonial Secretary's correction and I am glad to hear it. I think it would be a very objectionable proposal to provide for future deficits by funding. Whilst there could be no objection to the funding of the deficit as it exists, I certainly should object to any provision which would deal with future deficits by the machinery of any Bill which would be passed through this Parliament. What indication does the Treasurer give that this State under his administration is going to live within its income? There are three modes and only three by which one could favour a reform which would bring that about. The new Government could introduce fresh taxation, retrenchment, or increase the charges for public services. All these forms of dealing with the financial position are undoubtedly objectionable. They would all make the Government unpopular, but at a time like this there is no Government, whether it would be this Government or any other Government, that could straighten the finances without becoming very unpopular. If the Government have not the pluck to become unpopular or risk unpopularity at a time like this, it seems to me that they are lacking in their duty.

Hon. J. Ewing: Why was this not taken in hand before?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: There is all the more necessity that it should be taken in hand now if it was not taken in hand before. What do the Government propose to do, so far as their financial proposals are concerned? There is one proposal that they do make, and that is for

fresh taxation. After all their talk about straightening the finances the mountain in labour is producing a ridiculous mouse in the form of taxation on amusements and increased taxation upon the totalisator.

Hon. J. Duffell: Rome was not built in a day.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: These then are the proposals of the Government, a Government who, above all other things, when going to the country promised that they would do their best to straighten the finances. The proposed taxation is very good in its way, but infinitesimal as far as straightening the finances of the State is concerned. Consider what the Government have done since they came into office. In order to please certain of their political friends they made a reduction in railway charges which will lessen the revenue by many times as much as the new Government will get from this proposed increased tax. I do not know exactly what the total loss of revenue from these decreases in the charges will mean. It has been estimated by the late Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Scaddan, in a speech made on the goldfields a few days ago, that the total loss of revenue from what the Government have done up to the present will amount to £160,000 a year. It seems very large, but the previous Colonial Treasurer ought to know. The Government certainly talk of lessening the trading concerns. Several of these concerns seem to me to be merely experiments. I always believed that if any of them proved to be unsuccessful they should be shut down, after it was certain that there was no hope of them improving. I would like to know if even the most ordinarily drastic proposals regarding the State trading concerns will set the finances straight. It will not, even supposing the State trading concerns are the loss they have been represented to be in this Chamber and in another place. One of the State trading concerns that I would suggest the Government should put an end to is one that I in this House strongly opposed; that was the Wyndham Freezing Works. You will recollect, Sir, that when the Bill came before this Chamber to start the Wyndham Freezing Works, I was almost the only member—I think I was; I am not sure

whether Mr. Cornell did not support me—to oppose that proposal. I did so as strongly as I possibly could. I thought as the war was then on that it was no time to start fresh enterprises of that sort. I pointed out to hon. members of this House that they were constantly crying out against the socialistic enterprises of the then Government. If there was ever a time to call a pause it was then. I did what I could to impress upon this Chamber that they, at any rate, should take a stand regarding the Wyndham Freezing Works, and this House, which is supposed to contain so many anti-socialists, so far from opposing the Government for embarking on an experimental venture of that kind, belauded the Government with praise; they congratulated the Government, and the project was agreed to practically unanimously. I, however, did what I could against the Wyndham Freezing Works.

Member: You are only jesting.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I was not. Why should I be accused of jesting? I tried to be as serious as I possibly could, and I have since opposed them as I opposed them then. The Government would be perfectly justified in now stopping the works, provided they get the sanction of Parliament. I have been told that Vesty Bros. are desirous of purchasing those works. I do not know whether it is true or not, but I would suggest to the Government that they should make enquiries and see what could be done in that direction. We must remember that those works are so far removed from Perth that the question of supervision would be an extremely difficult one, and many other arguments might be used against them. Representing, as I do, a mining province, I desire to say a few words regarding that industry. Mining is constantly referred to and some of the members of the present Government have gone out of their way to represent it as a dying industry. Mining to-day is the most prosperous industry in this State, so far as the experience of the past 20 years in Western Australia is concerned. It is unquestionably the most stable industry—it is the only staple industry in Western Australia. It is quite true that particular mines may have gone down, that particular localities may have gone down; but the mining industry has gone on steadily

turning out the wealth that is so valuable to this State. It has gone on spending millions in wages and supplies, the money for which has percolated all over the State, all through this city and all over the agricultural areas. The mining industry, I say, is the one staple industry which Western Australia has had for the past twenty years. Agriculture has boomed at intervals, but it has more often failed us than not. The timber industry also constantly fluctuates; it has had its good years, and it has had its bad years. We know that the pearling industry is in a very parlous state. I would like to remind hon. members of what has been spent in the last few years on the development of agriculture, and what has been spent on the development of mining. In the *Statistical Abstract* we have a statement that the amount spent on agricultural development in one year was over a million, and the amount spent on the development of mining was about £98,000.

Member: A considerable amount of money spent on agriculture was in the form of loans.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Money spent on mining development was also loans. Now if the same amount of money was spent on mining as was spent on agriculture, I venture to say we would have had better results from it, and the State would have been in a better position. We should not forget that we have in Western Australia the largest auriferous area in the world. It extends from Ravensthorpe and Dundas in the south right up to Kimberley in one continuous belt, and the surface of that area, as it has so often been truly said, has only been scratched. There are mining possibilities that will provide work for many generations yet to come, and the hopes of this State must largely, at any rate for many years to come, depend upon mining. I do not want for one instant to discourage the agricultural industry; I do not say for one moment that money should not be spent in the development of other industries; neither is it in any spirit of hostility or opposition to agriculture, or what has been done for agriculture, that I speak. But I would urge that more attention should be paid to mining and that in its development it should receive a fair share of the money available for the de-

velopment of our primary industries. That is all I ask. I am not disparaging what has been done for other industries, nor am I desirous of doing so, but I do say that we should receive a fair share of the money for the development of our primary industries. The late Government has often been accused of neglecting the agricultural industry. Now, it has appealed to me that the late Government—often called the goldfields Government—has been more than generous towards the agricultural industry, and if the present Government, which is not a goldfields Government in the sense which the other Government was; if it is only half as generous towards mining as the goldfields Government was towards agriculture, well, the mining people will be more than satisfied. I would like, before I pass away from mining, to ask this Government to back up the efforts of the last Government regarding the Federal War Profits Tax. The Bill as it is before the Commonwealth Government, provides that the profits on goldmining should come within the provisions of the War Profits Tax. Now, the War Profits Tax is a copy of the War Profits Tax that was introduced into the Imperial Parliament. That Wartime Profits Tax did not make any reference to goldmining, and because it was a direct copy, the Bill as it is now before the Commonwealth Parliament, imposes a tax on gold mining profits. The Bill was intended to tax the profits that were acquired as the result of the war. There can be no such thing as war profits in gold mining. The war cannot in any way have increased the profits of goldmining; it may have decreased the profits. It has certainly increased the expenses, and all the Commonwealth Government need do is to have a clause in that Bill providing that the taxation shall only refer to profits that have been made as a result of the war. By no process of reasoning can increased profits of goldmining be occasioned by the war. If the Bill merely carries out the intention as clearly expressed in its title, then the mining interests will ask no more, because gold mining profits cannot be taxed. Furthermore some of the mines on the Golden Mile, such as the Great Boulder, would not be touched under the provisions of the War Profits Tax, but only the mine that has become profitable within the

last two years, perhaps after years of struggling. It is the mines that have become profitable since the war or during the last two years that would come within the provisions of the Bill as it now stands, and that is certainly most unfair. It seems to me the most extraordinary thing that the Federal Treasurer does not seem to realise that the Bill in its present form goes far beyond the intentions of the framers and is quite contrary to the very title of the Bill.

Member: It shows his ignorance in regard to Western Australian mines.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: It is not a matter that affects Western Australia only; it affects the goldmining industry of the Commonwealth. But it affects Western Australia to a considerably greater extent than any other State of the Commonwealth, because goldmining is vastly more important to Western Australia than to any State elsewhere on the continent. As Mr. Dodd pointed out we produce something like 50 per cent. of the total gold yield of Australia. Now, I would like to refer to the action of the Government in stopping the Esperance Railway. That action did not come as the least surprise to me. It is consistent with their policy of centralisation. I tried as a member of Parliament to get the late Ministers to push on with the work, and the argument I used was that if the party now in office came into power it would find some excuse to stop it. I think I told nearly every member of the late Ministry that if the then Opposition became the Government they would find some excuse to prevent the line's construction. We have heard the Colonial Secretary, we have heard the Treasurer, and we have heard all the Ministers, say we want to restore the authority of Parliament. After what they have done regarding the Esperance railway talk of that kind can only be characterised as clap-trap. In another place there were only seven members who voted against the Esperance railway. It had a very substantial majority in this Chamber, and the present Government, which came in to restore the authority of Parliament, without consulting Parliament and merely on a flimsy excuse, stopped the work that Parliament had ordered to be carried out. I knew that the Government would take action of that

kind. The Ministry dare not do anything contrary to certain interests in this State. The Premier was bound to block the line at all hazards. May I relate an instance which illustrates the Premier's methods? It may be of value to my Country party friends, and possibly a warning to them. When the recent by-election for Coolgardie was pending it was generally believed in Perth, and no doubt there were a number on the goldfields who thought, that the election was going against the Labour party. The Government saw a prospect of adding another vote to their strength in another place, a vote that they badly wanted. It was at that time that the Premier, in an interview published in the *West Australian* of 5th August, about a week before the polling day at Coolgardie, made a very remarkable statement referring to the Esperance railway. He stated it was the Liberal Government that had built the first section of that line, namely, the section from Coolgardie to Widgiemooltha, and then from Widgiemooltha to Norseman. I believe this statement, clearly implying that the Government were favourable to the Esperance line, was deliberately meant to influence the election, notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Wilson never meant to build the railway. The statement did not pass unnoticed in Coolgardie, where there is a large number of people to whom the Esperance railway is a vital matter. Some of the Coolgardie people who could influence many votes told me that the Government were going to build the Esperance railway. When I asked for their authority they showed me the statement by Mr. Wilson. I told them he would never build the railway, and I gave them some reasons for so thinking. But they said, "Surely the Premier is not so contemptible as to seek to win votes by a miserable misrepresentation of his own intentions?" I then told them that in order to make certain that I had not misjudged him I would have a telegram sent to him asking what he really meant; but I added that he would not reply until after the election, and that then his reply would be unfavourable. The telegram that was sent to Mr. Wilson read as follows:

Re your public reminder that it was the Liberal Government who built first divi-

sion of the Esperance railway. Many Coolgardie electors and others would be glad if you would kindly say whether you favour construction of the line between the head of the Esperance-Northwards railway and Norseman, so that the project that you point out was begun by your party may be completed. We shall be pleased to give prominence to an early and definite answer. Reply paid.

That was sent to the Premier on behalf of several electors of Coolgardie. More than ten days afterwards, or about three days after polling day at Coolgardie, Mr. Wilson replied stating that he intended to stop the work on the Esperance railway. The Premier may consider that very smart electioneering tactics. He may consider it clever to take credit before an election for having built the first section of the Esperance line and then immediately after polling day to stop the work on a flimsy excuse. But this method of deceiving electors will not be approved by any member of the House, nor will members consider it worthy of a man occupying the position of Premier of the State. Mr. Dodd and Mr. Drew on the floor of the House, and a number of others elsewhere, have shown that there is not one vestige of foundation in the excuse that Mr. Mann's report was suppressed. As members who were in the House at the time will remember, there were 200 samples of soil taken by Mr. Mann and exhibited in a huge glass case in the corridor; and underneath the compartments in which the soils were placed were full analyses of the soil. Furthermore, Mr. O'Brien's lengthy answer to Mr. Mann's report was distributed far and wide. Every member had it. It was so complete and effective an answer that Mr. Mann's report received but little attention from anyone until four years later the Ministry dug it out from the file and said that it had been suppressed, merely to bolster up the stoppage of the railway. Such tactics are worthy of a Government who sought to delude the Coolgardie electors. Happily those electors knew whom they had to deal with, and the device failed. The Premier and the Minister for Agriculture have always shown bitterness and animosity towards Esperance and the goldfields because the district has for so long kept them out of

office. If it be any satisfaction to them to know that they have disheartened the settlers in that district, they are welcome to that satisfaction. But they have not by their action killed the Esperance railway movement, because that will go on in the interests of decentralisation. The fact remains that they have crushed the hopes and embittered the hearts of as brave and fine a set of pioneering settlers as any part of the Commonwealth ever produced. I know those men, and I know the stuff they are made of. The Colonial Secretary is fond of quoting the returns of the district as being low, and using it as an argument that the land is not valuable. But I notice that the returns from some of the farms which have been long established in the district are never quoted. If the Colonial Secretary or any other members have any doubt on the question they should visit the district, when they would soon learn why the yields quoted were not as high as they ought to have been. The way those settlers have been treated and their properties decried would lead one to suppose that the men in the Esperance district were doing some wrong. I know that for a long time in this State it was generally regarded as high treason to refer disparagingly to any land in Western Australia—except of course the land in the Esperance district. Some years ago a member of the Federal Parliament referred in disparaging terms to certain agricultural land in Western Australia. What happened? The adjournment of this House was moved, and all the members, one after another, expressed their indignation at the disloyalty to the State of the federal member who had decried the property of our farmers. It strikes me that the member of the Federal Parliament was not altogether wrong, and that the members of this House who adopted that attitude and at the same time did all they could to decry the Esperance country were in a very inconsistent position. The Esperance land has one fault and one fault only, namely, that it happens to be between the goldfields and their natural port. Had the land been anywhere else in this State, it would have been boomed in all the moods and tenses, and all sorts of efforts would have been made to get men on to it and to foster them in every way. The crime committed by the settlers of Esperance in

the eyes of the Government is that they have settled on the land they liked best. Many of them know the State well, yet like that land best of all, and that land is unfortunately situated in a place a railway to which would interfere with the policy of centralisation which was pursued by the first Wilson Government and is being pursued by the present Wilson Government. I am constantly meeting in Perth with goldfields residents who were induced to go on the land in the western portion of the State. There is not one of those men who does not express regret at having gone on that land. All of them have told me that the land is not up to their expectations, and they all express disappointment with it. On the other hand I am constantly meeting the Esperance settlers. Personally I know nothing about the value of agricultural land. I can only judge the Esperance land by the opinions of men who know what that land is. Yet I do not know a single Esperance settler who does not express unbounded faith in his land. All are disappointed with the way in which they have been treated by the present Government, and consider also that the late Government did not do all they should have done. But all that the Esperance settler wants is to enjoy the same facilities as are given to settlers in other parts of the State. Of all those on the Esperance line there is not one which does not express unbounded faith in the land and the future of the district, provided it be given fair play. The personnel of the Esperance Commission has met with almost unanimous condemnation. There is on it not a representative of the people most deeply interested. Neither the Grasspatch nor the Scaddan branches of the Farmers and Settlers' Association have been consulted, nor has the Esperance Land and Railway League or the members of Parliament representing the locality. How would you, gentlemen, like to have your land judged by men whose opinion you have no faith in, by men appointed without consultation with you who have the best knowledge of the land? The suggestion made by Mr. Dodd was a good one. There are very few men in this State who know anything about mallee country. Why not get an expert in mallee lands from South Aus-

tralia? The mallee lands of the Eastern States are very highly classed. In conversation with a gentleman who asked me what I thought should be the personnel of the Commission, I said that if the present Government wanted to appoint a Royal Commission in whom the people interested would have faith, it was no use their appointing any men who were the nominees of the present Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Mitchell. We all know that Mr. Mitchell condemned the land before ever he saw it. I was present at a meeting where he condemned the land, and where, on being asked if he had seen it, he had to admit that he had not seen it. Then he went down to have a look at the country, and he travelled over the best part of it in the dark. Knowing the gentleman as I do, I should imagine he was asleep even then. He afterwards said that he judged the country by the trees he saw at night time. That is the sort of person in whose hands the fate of the Esperance district now rests. If the Government want to appoint a Royal Commission that would have the confidence of the people, why not ask the South Australian Government to select an expert to inquire regarding the value of the land? Some day the history of the Esperance railway possibly will be written. No railway ever built or advocated met with so much opposition, and few railways have had stronger cases in their favour. It is some 20 years since the Esperance railway was first advocated, and the fact that its construction has hitherto been prevented is a striking example of the strength of the centralisation movement in Western Australia. Probably there is no other instance of a railway sanctioned by Parliament and actually in course of construction being stopped because those opposed to it came into office. Moreover, those opposed to it were in an insignificant minority, as they could only number seven votes in a House of fifty. The fact that the railway has been stopped is a proof that the advocates of centralisation are stronger to-day than ever before in this State. Centralisation, as Mr. Carson has said, has indeed been the curse of Australia. At present nearly 40 per cent. of the people of this vast State live in Perth, and when the vast area and the small population of West-

ern Australia are taken into account the evil of centralisation appears to have assumed greater proportions here than anywhere else, probably, in the world. It is deplorable that we have in power a Government whose policy it is, despite any professions they may make to the contrary, to further that evil. I claim that in the interests of good government every district has a right of access to its natural port. The farmers of every district have also the right of access to their natural market. If that policy be not pursued, so much the worse for the country. But the policy at present seems to be, instead of encouraging the people to fill the vacant spaces of this vast State, to crowd the people into the City. I candidly confess that I have little hope of the present Government doing what, with wearisome reiteration, the Premier and the Colonial Secretary constantly state the Government will do—that is, restore confidence. So far as this State is concerned, confidence has been shaken not so much by the causes attributed by the present Ministry as by the failure of the agriculture industry to realise expectations, and by the decline of other industries as the result of the war. I am convinced that the present Government are bound body and soul to the cause of centralisation, as proved by their determined hostility to the Esperance railway. There are forces which compel the Government to do things that perhaps some members of the Ministry may not altogether like. I also fear that the Government have not the courage to take that drastic action regarding the finances of the State which is necessary if we are to avoid serious financial consequences. I hope the new Government will do more than I expect from them. I trust that I may prove a false prophet in this respect. There is nothing that would give me greater pleasure than that my expectations on this head should not be realised. But I am afraid that the Government will not act in the best interests of the industrial and commercial advancement of this country. Before concluding I would like to say a few words regarding my old friend the Colonial Secretary, and also regarding the Honorary Minister, Dr. Saw—words of congratulation and appreciation. Dr. Saw I have known for a great many years, and

I have always had a high admiration for his ability and also for his transparent honesty of purpose. I believe he will be found of great assistance in the administration of the Health Department; and I trust that, if the present Government remain in power, Dr. Saw will soon come back to assist in that work. Mr. Colebatch and I have known one another for a considerable number of years. The majority of members of this House, no matter how strongly their views may have differed from those of Mr. Drew, Mr. Colebatch's predecessor, invariably viewed him with respect, and that respect was mingled with admiration for Mr. Drew's sincerity. I believe that whether Mr. Colebatch's tenure of office be long or short, he will prove to be a not unworthy successor of Mr. Drew. There are old ties of friendship between Mr. Colebatch and myself—ties which I hope no political difference will sever. When I came to Western Australia first, as far back as 1895, longer than one wishes to remember, Mr. Colebatch and I were old journalistic colleagues. We were in close association in the early days of the goldfields, days of long ago, days dear to both of us, and days that are hallowed by the memory of old comrades who have passed away. I respected Mr. Colebatch then; and, much as I may differ with him, I respect him now; and I firmly believe that he is doing what he thinks will tend to further the best interests of Western Australia.

On motion by Hon. J. Ewing debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.40 p.m.*

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