

ment to allow free export of base metals. The Premier, for whom I have the greatest respect and admiration—and have always had that against considerable opposition—in my opinion made a mistake in the formation of his Ministry. I do not take exception to the ability of those who form the present Government, for I think we have one of the strongest Cabinets we have ever had in Western Australia. I do, however, take exception to the fact that no representative of the northern portion of the State is a member of the Executive.

Hon. J. Cornell: We have none from the goldfields either.

Hon. H. CARSON: I realise more and more every day that this huge State, especially under present conditions, will not be developed satisfactorily when our Executive is formed of men who come from practically one province.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is nearly all a Northern Government.

Hon. H. CARSON: The feeling is evident in my province that there is too much centralisation, and there are some grounds for it. If we had a representative of one of the northern constituencies in the Cabinet it would allay that feeling to some extent. The Premier is keen on developing the South-West and I think he is right, but this should not be done to the detriment of any other portion of the State. The Government are buying up many estates in the South-West, and I do not know that any offers have been refused. This is not so in the Geraldton district. There we have had estates offered to the Government but they have been refused. This may be because, in the opinion of the board, the estates were not satisfactory for the repatriation of our soldiers, but the Government should endeavour to secure land even if they have to resume it by arbitration. There are many men in our district who are desirous of settling on the land but are unable to secure suitable holdings. When speaking on the high cost of living, I forgot to mention that the citizens of Western Australia are not doing all that they might do. There are many people who are paying 3s. 4d. a bag for imported oatmeal. We have imported to this State £28,000 worth of oatmeal and at the same time have been exporting oats to the Eastern States. I think we should do more regarding our local production. We had huge stacks of wheat here, and if that had been crushed into meal and used in the same way as oatmeal it would have been a good thing for Western Australia.

Hon. J. Nicholson: There are plenty of oats, too.

Hon. H. CARSON: If that had been done oatmeal would have cost 1s. a bag instead of 3s. 4d. I congratulate the Minister for Education upon establishing his correspondence classes for children in the country who are unable to get to the schools. This is a very fine move, and I am pleased that so many are availing themselves of it. We have to try to reduce the cost of government. I believe the people think it is about time that

members of both Houses were reduced in number. It is also high time we had a redistribution of seats.

Hon. J. Cornell: There is room for improvement in the Public Service.

Hon. H. CARSON: Co-operation is going to do much to lift us out of our present difficulties, and the Government should do all they can to encourage the movement. I have, however, a complaint against some of the leaders of the Labour party. Of course I desire to see my fellows improve their position. There are leaders of the Labour party who have tried to put one section against another. This is most unfortunate, though probably in many cases they have had good reason for doing so, because there are some employers about whom you cannot say things that are bad enough. But if we adopt a more conciliatory attitude things must improve. I realise too, that if the co-operative movement were more largely adopted, it would be to the advantage of the workers. Co-operation creates a greater interest in one another's welfare and that is one of the best features of the movement. Then of course there is the immense advantage in the saving which is brought about, and that, together with the feeling of good fellowship which it creates, makes it something that is very desirable. I am pleased to have had the opportunity of saying these few words. I realise we are living in troublous times but I hope that some means will be evolved whereby industrial problems will, in the future, be promptly settled.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.5 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 12th August, 1919.*

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

### QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, WAROONA TO LAKE CLIFTON.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is the Public Works Department constructing a railway line from Waroona to

Lake Clifton? 2, If so, under what legislative authority is the railway line being constructed by the Public Works Department? 3, Is he aware that under Clause 3 of Special Lease, granted to one John Henry Johnson, and approved of by Parliament in 1916, the lessee undertakes to construct the railway line from Waroona to Lake Clifton? 4, Has the lessee, John Henry Johnson, transferred the Lake Clifton Special Lease to a company? 5, If so, what is the name of the company and who are the directors? 6, If the Public Works Department is constructing the railway line from Waroona to Lake Clifton for a private company, under what terms or conditions is the line being constructed? 7, Is the Public Works Department financing the construction of the railway? 8, Has the Government opened a new trading concern as contractors; if so, what capital is placed at the disposal of the contracting concern?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, Yes. 4, Yes, transfer registered 3rd March, 1919. 5, (a) The West Australian Portland Cement Company, Limited, incorporated, New South Wales, 2nd November, 1918; the directors of the company are: Lewis J. Davies, T. R. W. McDonald, — Goodlet, and F. Oakden, general manager. (b) The local board with power of attorney: R. O. Law, W. T. Loton, J. L. Ochiltree. 6, Answered by No. 1. 7, No. 8, (a) No; and (b) None.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY EMPLOYEES' WAGES.

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that the Railway Commissioners of Victoria have agreed that the rates of pay and hours, decided by wages boards for outside labour doing similar work, shall apply to railway employees as from 1st July this year? 2, Is he also aware that the basic wage determined by the State Arbitration Court of Western Australia is now 11s. per day? 3, Is it the intention of the Government to adopt a similar policy and make a corresponding increase in the wages of railway employees, taking into consideration the recent award of 11s. per day by the State Arbitration Court?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, In an award given in the case of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers on 30th ultimo, the minimum adult wage was fixed at 1s. 4½d. per hour—11s. per day of eight hours. 3, The unions representing the majority of the railway employees are approaching the Arbitration Court next week for an increase in wages, and the Government will naturally abide by the court's decision.

#### QUESTION—ONGERUP DISTRICT SETTLERS.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Industries: 1, Is it a fact that the Industries Assistance Board has refused further assist-

ance to settlers in the Ongerup district, and, if so, what is the reason for such action? 2, How many settlers are affected by the decision, and what is the total amount advanced to date?

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, Yes. Endeavours to profitably grow wheat have proved futile, but the Agricultural Bank has been authorised, and where circumstances warrant, is extending mortgage credit for the purchase of dairy stock, for which the district is proving suitable. 2, Thirteen. Approximately £11,000.

#### QUESTION—ELECTORAL DEPARTMENTS, AMALGAMATION.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: What action has been taken in regard to the proposed amalgamation of the State and Commonwealth Electoral Departments?

The PREMIER replied: The matter is under consideration.

#### QUESTION—NATIONAL WORKERS, COMPENSATION.

Mr. JONES asked the Premier: 1, Was any compensation paid to National workers on Fremantle wharf (a) for six weeks prior to May 4th; (b) since May 4th? 2, If so, what was the amount paid per week? 3, How many were in receipt of same? 4, What was the total amount of money paid?

The PREMIER replied: 1 (a), Compensation paid to National workers from the 12th April, 1919, to the 7th May, 1919—£2,275. (b) See paragraph 5. 2, £3 5s. per week. 3, 200. 4, £3,046 1s. 5, Since 7th May, 1919, £771 1s. has been paid towards the Distress Fund. Payments from the fund have been made on the following scale:—Single men, £1 per week; married men, £1 5s. per week; married men, with one child, £1 7s. 6d. per week; married men, with two or three children, £1 10s. per week; married men, with four children, £1 12s. 6d. per week; married men, with five children or over, £1 15s. per week.

#### QUESTION—WHEAT STORAGE CHARGES.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Honorary Minister: 1, What storage is now being charged on wheat stored in Fremantle Harbour sheds? 2, Has any refund been made of the charge of £12,000 per annum imposed in past years?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, One-sixth of a penny per bag per week. 2, No, but the Wheat Board considered the charge of £1,000 per month excessive in view of the reduced quantities handled, and a charge of £5,000 to cover a period of eleven months was arranged with the Harbour Trust Commissioner.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Amendment—Expansion of State Steam-ship Service.

Debate resumed from 7th August.

Mr. JOHNSTON. (Williams-Narrogin): Hon. members on this side of the House must feel every satisfaction at the result of the no-confidence debate. It appears to me that the speech of the Premier was of such a nature that it silenced completely the big guns of the Opposition, even those on the Opposition front bench. Never since I have been in this House have I seen a no-confidence motion, moved by a party leader, treated, may I say, so contemptuously by the House. In fact, it appears to me that the leader of the Opposition could justly accuse his supporters of having deserted him on the field of battle, inasmuch as, with the exception of the valiant member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) they let the Premier's speech go unanswered.

Hon. P. Collier: You deserted us once; those who have you now are welcome to you.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is incorrect. I am drawing the attention of the Speaker and the House to the manner in which the leader of the Opposition was deserted by the eloquent gentlemen who sit beside him. I consider that the hon. member had the right to expect better support after having moved a motion of no-confidence in the Government. One can compare it with the no-confidence motion which the present Premier moved against the Nationalist Government a little less than 12 months ago.

Mr. Munsie: You voted against him.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Certainly; I voted for the Government of the day. I have done that almost ever since I have been in the House owing to circumstances beyond my control. I look forward to the day, however incompatible it may be with the best interests of the country, when members opposite will be on this side of the House, and I shall have a period of freedom and irresponsibility with the Opposition. I cannot help comparing the different receptions which this no-confidence motion and that moved by the member for Northam a little less than 12 months ago received. On that occasion we had a full dress debate extending over several days on the subject of repatriation. If the object of the leader of the Opposition was to sow disruption among members on this side of the House, we can only conclude that he signally failed since he received no support from this side of the House, not even the support of the independent party who I understand was absent through illness.

Hon. P. Collier: Don't worry; I did not have you in mind.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Opposition may have had a question of tactics in view in putting up their leader to mildly criticise the Government in the manner he did, and the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) to express the views he stands for at such full length. We can thank the member for Fre-

mantle for his frank exposition of the views held at any rate by the extreme section of members opposite. He is an earnest believer in what he expressed and desires to carry his ideas into effect. I can only say his speech was one of the most remarkable utterances ever delivered in the Parliament of Western Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: You have made many remarkable utterances.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The member for Fremantle made threats against the lives and personal safety of Ministers of the Crown and suggested that, as far as he was concerned, they should be strung up to lamp-posts.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in accusing the member for Fremantle of saying that because he did not say it.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I have a portion of his speech before me. The hon. member told us that what had happened in Russia, Germany, and other parts of the world could quite possibly happen here, and he went on to say—

There are just as many lamp-posts and just as strong ropes in Australia and men cannot be perpetually starved.

The member for Fremantle then suggested that compliance with the wishes of a section of the goldfields unions was the only way in which Ministers could avert temporarily the coming revolution. It was an utterance of Bolshevism, anarchy and revolution.

Hon. P. Collier: Any one of which you would support if it paid you.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not wonder that he silenced the hon. member's colleagues.

Hon. P. Collier: You would support any one of those three and worse.

Mr. JOHNSTON: What I have quoted is quite a fair statement of fact, and the irritation of the leader of the Opposition convinces me that the remarks are going home.

Hon. P. Collier: You make a man sick—a double-barrelled hypocrite.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in making that statement.

Hon. P. Collier: I withdraw.

Mr. JOHNSTON: After the nauseating utterances of the member for Fremantle, we can turn with a great deal of pleasure to the practical programme which has been put before the country in the Governor's Speech.

Mr. Munsie: It takes some finding.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If the Premier wished to submit a programme which would meet with the approval of the Country party, he certainly succeeded in doing so. The Speech, to my mind, contains three cardinal points with which the farmers in Western Australia are well familiar.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Faith, hope and charity.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Their faith has often been misplaced; they have always hoped for the best, and they do not want charity, but they want proper consideration at the hands of the Administrators of the country and I believe they will get it from the present Government.

Hon. P. Collier: Is this the same Premier you spent years in denouncing?

Mr. JOHNSTON: When the Premier made mistakes I pointed them out, just as I pointed out the mistakes of the hon. gentleman when he was a member of the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: You lived politically in your district for six years by denouncing the present Premier.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is not so.

Hon. P. Collier: It is so.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It is not so. Despite the statement of the "Sunday Times" to the contrary, there is only one point on which I always disagreed with the Premier, and that was with regard to the high values put on land in Western Australia. It is to the credit of the Premier that he assisted the Government—of which the leader of the Opposition was a member—to give relief to the settlers in regard to that vital point.

Hon. P. Collier: Did you ever say anything about the Narra Tarra estate?

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Governor's Speech contains three cardinal points which are necessary for this State. They are work, production, and faith in the resources of the country. With work the farmers are well familiar. As to production, that is their daily duty. As regards faith in the resources of the country, if the farming community had not possessed that in superabundance, many of them would not be on their holdings to-day. The farming community have made some requests for Government assistance, and have responded to the appeal that Western Australia has repeatedly made to the farming community to produce, produce, produce. In return they have very justly and naturally made small requests which may be described as requests for facilities, facilities, facilities, to enable them to carry on the great work of production. The Premier received the leadership of the Nationalist Government largely because of his optimism and faith in the agricultural resources of Western Australia, and his desire to see this his native State properly opened up and developed from one end to the other. The Premier will be judged by his actions, not by his words. He has made a very good start by the restoration of the sustenance allowance to assisted farmers, and affording relief in the price of poison lands. There are grave difficulties ahead of the Government, particularly in regard to finance, and I hope the Government recognise that the present drift in the finances, as shown by the monthly deficits, cannot continue indefinitely. It is difficult for those outside ministerial office to put a finger on the points where economies might be exercised, but there are certainly matters to which the Government might well give attention—outlays which appeal to outsiders as capable of being converted to prompt and easy savings. We have had in this House "gone a million Jack." We have had "gone three millions Jim." We know the love of the present Premier for millions, and I have some fear that, if we do not look out, we shall have "gone five millions James" before many months are

past. Western Australia looks to the Government to stop this drift. The Government should economise by starting at the top. Among the smaller economies that outsiders consider easy of accomplishment, I direct attention to the abolition of the position of State Governor, a reduction in the number of members of both Houses, and I suggest the Government refrain from making the suggested increases to practically all heads of departments on which some light was thrown by the "Sunday Times."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If you want good men, you must pay them.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not know where the Sunday Press got that information but the minute seems to contain clear proof of an intention to increase the salaries of a large number of highly paid civil servants without notification in the "Government Gazette." I hope the Government will take no action in this direction.

The Premier: The information is inaccurate.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If the proposal is as stated, I hope it will not be carried into effect. I urge also the advisability of amalgamating the State and Federal Electoral departments.

Hon. P. Collier: That is something quite new!

Mr. JOHNSTON: It has been before the country for years, but has never been carried out.

Hon. P. Collier: You ask for it and it will be done.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Also the amalgamation of the State and Federal Taxation Departments and the State and Federal Savings Banks. These are directions in which economy could be easily applied. Regarding repatriation, much has been expected from the Premier.

Hon. P. Collier: The Government are economising. They have even cut out our use of the phone for trunk lines. Have you heard of that?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I have heard of it. The Premier's recent visit to the Great Southern districts was in the nature of a triumphal tour, but there has been a good deal of uneasiness in those districts regarding the delay in settling returned soldiers in the districts from which they enlisted. The Premier has assured the different repatriation committees in the Great Southern districts that they would endeavour to settle the men in the districts from which they enlisted and, in this House, he has laid it down as a cardinal point of policy that this would be done. I would direct his attention to a resolution passed at a conference of repatriation committees from the Great Southern districts which sat at Narrogin on the 4th July. It read—

This conference views with surprise the recent announcement of the Premier to the effect that most of the repatriation money will be spent in the South-West and in the interests of the returned men them-

selves, we urge the necessity of settling our soldiers promptly on mixed farming areas in the Great Southern district and in the wheat belt; we think steps should be taken to make good land available for soldiers in the districts to which they belong.

Hon. P. Collier: Why do not you refer to some of the poison lands in the Williams district?

Mr. JOHNSTON: There is some good land there.

Hon. P. Collier: I knew you intended to allude to it.

Mr. JOHNSTON: There is no part of Western Australia where the Government could, with greater consideration for the interests of the men themselves, place returned soldiers than in the beautiful valley of the Williams River. In that district much of the best unimproved, or partly improved land in this State exists to-day. If the hon. gentleman has any knowledge, as I believe he has, of that part of Western Australia, or if his colleagues have any knowledge of it, I am surprised that he does not support my proposal.

Hon. P. Collier: Why has the land remained unimproved all these years?

Mr. JOHNSTON: A great deal of it was taken up in the early days of Western Australia under grants made by the Imperial Government without improvement conditions, and under old poison leases; and it has been very difficult for people to get hold of those lands. But the residents of the district have carried a resolution drawing the attention of the Government to the fact that these valuable lands, which so far as I know have never been placed under offer to the Government, should be acquired by compulsory purchase. The following is the resolution which was carried:—

Mr. Hughes moved "That we recommend to the Premier that the Soldiers Settlement Act, providing for the compulsory resumption of land, should be put into operation where the land is not being reasonably utilised."

That proposal is a very wise one. There are considerable areas in that district which are not being properly utilised. The Government ought to acquire for subdivision some of the estates in that district, so that the best of the land held out of use to-day may be made available for our soldiers. Up to the present very little has been done in the direction of settling returned men in any part of the wheat belt. I admit that the Premier has been only two months in office, but he knows that, as regards Wagin, Katanning, and Narrogin, 1,000 men could be settled in each district. So far, Mr. McLarty tells us, four estates have been purchased in the whole of the wheat areas for subdivision with a view to soldier settlement.

Mr. Smith: What about the lands the men occupied before they went to the Front?

Mr. JOHNSTON: Those soldiers who had lands before leaving are returning to them. But many of the soldiers are farmers' sons,

with no land of their own. The whole of the men returning from the war to lands they held before going away are included in the total of 647 who, according to Mr. McLarty's report, have been settled on the land in Western Australia. After four years of operation in a more or less half-hearted spirit of the Repatriation Act, we have a total of 647 returned men settled on the land, or with their applications approved. But how many of them are men who were settled on the land before they enlisted, and who are now merely returning to their holdings, to which end they are obtaining financial assistance under the operation of the repatriation scheme?

The Premier: I do not think a large number.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I should think the proportion was about half.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): No; nothing like that.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If it is so, the result of our four years' effort at repatriation is very small indeed.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Does it not strike the hon. member that most of the soldiers who came back four years ago were not physically fit to go on the land?

Mr. JOHNSTON: Four estates, comprising 35,814 acres, have been purchased for £76,062. Those four estates are capable of being subdivided into 42 holdings, which number will go absolutely nowhere among the men who are returning to Western Australia in the expectation of being assisted to settle on the land. This State has repurchased for soldier settlement a total of 52,077 acres at a cost of £139,449. In other words, we have purchased 134 holdings for subdivision, as compared with 2,312 applicants who have already applied to Mr. McLarty for assistance under the Soldier Settlement Act. It is true that Western Australia has Crown lands of a greater extent than any other State except Queensland, but I may remind the Premier that the people of this State, and the members of this House, expect him to get the soldiers settled in accordance with the speech he delivered 12 months ago, and also in accordance with the promises made by him since and much applauded during his recent triumphal tour through the Great Southern district. So far, it can only be said that the Government have failed lamentably with their 134 subdivisions to meet the requirements of the men who have returned to the State. The Federal Government have agreed to make available £3,375,625 for soldier settlement during the next three years, and at the present rate of departmental inactivity in Western Australia it appears very doubtful whether half this money will be spent during the period for which it is being made available. On the other hand, let us see what has been done in the State of Victoria, the smallest State in the Commonwealth except Tasmania. A cutting I have here from the "West Australian" shows that up to the 31st July last the

Victorian Settlement Board had purchased 175,430 acres at a cost of £1,862,242. Assistance by way of advances for stock and improvements had been granted to the extent of £331,916, and 1,093 settlers had already been placed on the land. Our population is about seven per cent. of that of the Commonwealth of Australia, and yet we have spent on land purchased for soldier settlement only about one-fifteenth of what Victoria has spent.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Victoria has practically no Crown lands available.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Our enlistments were about 10 per cent. of those of the Commonwealth, and yet in assisting our soldiers to settle on the land we have spent only one-fifteenth of what Victoria has spent. These figures seem to me to prove conclusively that the local Repatriation Department have failed to take advantage of the opportunity of putting the soldiers on the land.

Hon. P. Collier: You said last session that the Government had succeeded admirably in this matter.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I said nothing of the kind. I have read through the whole of that debate to-day, and I contradict the leader of the Opposition absolutely. I claim that Western Australia ought to lead the Eastern States in this matter, instead of seeing some of them do very much more than we are doing.

Mr. Munsie: I want to see the Government get the land fairly. I want to see the man that is put on the land have a chance to live. If he pays three times the value or the land, he has no chance.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I have read the motion carried at the Narrogin conference, and I do not think the Government will ever succeed in putting the soldiers on the best land, to which they are entitled, until a system of compulsory resumption, as advocated by the members of the repatriation committees, is adopted. Indeed, I consider that some of the best repatriation committees in Western Australia are to be found on the Great Southern railway. They have large sums of money on hand. At Williams the repatriation committee are prepared to give every returned soldier settler 100 first class ewes; and yet, through the failure of the Government to acquire there by resumption or purchase even one estate for subdivision, nothing can be done in that district. I suggest that the Government will have to resume some of those large, rich, well improved, empty areas, which are so admirably suited for settlement by returned soldiers.

Mr. Underwood: You are pleading pretty hard to sell some of those estates.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not care how the Government get hold of the land; so long as they get good land for the returned soldiers. Next, a few words in regard to the position of the wheat growers of this State, who I think have very little to thank the Prime Minister, Mr. Hughes, for as regards his recent sale

of their wheat at the rate of 5s. 6d. per bushel. I regard that price as very unsatisfactory in view of the world's price to-day, and also in view of the high cost of production. The pool in Western Australia to-day is charging our own millers 8s. per bushel for wheat to be ground into flour for export. If any miller in this State wishes to grind flour for export, he has to pay the Scheme 8s. per bushel for that wheat; and yet one million tons of our wheat have been handed over by Mr. Hughes at a price of 5s. 6d. per bushel.

The Minister for Mines: For Imperial orders the price is less than for private orders.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Pool is charging 5s. per bushel for wheat for local consumption. The Canadian farmer is getting from 9s. 5d. to 10s. per bushel for his wheat, while ours is sold at 5s. 6d. per bushel, delivered at the seaboard. We find the "Sunday Times," in its desire to condemn the Government, also condemning the wheat-growing industry in Western Australia. That journal has pointed out that certain distressed farmers have secured a return of only five bushels to the acre, and has suggested that wheat-growing is therefore an unprofitable industry.

Hon. P. Collier: The official figures show that since 1912 it has not been profitable.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The figures show the enormous amount of wealth which wheat-growing represents to Western Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not the point. Since 1912 it has not paid.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It has paid Western Australia well, and perhaps the wheat-grower least of all. In my opinion it has certainly paid the great majority of individual farmers quite well, and the figures which I am going to quote show the value of the industry to the State. I think it is entirely improper for the "Sunday Times" to attempt to condemn so valuable an industry. In 1915-16 we had 1,734,117 acres planted with wheat, which returned 13,236,355 bushels, worth roughly £4,559,000; in 1916-17 we had 1,566,608 acres under crop, which returned 16,103,216 bushels worth four million pounds; in 1917-18 we had 1,349,762 acres under crop, which returned 9,303,787 bushels worth £2,325,000; and in 1918-19 we had 1,146,103 acres under crop which returned 8,845,387 bushels worth £2,211,000.

Hon. P. Collier: But, according to the official figures, the average during the last five years has been seven bushels.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Nothing of the kind. During the last four years the average has been respectively 10.52 bushels, 10.28 bushels 7.44 bushels, and 7.72. Yet the "Sunday Times" is decrying the whole industry because the average yield secured by certain assisted farmers has been less than five bushels; and that despite the fact that, during the period of four years I have referred to, the total value of the wheat crop aggregated over 13 million pounds. I am sorry the Minister for Agriculture is not in the

Chamber, because I should urge on him the duty of doing something to keep the flour mills going. We hear a lot about the starting of new industries, but here is an existing industry of the utmost value to the State, yet the small mills find their Imperial orders cancelled and they are getting no encouragement from the Wheat Scheme to continue operations, in spite of the fact that the farmers are not able to purchase all the offal they require. In view of the development of the dairying industry, it is the duty of the Government to see if the Asiatic markets cannot be exploited for flour, so that we may enjoy the benefit of keeping the required offal in the State. The most interesting feature of the Premier's speech was his notification that the British Government propose to settle 12,000 British immigrants, ex-service men, per annum in Western Australia at the rate of 1,000 monthly, these men to be financed in their land operations in this State by Great Britain herself. I have always supported an active immigration policy. We all have. It is a mere truism to say the people of Australia will never be able to hold this country unless they fill it up with a vigorous white population. In view of our limited population I believe the State can easily absorb all those men, if our land and immigration policy is properly administered. At the same time, according to Mr. McLarty's report, we have already 1,655 Western Australian returned soldiers anxious to settle on the land who have not yet been so accommodated by the Repatriation Department. It is the duty of the Government to settle all the local applicants before they let the British Government send out immigrants at the rate of 1,000 a month.

Hon. P. Collier: One thousand immigrants monthly, and we cannot settle a few returned soldiers!

Mr. JOHNSTON: A price-fixing Bill is forecasted. I well remember that, shortly after the outbreak of war, this was the first Parliament in the British Empire to pass a price-fixing measure with a view to protecting the people of the State from exploitation while the war continued.

Mr. Munsie: The present Government, with the exception of one Minister, opposed that measure.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am talking, not about any Government, but about the Parliament. We passed that measure and it was subsequently copied throughout the British Empire. All the Australian States followed the example of Western Australia in that respect. There have been some kaleidoscopic changes during the last few years, and I do not think any of us have blindly followed the one leader or the one political shibboleth all the time.

Mr. Munsie: Speak for yourself.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The hon. member no longer ranges himself behind the leader he had when war broke out.

Mr. Munsie: My old leader, like you, has twisted.

Mr. JOHNSTON: There have been a great many changes, and probably quite small accidents have determined whether certain individuals find themselves in the Nationalist camp or opposed to the Nationalists. However, those of us who supported that price fixing measure in 1914, remember that the Upper House was responsible for refusing to renew the provision when it expired at the end of the first year.

Hon. P. Collier: Who led the attack?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I think Mr. Colebatch did.

Hon. P. Collier: And now he is going to lead the defence.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not think that affects the question. The hon. member would have a fixed support or opposition to any given measure recorded, and he would endeavour to keep other members to that, irrespective of the changes that have taken place in politics throughout the world. Few of us think as we thought a few years ago. We are advancing and progressing with the times. It would be a bad thing for the Australian democracy if progress in thought did not continue. The community should be protected, particularly in regard to the cost of living. The question of price-fixing by the States, however, is a very complex and difficult one. It appears to me that better results could be obtained by the Federal authorities having one law in operation throughout the Commonwealth. Many of the commodities in respect of which the people have been most exploited are imported, and in regard to those commodities it will be a very difficult matter for the State Government to fix the price in Western Australia. I propose to give the measure my support if its merits commend it to me. I applaud the Government on having decided to bring in this measure. At the same time I point out that we cannot unduly interfere with prices of local products unless we give local producers protection in regard to the price of imported commodities which they require for use in their production. In other words, we must limit the cost to the local producers before we limit the cost of local products. I shall be very much disappointed if the Government do not endeavour to fix minimum as well as maximum prices for local products. If we have minimum prices fixed for our local products we shall get a very much larger production. Practically we had the minimum price fixed for wheat throughout the war, for the guarantee given by the Federal Government was looked upon as a guaranteed minimum price, and so was responsible for production continuing under strongly adverse conditions. Year after year we have had a glut in the chaff market; we have seen hay sold in the stack at £2 or £3 per ton. That is one of the reasons why farmers have not grown it. Then, in the following year, high prices have ruled for that commodity. If the Government wish to avoid a recurring scarcity in local articles, including chaff, with consequent high prices, they can best secure that result by fixing a minimum as

well as a maximum price, and by guaranteeing a payable return to the producer.

Mr. Munsie: There was a big scarcity of chaff in this district, yet hundreds of tons of it were burnt in one establishment.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I trust that in those circumstances no fire insurance was collected. I am glad the no-confidence motion has been disposed of as it was, and I hope the House will now get down to solid business on the Government's practical and progressive policy, and that, without party faction, we shall be able in a spirit of sweet reasonableness to do our duty to the whole of the people of the State.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): I regret I cannot entirely comply with the desire expressed by the last speaker, who has just concluded his speech on the Address-in-reply, that we should all immediately settle down to work. I am pleased to hear the hearty support given by the member for Williams-Narrogin to the Government. This is about the first Government he ever did support, so far as I know.

Hon. P. Collier: It is the end of the Government.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I belonged to two Governments of which the hon. member was a supporter. I got out. He did not support us so fully and so heartily as he is now supporting this Government.

Mr. Johnston: You had no reason to complain.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I agree with the leader of the Opposition when he says that we are all glad the war is over. I am particularly glad it was not finished merely by negotiation with Germany, but was concluded on the terms dictated by Great Britain and her Allies. The sooner we settle down amongst ourselves and have peace at home, the better it will be for us all. An entirely new era has opened up as a result of the conclusion of the war. No people in the world have ever been through a time like this before. It is obvious to many of us that the world will not return to pre-war conditions. There is a new time ahead of the old world. That being so, we might have expected something from the leaders of this Parliament that would tend to be a guide to us for the future upon which we are bound to enter. I regret that so far we have had no indication from any speaker that anything more is required than the old platitudes that suited us so long ago. For the last nine years I have heard the same old tale unfolded by the member for Williams-Narrogin, namely, that the land at Narrogin is the best in the State, and that he wants the Government to spend money there. The leader of the Opposition has followed the same traditions usually followed by the Opposition. He has dealt with the Governor's Speech. It contains nothing. It is not for the leader of the Opposition to put forward a policy. His position is to criticise or comment upon one. As no policy was put forward he has nothing upon which to comment.

He spoke about one or two things which did not matter, such as the defeat of the Lefroy Government, the coming into power of the present Government, and other trivialities. He also mentioned the land tax, the abolition of the Legislative Council and the abolition of imported Governors. I do not think any of these matters are going to open up anything to help us in the future. Then we had the no-confidence motion. The leader of the Opposition said nothing, and the Premier stood up and replied to nothing, and said nothing. Up to the present we have not had one indication as to what this State ought to do to overcome the difficulties that are facing it.

Mr. Johnston: Let us see what you will do.

Mr. Maley: We are coming to it now.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: By and by perhaps. We are not going back to the old conditions, possibly more particularly in Europe than in Australia. In Australia, however, we shall certainly not revert to them, and the Government which does not realise that will not succeed in this State.

Hon. P. Collier: As a matter of fact it would appear that we are going back to worse conditions.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Appearances are not right just now. We have changes in our politicians and our political parties. Before the war finished we had a National party and a Labour party. To-day we have a National party, two or three Labour parties, and some Independents.

Hon. P. Collier: And the Country party.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I will speak about that later, for I have some good advice to give. I am going to leave this seat because I cannot keep my eye on the Country party. My experience of the members of that party, when I was in office, was that they were always apt to stab one in the back.

Mr. Pickering: That is unkind.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That was true, politically. I think the late leader will agree with me on that point. There were many interjections coming from behind us, and that is why I want to get away from here.

Mr. Hardwick: Where are you going?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I will tell the hon. member later. I joined the National party conscientiously believing that it stood for the interests of Western Australia and the Empire. I promised to support that party until the end of the war, and have loyally fulfilled that promise. When the war was over I was in a position to consider whether the Government I then was with were working on the best possible lines, and I concluded that many members of that Government lacked the qualifications necessary to run this country. Some of them seemed to me to lack the desire to run it on proper lines, for they wanted to run it in the interests of a few. The greatest difficulty of all was in the matter of ability. I resigned from that Government. The Nationalists are split. I have left them. We have a Labour party. As a matter of fact, we have three sections of the Labour



party. We have the National Labour party—I am using these phrases in order to define the different parties—we have the Official Labour party, and we also have the extremist Labour party. The extremist Labour party I would call that to which the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) belongs. This I would call the rope-and-lamp-post party. I have no desire to pay any attention to the flamboyant piffle of the member for Fremantle. I do not care to anticipate the trouble to which he has referred, but will tell him this, that if such a time does come there will be a lamp-post to spare for him.

Mr. Pickering: Hear, hear!

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am not inclined to deal with that sort of flapdoodle. Responsible citizens should avoid that kind of thing. Most of my friends opposite, I believe, desire to avoid the catastrophe of Australians killing each other. Regarding my own position, I would say that I have formed a new party. It consists of the electors of Pilbara and myself. I did think of joining the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Rocke), but we could not amalgamate our views. After 13 years experience in Parliament I am convinced that one of the worst things in Parliamentary government is the party system. Its influence is not only in the House but out of it. It reminds me of a lot of football barrackers. If a man is wearing a blue and white guernsey he is a hero, but if he is wearing a red and green guernsey he is "a cow." So it is with the political ticket. If a man is wearing the blue and white of Labour he is "It," but if he is wearing some other political colours he is a traitor, or as bad a thing as may be imagined.

Mr. Munsie: You have only to be in the Labour party to be called that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The hon. member has only to stick to it long enough to be called that by McCallum, Jones, and company. I was called that when I was in the party by the rope-and-lamp section of the hon. member's party.

Mr. Munsie: You cannot prove that this was ever said by McCallum. You are making an untrue statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in accusing another hon. member of making an untrue statement. He must withdraw the remark.

Mr. Munsie: I withdraw.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I find myself in the position—

Hon. P. Collier: Of a whale on the sea-shore.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I find myself almost in the position of the hon. member who does not know exactly where he is. But I know where I am. I know I cannot promise anything like loyal support to the present Government, such as I have given to previous Governments behind which I have sat. In the past, whether the Government were right or wrong, they had my vote if they wanted it. The leader of the Opposition will agree with me in that, and so, I think, will the member for Moore.

So far as the present Government are concerned I am going to use my own judgment in regard to their actions, and if I do not think their administration is in the best interests of the country, I will vote against them—I will vote either to put them out of office or to defeat their measures. If we take the Premier's speech as reported, we find that he said in effect, this is a great country. He tried to boost the country and said he was an optimist. I can remember the hon. gentleman when he sat on the other side of the House and a more dismal circumstance I have never known.

Hon. P. Collier: A pessimist.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The word does not apply to him. He was a dismal Jimmy when he sat in opposition, a more dismal individual did not exist. Soon afterwards he told us that we were going through fearful times, that this country was being dragged down and that there were dark clouds over us. Next he is elected Premier and then is "the winter of our discontent made glorious summer" by this son of Northam.

Mr. Green: The fowls are beginning to lay then all right.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He says it is a great country and he starts to boost it. As a matter of fact his capabilities as a booster are not very great. He has told us through the Press that he has rejuvenated the Lands Department, that he has galvanised that department into action and that at the present time returned soldiers are being put on the land. In fact the department are shovelling them on the land. As a matter of fact the same Minister is in control of the Lands Department to-day who was in charge of it before the present Premier assumed office.

Mr. O'Loughlin: The Premier over-rides his Ministers.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Premier could not over-ride a cat.

Hon. P. Collier: And that Minister refused a portfolio so that he might remain in the Lands Department.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The two Ministers responsible for settling soldiers on the land are the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Agriculture. They are actually doing the work to-day and they have been doing it all along ever since the Lefroy Government was formed.

Hon. P. Collier: For the past two years, and they were refused a portfolio.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am not going into that beyond saying that the same gentlemen who were there when the Lefroy Government were in office are there to-day. All this great galvanism has been drawn attention to in the "West Australian."

Hon. P. Collier: It has all been done in the Press.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes. The figures regarding the settlement of soldiers seem to be most extraordinary. I feel absolutely certain that our late Premier gave figures which were similar to those which have recently been quoted.

Mr. Munsie: But there has been a Premier intervening.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I shall have a few remarks to make about the intervening Premier directly. This galvanic shock, which according to the present Premier has been administered to the Lands Department, amounts to, in all, the settlement of about 40 or 50 soldiers on the land. If the Premier cannot go faster than that he cannot expect much support from my party.

Hon. P. Collier: What will he do with the 18,000 immigrants a year from the Old Country?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Another important item in the Premier's speech was that we were importing a million and a-half or two millions and a-half pounds worth of stuff from Victoria and the other States, and that we should grow all that stuff here. I have been in Parliament for 13 years and I have heard that from the hon. gentleman all the time I have been here. I want to point out that during that 13 years the hon. gentleman now occupying the position of Premier has been a Minister for nearly eight years. He was a Minister for Lands and Agriculture and while holding that portfolio should have promoted the growth which would have been responsible for our own production of those articles about which he spoke. If we are not growing that stuff now we should be growing it, and all we can say is that the present Premier has utterly failed during the past 13 years.

The Premier: We are growing six times as much as we grew before.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Six times as much what?

The Premier: Produce.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Butter?

The Premier: Yes, much more butter.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: When the hon. member took office we were producing 21lbs of butter, now we are producing 12lbs.

The Premier: You were a Minister yourself.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I was a Minister for many years, but I do not skite about it. I told the Premier all along that that is one of the most difficult problems it is possible to solve.

The Premier: It is being solved.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Then why those remarks alleged to have been made by the Premier, and which appeared in the "West Australian"? If we are producing those articles we must have them here. If we are not producing them then the Premier has utterly failed. What does the hon. gentleman propose? In his great optimistic speech he proposes that we should build new railways. That was ever his policy—the building of railways. He proposes further that we shall send out surveyors. That is also a continuation of his previous policy, to save the country. The cause of a great portion of the deficit of this State is the fact that we are over-railwayed. Railways are built which are not earning interest or sinking

fund, and to continue to construct railways will be to further increase the deficit.

Hon. P. Collier: I said that, although you remarked I said nothing.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If there is any possible chance of getting out of our financial difficulties it will be by promoting settlement along our existing railways and refraining from expenditure on works which will not give an immediate return. That is practically the only way of getting out of our troubles.

Hon. P. Collier: Would you care to read what Mr. Monger said about the Premier to-day.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not desire to speak much ahead of the Bill which will be introduced for the construction of that railway, but in regard to the proposed railway from Bridgetown to Denmark, I would point out that there is an enormous value in timber in that country. To talk about settlement there is to talk absolute nonsense. The only way to work that country is to take along the timber mills, cut out the timber and allow the settler to go out after the mill. I have been to Nornalup and it is absolutely sinful to see the most beautiful timber ring-barked and dead, and the cocky scratching out a living like an old fowl.

The Minister for Works: Not quite that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: As a matter of fact, I have not seen many poorer people since I left home.

The Minister for Works: They have good hearts.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Exactly, and I do not think we should break them by sending those people down there. We are to have a million sterling from the Commonwealth to advance to returned soldiers. My opinion is that when we have spent the last pound of that million we will have finished with our last settler, and a year afterwards the scrub will have grown bigger than ever on that area.

Hon. P. Collier: The railway will cost £400,000.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It will cost a million.

Hon. P. Collier: The two of them will cost that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It has been stated that this country is like Gippsland. There is some good soil there, but I would draw attention to this difference between Nornalup and Gippsland: Gippsland starts at Dandenong, which is 20 miles from Melbourne and there was a population there of 300,000 people. Nornalup Inlet is 400 miles from Perth with a population of what?

Mr. Green: Two families.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There is the difference between Gippsland and Nornalup Inlet. The people of Gippsland always had a market in Melbourne. The people of Nornalup cannot possibly have a market this side of Africa. If we get a big settlement there, their produce must be exported to Europe.

The Minister for Mines: There should be a local market at Denmark. The Gippsland people export potatoes to this State.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They do not grow only potatoes in Gippsland.

The Minister for Mines: That is what they started on.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Gippsland started to go ahead when they got a bonus for butter.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Gippsland started to go ahead because of a lot of other things. It went ahead before the bonus came.

Mr. Foley: You are all wrong, it was gold that gave it a start long before farming.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I hope the House will not agree to the spending of money in constructing this railway, except as a timber line. If it is warranted for that purpose it can be pushed along as required, but to build it for settlement means only the same policy that we have had from the hon. member ever since he has been in office, a policy of building railways anywhere, boosting the country beyond its possibilities, sending out settlers at the cost of the State and ruining them—and he has ruined hundreds, if not thousands, of people who have put their money into farming—and bringing the State to a very serious position. The Nornalup Inlet scheme is absolutely doomed to failure. There is not a chance of it being successful.

The Premier: That is in the words of the member for Pilbara.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not know that my words have been often wrong, not nearly so often wrong as the Premier's. Then we are going to send out surveyors.

Hon. P. Collier: They are out now.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The pegs put in, when the surveyors were down there before, have been eaten out by white ants. If the hon. gentleman is looking for work for the unemployed, it might be worth while considering, but to send capable surveyors out there is to waste their time.

Hon. P. Collier: He sends them at the wrong season, always.

The Minister for Mines: What is wrong with the season?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: But what will the Government do after they have surveyed it?

Hon. P. Collier: Build the railway then and send the soldiers there.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If so, I think we shall require sufficient railway material to bring the soldiers back.

Mr. Foley: I think it will end up with a Royal Commission.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Price-fixing is the long suit of the present Government. I judge their long suit by the declarations made by the "West Australian."

Hon. P. Collier: They are pretty right.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you want any quotations from the "West Australian"?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not want to have anything to do with that paper. One cannot be too optimistic with regard to price-fixing by members of a Government who so bitterly opposed it some years ago.

The Minister for Mines: You admit a change has taken place in the world?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not admit much change in the Premier. His ambition is to be in office: There is no change in that, but he will change anything else to get there.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a justifiable change.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We cannot feel that we are in safe hands when we have the Premier, the Minister for Works, and the Minister for Education to administer price fixing, because of the speeches they made in condemnation of the principle.

The Minister for Works: What were the speeches; when did we make them?

Mr. Munsie: You opposed it on principle.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Price fixing was abolished by our friends the Premier, the Minister for Works, and the Minister for Education, just when it could have been far more effective than it can possibly be to-day.

Mr. Munsie: That is the point. They allowed the prices to be put up.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: And the prices having been put up, price fixing will not pull them down again. They opposed price fixing not because they were opposed to the principle but, I think, because they wanted to get into office. I cannot see any other object that they could have had in view. May I point out one or two reasons why I am not giving very loyal support to the present Government. The Premier has been a total failure as an administrator of the Lands Department. The state of our farmers to-day is proof of that. The gentleman who occupies the position of Premier has been more than half of the last 13 years in the office of Minister for Lands and Agriculture and yet we have the position which now prevails in connection with our lands. Can anyone persuade himself that the Premier can be a success as an administrator? Then we have the Minister for Works, and I would like the House to consider the possibility of getting good administration from him. We heard a great deal about the Wyndham Freezing Works. Many members will remember that the present Minister for Works commented very solidly on the Wyndham Freezing Works. Week after week, he put up his creeping barrage of insinuation and assertion regarding the Wyndham works—insinuation that some member of the Ministry was getting a bit of palm grease; assertion that all we wanted was a practical business man who would know how to manage the works.

The Minister for Works: You are not correct in saying that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Labour Government spent £100,000 on these works and were condemned for making a contract for the erection of the lot for \$250,000. This is where the Minister for Works used to put up his barrage. He said we should have been able to provide the works for less money. The Labour Government spent £100,000, the great bulk of it in payment for material, in fact

that expenditure paid for over 75 per cent. of the material used in the works. The hon. gentleman has been in office for three years and has spent £600,000.

The Minister for Works: More than that, I think.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: You ought to be proud of it.

The Minister for Works: I am, too.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: And able to put up a good speech on it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The amount was £270,000.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We spent £100,000, bought nearly all the material, and he has spent £600,000 and is not nearly finished yet. This is the great practical man, the man who was going to control the engineer!

Hon. P. Collier: Twenty-five years in five different lines of business.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: And 25 years in each. He was going to show these unpractical men, who had no business acumen, how to erect the works. The Minister stands absolutely condemned as an administrator. He skites and blows, and bluffs some of the people that he is an administrator, but there are the Wyndham Freezing Works, a monument of condemnation of his administration. I cannot be persuaded to give hearty support to the Minister for Works. Members should look at the alterations which have taken place in our Government offices. The Scaddan Government recognised that it would be absolutely useless to tinker with them and that we must build new offices, and got them solid.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We left the plans for them.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Well, the present Government have shifted the Minister for Mines to the old Stores Department, the Audit Department they have shifted upstairs, and the Public Service Commissioner has been moved somewhere else, spending tens of thousands of pounds.

Hon. P. Collier: Patching.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Not patching even; making alterations to impossible buildings. This is the great practical business man, the man who knows.

Hon. P. Collier: He has even made alterations upstairs in this House.

The Minister for Mines: I think a lot upstairs needs altering, too.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If the hon. gentleman confined his attention to putting in strips of carpet, it would not be quite so expensive for the country.

The Minister for Works: Give us some more.

The Minister for Mines: Why use carpet when you can get grass?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If the hon. gentleman can justify the expenditure by himself in three years of £600,000 and not resign his position, I shall be pleased to hear him.

Hon. P. Collier: He is hopeless.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Minister for Education gave promise of some ability. He can undoubtedly make a reasonably good

speech or write an article. He was made Premier.

Mr. O'Loughlen: At the request of the Press.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes. He believed the Press and thought he could accomplish anything. He went to the Fremantle wharf—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And the Press deserted him.

Member: And met his Waterloo.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He had no right to go there, and once there he had no right to go away until he was kicked off.

Hon. P. Collier: He should have carried on once he was there.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In that incident he proved himself both a mountebank and a coward, a coward who has caused some trouble in Australia since. I do not mind a mountebank. I have been mixed up with them in politics for some time, but I do object, and so do the people of this State object to a coward. The action of the hon. gentleman on that Sunday morning is to me absolute proof that he is not a fit person to be in charge of any ministerial office in this State.

Mr. Munsie: The people thought so. If they had had an opportunity they would have shown it.

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

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Before tea I was speaking of that unfortunate episode at Fremantle. I do not wish to pursue the subject but would suggest that some decided alteration is required as regards the employment of lumpers. Hon. members will agree with me that the position at Fremantle has been unsatisfactory for many years—unsatisfactory not only to the general public but also to many of the men following the occupation of lumping. It has not worked out evenly. It is the case on many wharves, and particularly to my knowledge on the Fremantle wharf, that some men will often work 24 hours on end while others are not getting any work at all. Some men may earn £10 in a week, while others earn only 30s., or 10s., or perhaps nothing. Evidence was given in the Arbitration Court that a number of men had not averaged more than 30s. per week, and the Arbitration Court put up the wages. Notwithstanding the Arbitration Court, however, there has been no steady work on the wharves for many years. I think there have been more strikes among the Fremantle lumpers than in any other industry in Western Australia.

Mr. Green: And every one of the strikes justified.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If every one of them has been justified, it indicates that the present system needs altering. The way to alter the system is to put permanent men on the wharf. In my opinion, it is necessary for the Government to take over the entire control of the wharf, eliminating the

stevedores and the ship owners altogether. Permanent men should be engaged, and should be paid a wage awarded by some tribunal, a wage fair between them and the other citizens of Western Australia. After all, it is not a question of the ship owners and the lumpers, but a question of the people of Western Australia. Many persons have said that such a system is not possible, but I think it is easily possible.

Mr. Green: What about the ship owners?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The ship owners will have nothing to do with the matter. Once a ship comes alongside our wharf, we handle all the cargo coming out of or going into that ship. We employ men at a fixed wage, giving them a guarantee of 48 hours' work per week, or whatever hours may be agreed upon. If they do not work all that time, they still get paid for it. They have to take their shift, either night or day, just the same as our railway men and our mine workers do. I contend that under such conditions we would get satisfactory work and would have a number of workmen in permanent employment who could become permanent residents of Fremantle and make their homes there. And further I contend that the work would be done at a less price than it is costing to-day.

Mr. Davies: That system was suggested years ago, and it was declined.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Who declined it?

Mr. Davies: The federal union.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It was the ship owners who declined it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In reply to these interjections let me say that I have uttered some pretty hard things about the lumpers who struck during the war. However, the hardest things I have said concerning the lumpers, I could easily say about the ship owners. But it is not a question of ship owners or of lumpers; it is a question of the organisation of the people of this State. We must give those men reasonably good employment, and permanent employment. If we do that, I am certain we will get good men on the wharves, just as we already have good men in most of our Government services.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We want legislation to do it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If so, I feel perfectly satisfied this House will pass the legislation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the other House will throw it out.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Let us abolish the other House, then. However, I am not sure that the other House would be so solid against the proposal, now that the leader of that other House has had a look at those lumpers. I fancy the situation may have impressed itself upon his mind. I have said that I could not support the Minister for Education on account of the Fremantle episode. Moreover, I cannot support him as an administrator. I think the late Treasurer will agree with me that the present Minister for Education is one of the most extravagant

men who ever attempted to administer departments. I put his Estimates through this House a couple of times, and I did pretty well.

Hon. P. Collier: It was only that we recognised you were not responsible.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I thank the Opposition for their generosity in that regard. But let me state clearly that the present Minister for Education is the most extravagant Minister who, in my experience, has had charge of departments.

Hon. P. Collier: Besides being a rubber stamp.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I will not say any more. Let us revert to the question of what we are going to do. It is absolutely true that we must have land, settlement or we shall be in pretty serious difficulties. But the Premier seems to have only one piece of land on his mind at the present time, and that is in the South-West—Nornalup. Our first experience of the hon. gentleman was that the land was the Wheat Belt. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of abandoned farms in the Wheat Belt. Many of those farms, I am absolutely satisfied, can be made profitable under different conditions from those under which they have been tried so far. In order to grow wheat, it is absolutely necessary to have sheep. The Premier, in putting forward that optimistic policy of his, entirely overlooked that fact. The leader of the Opposition has commented upon the average wheat returns for the last four or five years. A good deal of the decrease in the returns is due to the fact that weeds and grass and other rubbish have come on the land and so choked the growth of the wheat. There is only one way of preventing that trouble, and that is by putting sheep on the land. I am stating now an absolute fact, one known to almost every man who has tried to cultivate land.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The trouble is that a lot of the settlers have no fencing.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: True, and a lot of them have poison on their land. But those difficulties have got to be overcome, or else the land will revert to a state of nature, and the many thousands of pounds advanced on it by the State through the Industries Assistance Board will be lost. If we are going to have land settlement either for soldiers or for anybody else, provision must be made to supply the settlers with sheep. I have been over a great deal of the Wheat Belt—some of it I saw only yesterday—and I tell hon. members that we might as well drive the men off their holdings to-morrow as keep them there any longer unless they are supplied with sheep.

The Premier: Fencing wire cannot be bought just now.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Premier is given credit by the "West Australian" for having imagination as well as common sense, and when I mentioned sheep his imagination could carry him on to the fence that is needed to keep sheep in. If fencing is not procurable, do not let us boost land settle-

ment. If sheep cannot be put on those farms, let the settlers be turned off at once.

The Premier: Fencing will get cheaper now the war is over.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) has pointed out that we have three million pounds coming to us from the Commonwealth for repatriation purposes, and he says that we ought to spend that amount. Apparently he desires it to be spent in the purchase of land in his own electorate, possibly from some of his supporters. I advise the Government to spend at least some of it in making the I.A.B. farmers competent to carry sheep on their holdings. As regards land settlement, one never hears from the Premier about land settlement anywhere except in the South-West. I desire to point out that there are incomparably better opportunities for close settlement in the Kimberleys than there ever were or ever will be in the South-Western portion of this State. I listened to the Premier on this subject, and I heard him say that the Government were endeavouring to put some of the soldiers on pastoral leases in the North-West. He said, further, that Kimberley was the best cattle country in Western Australia and would possibly carry sheep. That is what I heard him say, and all I heard him say, on the subject.

Hon. P. Collier: Is that all the "West Australian" says he said?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The "West Australian" came out on the first morning after the Premier's speech was delivered, with a fairly long piece about the North-West.

The Premier: It is all in "Hansard." You were asleep.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Most members go to the "West Australian" to find out what the Premier says.

Hon. P. Collier: Sometimes you get there what he did not say, also.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We usually get what he meant to say. On this occasion he has come to light with a second edition. It has been elaborated, and in the elaboration he made quite a long speech about Kimberley. I have no doubt he will yet make a third and last explanation of that speech. In its leading columns the "West Australian" seemed to be perfectly satisfied with the meagre report of the Premier's speech. They said he was a statesman; that he had delivered a speech that would carry this country through all its difficulties, that it was a close analysis, and a fine exposition. When the Premier published his second edition it was better still, and no doubt when he makes his third it will be a further improvement. As a matter of fact, using racecourse terms, one might say that when the Premier did his first gallop he was a blitherer, when he did his second he was a snorter, and that when he does his third he will be a ring-tailed roarer. I plead with the Premier to let us have his speech in one issue of the "West Australian" in future, and not spread it over two. In referring to the North-West, let me make it clear that none of my con-

stituents has land to sell. All the land there is held on leasehold and can be resumed for almost any useful public purpose. For years past the North has been the most prolific revenue-producing part of the State. In land rents alone, before those rents were doubled, we were paying about £50,000 per annum, and improving the land at the same time. Hundreds of thousands of pounds earned by private individuals in the North have been spent in developing the southern portion of the State. We have not yet touched the possibilities of the North. I have nothing to say against either the closer settlement, or the irrigation, of the Gascoyne, but in Kimberley there is no doubt whatever about the water supply. If, out of the three millions they are to get, the Government were to spend £100,000 judiciously on a settlement in Kimberley, they would not require to spend any more. The reason why that part of the State has not been settled is its distance from population. That does not apply to the South-West. When we hear of marvellously good land it is always a fair question to ask why the owners of that land have not grown something on it. That question can be fairly asked of the South-West. If the South-West can supply us with butter, at least they have had 25 years' trial, with every facility. One might ask why they have not supplied the butter. The same question might be asked in regard to Kimberley. I can answer it. The first settlement in Kimberley is not more than about 30 years old. Kimberley is right at the top of Australia, and communication therewith is difficult. There is no close culture there, because there is no market for the products of such a system. Before developing a scheme of settlement there it will be necessary not only to provide a market but to provide ships to take the products away. The Federal Government have poured hundreds of thousands of pounds into the Northern Territory. They have put men on the land there. The land was everything claimed for it, but when the settlers had grown the stuff they had to allow it to rot on the ground. We want something saner than that. There are parts of Kimberley advantaged with permanent water that requires only a pump. The land will grow stuff faster than any other country I have ever seen. In other places in the Kimberley one might put down a stick three or four feet and get splendid fresh water. There are large areas of that sort of country. In such a country dairying can be carried on with slight irrigation. One can grow corn there, and with corn pigs can be fattened. But it is of no use producing milk without a butter factory, and of no use producing pigs without a bacon factory. I invite the Premier to investigate the possibilities of that class of farming in the Kimberleys. I mention Kimberley particularly, because there we have an absolutely assured and sufficient supply of water. In my own electorate, farther down the coast, we have not that advantage. And in regard to irriga-

tion in the Kimberley, it must be remembered that the summer rainfall is unfailing, and that therefore irrigation would be required only in the winter, when the evaporation is not nearly so great as in the summer. In the South-West, irrigation is necessary over six summer months. I trust that the Premier will not stop at a mere utterance of platitudes in respect of the development of the Kimberleys. Another reason why I speak so earnestly on this question is that the Kimberleys, above all other parts of Australia, most urgently require a white population. Unless we can put a white population into the Kimberleys, a black population will come there. Any Government with the advancement of Australia at heart would do more than merely utter a few platitudes about the cattle potentialities of Kimberley and its possibilities as a sheep-growing country. In regard to the pastoral leases, I must say a word about that most iniquitous Land Bill passed by the Government of which the present Premier was a member. That Act provided that the pastoral lessees could have an extension of tenure for 20 years conditionally on their paying double rent pending a classification of their leaseholds, when a definite rent would be fixed. That Act is working out in this way: those who were there first got the best land, those who came later got the poorer land. There is much land held under pastoral lease which could be increased from 10s. per thousand acres to £20 per thousand acres. On the other hand, there are many pastoralists the full rent value of whose holdings is 10s. per thousand acres. The man who has a good holding has had his rent doubled, and so, too, has the man with the poor holding. There are up there millions of acres of land held at half a crown per thousand acres, land infinitely superior to other land held at 10s. per thousand acres. The Act referred to has doubled the rent of both classes. Another point: many of the people on the poor land are working on an overdraft. Their rents are considerable, and those men are paying interest on the rents. The Act provides that when the land is classified, in the case of a reduction the money shall be refunded to the leaseholders. But in the meantime they have to find the money and pay interest on it. I hope the actual Minister for Lands will endeavour to have this classification made, and so relieve those people who are undoubtedly paying more than they should. I speak of the actual Minister for Lands, because I know he has some knowledge of the question and of the people to whom I refer. The nominal Minister for Lands may not have that knowledge. Now I come to what is perhaps the most important question, not only for Australia but for the world, namely, the cost of living. It has increased in every country in the world, and in my opinion it will not come back to the old level, although it will have to come considerably lower than it is now. The Government propose a price-fixing Bill. I have dealt with that to some extent, but I wish to say

that one can only fix prices for those things one has control of. Most of us are well aware that the tobacco trust made enormous profits and then, at one and the same time, raised the price of a tin of tobacco and reduced the weight thereof. They were allowed to do it. We are also aware that since the Commonwealth removed their restrictions the Tinned Milk Combine has put up the price of milk. So far as Western Australia is concerned we have no control over these things. If, for instance, we fixed the price of tobacco at 1s. a tin, the tobacco combine would not send anything here at all and we should have no tobacco.

The Minister for Mines: Not if the States agreed in the matter?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Then it becomes a Commonwealth matter. The Commonwealth Government are the only body in Australia to deal with the matter in a practical manner. In America the Federal Government have taken the matter wisely in hand, and have fixed the rate of profit to be earned, compelling the people to reduce their prices to such an extent that their profits will not be in excess of, say, eight per cent. We can, it is true, fix the price of some commodities, but of very few. A Bill in this matter cannot have nearly the same effect now that it would have had when my friends defeated it. Speaking on this matter the Prime Minister is reported to have said in connection with profiteers and Bolsheviks, "Damn them both." That may be all right. I am quite in agreement, but I am not usurping the functions that the Prime Minister seems to possess. If we can get rid of the profiteer, the Bolshevik will be out of the work almost immediately. There will be nothing for him to do. There are some profiteers in this country, and I am going to mention the names of one or two of the firms concerned. For instance, I would refer to Messrs. Wigmore & Co. I happen to know a man who obtained some stuff from them. He could not meet his bill for a while, and the firm agreed to extend it. They took up his bill, providing for an excess for the accommodation. For that excess of accommodation they charged him at the rate of 11 per cent. on what he owed. Another firm I would mention is Dalgety & Co., Ltd. In this new era we are coming to we shall get rid of these profiteers, or endeavour to do so. There are other prices which will require consideration. We know that the price of Collie coal has been raised 2s. 6d. per ton quite recently.

The Minister for Mines: To be correct, 2s. 7d.

Mr. Wilson: That is only one penny.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It means a matter of £70,000 to the Government.

The Minister for Mines: Of £31,000 to the railways.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Acting Prime Minister Watt did that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Now we are coming to something with which we can deal. The coal owners and the coal miners go to Melbourne. They fix up an arrangement there

and come back to tell us that coal has gone up 2s. 6d. a ton. That coal belongs to the people of Western Australia. The value of the coal is made by the industries of Western Australia, and before the price is raised again the people of the State should be consulted, not Mr. Watt or someone else. We, as citizens, have as much right to speak on that as any other party.

The Minister for Mines: We have an agreement for three months after the war, and that has not yet expired.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The order of the court made no difference to the agreement.

The Minister for Mines: What is the use of our agreement?

Mr. Wilson: Why do you not stick to it?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There is the broad question, namely, that the coal belongs to the people of the State. If necessary the people will have to take it over and manage the mines themselves.

The Minister for Mines: There are other coal mines.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There are no coal mines known in Western Australia that could take the place of the Collie mines.

The Minister for Mines: Wait until we open up Wilgi.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In opening it up let the Government see that the people get a fair deal. We are most fortunate in having a coal supply at Collie: There is one other matter I would touch upon before reaching the State steamship service, and that is the Civil Service. There is an extraordinary gag, I may call it, in regard to this matter. As soon as any hon. member speaks about the Civil Service he is presumed to have the intention of reducing wages or dismissing a number of the employees of the State. Speaking from three years' experience I say there is a great deal of waste in the Civil Service. I do not care whether we get men out of the Service or not, but I do contend we should eliminate that waste. That was part of the policy of the National Government, and the National Government I am sorry to say absolutely forgot all about it. I have knowledge myself that there are unnecessary men, and some well paid. I remember a case in connection with one of my own departments. I was opposed to a certain man being appointed, but was away when the Executive Council paper went through. I protested through the Premier and the Civil Service Commissioner. The file went on to the Commissioner, who sent it back through the Premier to me. I put my reply on the file, but it never got out of the Premier's office. The last time I was in it I saw the file on the ice chest.

Mr. Munsie: For fear the paper would be scorched.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If the Premier will look on the ice chest he will find the file there with a minute of mine on it that is well worthy of consideration. On the question of State steamships, the Premier is reported to have said that there was necessity to provide transport facilities for the North-

West, and he is also reported to have said that he was opposed to oversea ships. It is absolutely necessary to have State owned ships running not only on the North-West coast, but to Java and possibly to Singapore. We have just read in the paper the interview with a gentleman who has been to the East—it is called our North—who points out what great markets there are in Java, and the possibility there is for shipping flour, meat, and other products from Australia to that country. It will be noticed that this gentleman comes from the Eastern States. It will be seen from the map that the islands he mentions are almost due north of Fremantle. We are seriously handicapped by almost all of our commerce being run by Eastern firms. The firms here are only branches or tail ends of the big Eastern State firms. Dalgety & Co., Ltd., for instance, is only a branch. The owners of these Eastern commercial firms are also the owners of the Australian ships. When we are looking for a market in Western Australia in that country we see that geographically it belongs to us, but we find that the merchants and ship owners are working together and carrying the produce all round the Continent of Australia. In order to overcome this we must run our own ships, irrespective of the Eastern States commercial firms or the shipowners there. To run that service we will require possibly four ships. We should have ships to run on our North-West coast, not only to bring supplies to our present settlers, but to the settlers who are coming here. Private enterprise will not supply the ships we require in order to settle that country, and without ships it cannot be settled. We want a fortnightly service along our North-West coast. We require specially constructed ships, as this coast is a peculiar one. It has no coal supplies, and only a few ships can burn our local coal. We must, therefore, have oil-driven ships. The occupation of a fireman in the tropics is one I would not follow unless I was very hard up. If we can run ships without firemen we will have a better service than we have to-day. The present ships running on the coast are not very satisfactory. The "Kwinana" is possibly one of the best cattle boats in Australian waters. The "Bambra" is not a suitable ship. She is most unsuitable. At the same time the residents along the North-West coast recognise most fully that they were fortunate indeed to have her there. The Premier is reported to have said that he is going to put ships on the coast to bring down stock. That seems to be all he knows about it. He is also reported to have said that a few years ago we were bringing down 30,000 bullocks a year, and that this year we were only bringing down 10,000 head. Last year we only brought down 10,000 bullocks and had plenty in the market. The only difference is that the overland stock route is not yet opened. That goes to show an absolute lack of knowledge on the part of the Premier so far as the North-West is concerned.



With the Eastern Goldfields growing cattle, and the increase in stock on the Murchison and the Upper Murchison, the North-West stock is scarcely required in the metropolitan market during a good season. I desire to tell the House some of the difficulties which exist in running the State Steamship Service in competition with private enterprise. Right throughout the war the Government have been running their vessels along the North-West coast in competition with Dalgety's, and Dalgety's, I can say without hesitation, have taken every possible advantage to work points on the State Government. They have put up their prices wherever they can, they have cut us out wherever they can, and they have declined to take cargo to Carnarvon. That is the first port of call and they can get higher freights if they take cargo further north. They have left the State vessels to carry the trade to that port, and what is more extraordinary, to supply Dalgety's own store at Carnarvon, while they themselves will run their ships past it. Again, Dalgety's asked us to agree to an increased freight for wool. As the squatter was getting a fair price for his wool, we agreed to put up the price 12s. 6d. a bale. Dalgety's are agents for a lot of the stations and they have representatives along the coast. What happened was that our ships scarcely ever got a bale of wool. Dalgety's ships got the lot. I was aboard the "Bambra" on one occasion. We passed Derby and saw that the wharf was loaded up with wool while not a bale of it was for the "Bambra." It was all being kept for Dalgety's vessel. We came to Point Sampson and we got about 40 bales of skins; the bales are all about the same size. The skins were shipped at 4s. 6d. a bale. The jetty was loaded up with wool all booked to Dalgety's. When I made inquiries I found that they were Dalgety's skins.

The Minister for Works: They were showing you a point.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Of course they were. Again, we had a chance with the "Kwinana" to earn £20,000 by taking 4,000 tons of flour to Java. Dalgety & Co. got on to the manager of the shipping board and the shipping board replied that there was no necessity to run two ships to Java with flour and Dalgety's carried that flour while our ship remained idle. That is private enterprise. I say again that while we have Nationalists of that description we will have Bolsheviks.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You mean to say that the Commonwealth Controller of Shipping did that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We had an order to take the flour to Java and I go further and say that I was making arrangements to go on that trip myself. But we were refused permission by the shipping board because they said there was no need for the two vessels to run to Java as one could carry on the trade.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is not the shipping board controlled by an Admiral?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I have serious doubts about that. I am coming to the question of the management of the State ships. We have as manager Mr. Stevens, who is also secretary of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. He knows practically nothing about shipping. He has never been on the North-West coast and knows nothing at all about North-West conditions; therefore, it is not saying anything harsh against Mr. Stevens to remark that he has utterly failed to manage the service efficiently. He is most of the time trying to work in conjunction with the Harbour Trust, with the result that the service has not been properly conducted. I told him when I knew the tricks that Dalgety's were putting up on us not to carry stuff for that firm. He told me he was a common carrier and he had to carry it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Dalgety's manager is chairman of the Harbour Trust.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is the position. The manager of Dalgety's, Tom Carter, is chairman of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, of which Stevens is secretary.

Hon. P. Collier: Consequently Carter is his boss.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He is Stevens' boss on the Harbour Trust and competitor in the steamships. I intend to move before I sit down an amendment to the Address-in-reply requesting the expansion of the shipping service and the putting of it under more efficient management. I can say to this House, after a good deal of experience, that that steamship service is absolutely necessary, not only to the people of the North-West coast but for the producers in the southern parts of the State. I can say, furthermore, that we will never have satisfactory management while we have a man in charge of it who has also another job, and I may go further and say while we have Mr. Stevens as manager.

The Premier: You were Minister for a long time.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, you were there; you cannot talk.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is the Premier really a convert to Government-owned ships now?

The Premier: A convert?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Premier is a convert to a limited extent. It is absolutely necessary to expand that service and to put it under more efficient management. I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the Address-in-reply:—"Further, we desire that the State Steamship Service be expanded and placed under more efficient management than obtains at present."

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany): As the amendment moved by the member for Pilbara deals directly with the State Steamship Service, which is under my control at the moment, the Premier has suggested that I might

reply to the remarks which have been made. Under ordinary circumstances the Premier would find himself in the position of having to accept such an amendment as one of no-confidence in the Government, but as an actual matter of fact the amendment is affirming the desirability of the Government carrying out their pronounced policy. It is not a vote of no-confidence in the Government; it is affirming complete confidence because it is urging that we should carry out a policy that we have already agreed upon and referred to in the Governor's Speech. The exact words in the Governor's Speech are as follows:—

My advisers are increasingly impressed with the great possibilities of further settlement and development of the North-West, and recognise the responsibility of ensuring to that portion of the State adequate and reliable facilities of transit.

I want to ask the hon. member how does he anticipate that we can give other than reliable facilities unless we provide all the facilities which are required for the purpose of carrying on that particular trade? And as it has been found necessary to expand the shipping along that coast, and provide adequate and reliable facilities, the Government have pronounced in favour of it and are definitely pledged by the Speech. The statements which the Premier has made also show that the desirability of developing the North-West is highly desirable. I have no desire to suggest that the member for Pilbara is not serious in his remarks but they come most refreshing to me, largely because, I suppose, I have been out of politics for two or three years. I may, therefore, be looked upon as one of the public, and if I were what might be called—to use a vulgar term—a greenhorn, I should imagine the member for Pilbara had during the past three or four years been away to Java having a holiday and during that time had nothing to do with the administration of the affairs of the State. As a matter of actual fact he has been Minister charged with attending to the welfare of the North-West in all its functions, and if there has been any laxity during that period the hon. member should have drawn attention to it. I can find no references on the shipping files where the hon. member suggested any special course of action. There is no evidence that he, after having visited the North-West, drew the attention of his colleagues in the Cabinet to the mismanagement of the State Steamship Service and the necessity for changing the management for the purpose of providing a better service. I have been busy since I have been in office in connection with the matter. We have had evidence from the Premier, in the course of his speech, that he is not the only one who, by reason of the altered conditions existing in the world to-day, has changed his views. Can we expect to make any progress unless we change our views from time to time? It is not desirable to continue on the same road if we wish to

make progress, and to imagine that the Premier would say that what was good enough for his grandfathers would be good enough for him to-day is absurd. Even Mr. Bonar Law is to-day pledged to introduce to the Parliament of the Empire legislation which I am doubtful whether we would dare to submit here.

Mr. Troy: We will dare it here.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not so certain about that. I am doubtful whether the hon. member has read what has transpired in the House of Commons recently. The member for Pilbara need not be so doubtful with regard to the Premier.

Mr. Underwood: I am bound to be on account of his past policy.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Then let me ask the hon. member whether we are not entitled to doubt even him if we accept his own statement in regard to his own past policy. He has been a member of the Cabinet which has done all these things.

Mr. Underwood: What do you think I left the Cabinet for?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know and I do not think it is desirable that I should. The fact remains that the hon. member has accused the Cabinet of neglecting to do the very things which he, as Minister, was charged to give special attention to. But I am dealing with the question of the Premier's sincerity in regard to many of these matters.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You must remember that an honorary minister has to be guided by his ministers.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Were you?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Get out.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am delighted with the Honorary Minister's answer because the hon. member cannot tell me that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, I do.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member was most pronounced in asserting his authority in controlling his departments. When placed in charge of a department as Honorary Minister, he is entitled to carry the responsibility for the administration of the affairs of that department.

Mr. Underwood: There must come a time when he leaves.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, I am not protesting against the hon. member having left the Cabinet. That is a matter for himself. The statement he made at the beginning of his speech afforded me pleasure. He said he was going to use his best judgment irrespective of whether it meant retaining the Government in office or not. I think the Premier realises with me that each of us must use his best judgment and not dance to the tune of any outside organisation or any organisation within Parliament itself. I made an announcement of that kind on the hustings when the representative of the Country party was my chairman. I have

not the slightest objection to the existence of organisations to make grievances known; we require them. I do not object to public clamour where that is necessary. We have a free Press, a free public platform, and a free Parliament.

Mr. O'Loghlen: The Press is free now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member used his pen very freely and was not always particular what sort of ink was on the pen. These facilities are provided to enable information to be brought before our public men, to rectify grievances and to carry on the government of the State and maintain peace in our community. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) talks about lamp-posts and ropes, but he knows very well he is only talking to the gallery.

Mr. Foley: There are not many lamp-posts on a steamer.

Mr. SPEAKER: The debate must be confined to steamships which form the subject of the amendment. The hon. member will have an opportunity on general questions later.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I was coming to the question of the hon. member doubting the sincerity of the Premier.

Mr. Jones: Keep away from those lamp-posts; they are dangerous.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member dealt pretty extensively and very fairly with the question of our shipping service to the North-West coast. He will not doubt that I am just as much in earnest as ever I was that we should have a shipping service for our producers in the North. With my knowledge of what has been done with the steamer "Kangaroo," I believe we should retain her to test out the very thing the hon. member says is essential; that is a certain amount of oversea shipping. I am not suggesting that we should undertake oversea shipping on the same basis as the Commonwealth line, but surely we as a State are pledged to supply facilities within our own borders to assist producers to get their produce to market. It is well to urge production, but we must be able to find a market for the produce and to provide the facilities for getting the produce to market. When we are able to provide these facilities, we are entitled to tell people to produce and, before going ahead with production in the North-West, I want to be able to say to the settlers there, "Here is a market and here are our facilities for getting your produce to market." The key to the position is that we cannot expect to carry on a shipping service with the North-West coast on all-fours with the shipping service to other parts of Australia. It is an entirely different proposition. We have had experience of it and if we do not profit from our experience we shall be very dull. Having no coal supplies up there, the hon. member said we should seek other methods—procure oil. The cheapest oil market is at our door, namely, Borneo. We can obtain oil there and supply our ships as well as the

freezing works at Wyndham and, I hope, further freezing works or chilling works on the North-West coast as well. Our inland production will very soon overtake our local demands. There will be little need in years to come, I think, to bring down live stock from the North-West, and we must be able to guarantee settlers there a market. Such market must be overseas and, to provide that market, I consider we must provide oil ships. It is impossible to obtain a ship anywhere at present. We have been hunting for one for the last three months.

Mr. Underwood: Order one.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If one had sufficient money, he could order them, but it is questionable whether it is desirable to order at present when shipping companies the world over are planning to replace lost ships, when new shipping yards are being constructed in all parts of the world, even in Japan, which is competing with America for the quick production of ships to restore the mercantile marine. Owing to the improvements made during the war, we cannot obtain Diesel engines for love or money. The question to be settled is whether the Diesel engine or oil fuel is the more suitable for the North-West. Surely it is not desirable, in the face of the pronouncement by the Premier to provide these facilities, to force us to make a decision at the moment in connection with matters on which we desire further information. We have obtained information from a source which the hon. member says is unsatisfactory; still he would ask us to do something without obtaining proper advice which is essential before we can arrive at a decision. Cabinet has approved of cutting adrift the State Steamship service and making it a definite department, under the control of a general manager. I wish to obtain to control our shipping service a man who can grow with it and who can give that adequate service which is required by the North-West coast. Until we get such a man, we should move slowly.

Mr. Underwood: That is the point. How many knots are you doing?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon. member is doing ordinary speed of nine knots, we are doing about 45. I hope the question of the North-West shipping service has got beyond party intrigue. If tomorrow there was a change of Government, there would be a continuance of the policy of the present Government regarding our shipping service to the North-West. Whatever else we disagree upon, whatever opinions we have expressed in the past, opinions largely due to party opposition to any move made by the Government—and one party is not more guilty than another—on this question we are beyond that point. All parties have agreed that these facilities must be maintained and that they must be adequate for that part of the State.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Then you are accepting the amendment?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is no need for the amendment; it is already in the Governor's Speech.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Then you will accept it?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is a vote of confidence in the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You had only 22 votes the other day and a majority is 26.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have not travelled on the State steamers and I do not know whether they are well managed on the water or from the head office. I do know that the shipping service to-day is unfortunately in a very difficult position owing to the fact that we have to carry such a huge quantity of coal on these ships and to the delays entering and leaving port due to being held up by the tides. When the Navigation Act is proclaimed—the Act was passed some years ago—some of the ships against which the hon. member alleges unfair trading, must go out of the business. They will be unable any longer to carry anyone's wool.

Mr. Underwood: Do you think the Act will be proclaimed?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot answer for the Federal Government, but, when it is, the objection raised by the hon. member will disappear.

Mr. Underwood: How?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Because that wool must be carried by our own ships.

Mr. Underwood: Dalgety's are agents; they will not give us that wool to carry.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: To whom will they give it?

Mr. Underwood: I do not know.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: When the Government are operating that service with proper ships—

Mr. Underwood: When!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We shall be able to operate as quickly as anyone.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If there are two ships of equal capacity, Dalgety's would give preference to other than the State steamer.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They would if there was another steamer calling.

Mr. O'Loughlen: In the past there has been boycott or prejudice against State steamships in some of the ports.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not denying that. The hon. member is justified in saying that some people, whether Dalgety's or not I do not know, give their best freights on the North-West coast to the shipping plying to Singapore and leave the rest to the State steamships. If we were in the position of the Singapore boats, we would take the best and leave the other.

Hon. T. Walker: Is it right?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not a question of being right.

Hon. T. Walker: It is.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The ships trading to Singapore are entitled to pick up the best freights obtainable.

Mr. Underwood: Cannot you operate to Singapore?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not with our present ships.

Mr. Underwood: Expand them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have already agreed to do that. The State steamship service is managed under very great difficulties. The hon. member referred to Mr. Stevens. He may not be ideal in every way as a manager; no man is ideal; everyone has his failings. I am not certain how the hon. member fell foul of the management, but Mr. Stevens can hardly be called to book for shortcomings on the ship after she left Fremantle. If there is anything wrong with the management, I would be glad to have my attention called to it. Mr. Stevens however, does not travel up and down on the ships and, if anything happened after the boat left Fremantle and his attention was directed to it, I am sure he would have it put right.

Mr. Underwood: You have only Mr. Stevens to direct your attention to it and I have travelled on the steamers. I did draw your attention to it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not aware of it even now. There is merely the bald general statement that Mr. Stevens is not a good manager. Such a statement can be made of anyone. In what direction has Mr. Stevens failed? Has he been discourteous? I should expect the first complaint of the hon. member to be on that score. Mr. Stevens was not entitled to go to Dalgety's and take exception to their attitude. He is there to manage the steamships. The hon. member knows that just at present, owing to shortage of shipping, we cannot alter the position on the coast, and that we shall have to suffer in the same way probably for some time longer. As regards the management of the service, we have not decided against Mr. Stevens; he may yet be the general manager. So far as I am aware, Mr. Stevens has given the State good service in filling the dual positions. We have decided that the State Steamship Service shall be made thoroughly efficient and shall be extended, and that there shall be a general manager giving his attention to this service alone and being directly responsible to the Minister. We have also decided that future questions affecting the service shall remain in abeyance until the general manager has been appointed. No time will be lost in obtaining a general manager if one is available. If the hon. member contends that he can raise objection to the present Government on the ground of their future policy relative to the State Steamship Service, he has absolutely struck the Government's strongest point. The hon. member desires that the service shall be expanded. I have already told him that we intend to expand it.

Mr. Green: Have you anything on the Estimates for a steamer?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have not the Estimates here.

Mr. Green: Are you putting anything on the Estimates for a steamer?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is a matter which will come before the House in its proper turn. I do not think the member for Kalgoorlie is fair in asking that the presentation of the Estimates should be anticipated. I assure the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) that, so far as is necessary to fulfil the promise given to the country through the Governor's Speech, expansion of the State Steamship Service will take place. Is that sufficient?

Mr. Green: That is shuffling.

Mr. Underwood: That is no more definite than the statement in the Governor's Speech.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Is not the hon. member satisfied with my statement?

Mr. Underwood: No; I am not satisfied.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The other point in the hon. member's amendment is that the service shall be placed under more efficient management than obtains at present. We can achieve that by making the State Steamship Service a separate undertaking from all other Government departments.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Is there anything to show that the member for Pilbara while Honorary Minister moved in any way to obtain that change?

Mr. Underwood: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The proposal must be in the ice chest, for I have not seen it. The Government have already arrived at a decision to separate the State Steamship Service from the Fremantle Harbour Trust, and to obtain an efficient manager. Does the member for Pilbara want anything more than that?

Mr. Underwood: Yes, I do. I want an expansion of the service to Singapore and Java. I said that pretty clearly, and I stated my reasons.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not suggesting that that expansion is not a good idea, but what I want the hon. member to understand is that we must first of all provide an adequate service for the North-West producer, which we have not provided up to date. That in itself, I think, goes to show that an effective service cannot be given for the North-West coast unless we expand it overseas. The first duty of the Government, however, before undertaking an expansion of the service, is to find overseas markets. I believe those markets are to be had for the asking. With regular deliveries of our products, I believe our products will be accepted in those markets in preference to any other. Our first problem, however, must be the provision of an adequate service for our own producers. The main objection raised to the present service is that the "Kangaroo" does not serve our own ports and therefore is of no value to our producers; and yet the member for Pilbara demands that we should at once provide other ships for the same service, namely overseas, instead of first satisfying the needs of our northern producers. The hon. member's vote of want of confidence in the Government is really a vote of confidence.

Hon. P. Collier: Perhaps the hon. member meant it in that spirit.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: While he criticised the Government pretty freely on other matters, he confined his expression of want of confidence, his amendment, to one point alone.

Mr. Underwood: Where did you get the information from that this amendment is a motion of want of confidence? There have been scores of such amendments moved in the House of Commons without their being regarded as motions of want of confidence.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: True; and I believe such amendments to be desirable. I agree that members should from time to time express their opinions in a definite way. We get too much in the way of generalities. I hold that members sitting on the back Government benches are entitled from time to time to express any want of satisfaction. It is a means of getting the Government to centre their attention on the needs of a particular member's constituents. From that aspect I have not the slightest disagreement with the member for Pilbara. Still, in moving his amendment he adopted the attitude of one moving a vote of want of confidence in the Government. Indeed, the hon. member warned the Government early in the day that the amendment was coming, and handed us a typed copy of it. If the hon. member intends his amendment for the purpose of drawing attention to this one phase of the Government's policy, Ministers will not have the slightest objection to supporting him; and, indeed, I think that when the vote is taken the whole House will be found on his side. The amendment affirms a policy to which at all events every member on the Government side of the House is already pledged definitely. I hope, therefore, that the hon. member will not press the amendment, but, following the practice of the House of Commons, will show his good sense by withdrawing it.

Hon. P. Collier: Why should he withdraw it when the Government endorse it?

Amendment put and passed; the words added to the Address.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora): I wish to say something about the position of members in this House. When war broke out a compact was entered into regarding the formation of the Nationalist party. Many of us joined that party imbued with the common purpose of doing everything we could to assist those who were fighting our battles in France. Some of us were called disloyalists and had other opprobrious epithets hurled at us. Personally I took the first opportunity of declaring my intentions to my old colleagues. Some men to whom I had been diametrically opposed were equally sincere in sinking their political beliefs in order to join up with the party working for a common goal. I entered into the compact believing that I was doing right. I have not since been called upon to vote against any of the principles I entertained when I was in the Labour movement, nor have I spoken, inside or outside the

House, against any of the principles I previously believed in.

Mr. Munsie: It is fairly easy to avoid voting against principles by simply walking out of the Chamber.

Mr. FOLEY: The hon. member is quite wrong in his suggestion. I was not within the precincts of the Chamber when the vote was taken the other night. I told Mr. Hardwick, who is not a whip over me, that if the division took place he knew where to get me on the telephone. I was not in the Chamber. Had I been here I should not have voted on that motion. When the Nationalist compact was made, the ideals of the party were truly national. It was sinking everything of a party nature.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It even sank its own Premier.

Mr. FOLEY: I have never sunk any Premier. When the need for the compact ceased, I told the members on this side that I was no longer of their party.

Mr. O'Loughlen: But you would have voted for the Government the other evening had you been here.

Mr. FOLEY: The necessity for that compact no longer exists. The present Premier was never a member of the Nationalist Government, was never a supporter of nor allied to that Government. Therefore there is no reason for me to support him now. I do not support the present Government. So long as I am in politics I am never going back to any system that will bind me to anything other than what I believe to be right and honest and just, nor shall I submit to anything that will take one vestige of freedom or independence from me.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Loud talk.

Mr. Munsie: Then you did do something which you did not believe in when you were a member of the Labour party?

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. FOLEY: The hon. member knows well that when I was associated with the Labour party I acted loyally and honourably by that party. I am not going to say one word of what happened during my connection with that party.

Hon. P. Collier: We do not object.

Mr. FOLEY: I am going to say nothing.

Mr. Munsie: Because you have nothing to say.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is nothing to be ashamed of.

Mr. FOLEY: As the hon. member says, there is nothing for me to be ashamed of in my old connection with the Labour party, nor in my connection with the party which I thought best for Western Australia, namely the Nationalist party.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why not stick to that party?

Mr. FOLEY: Because I contend it is not a Nationalist party at all now. Irrespective of what section we may belong to, I believe that politics in this State have been clean, and without corruption.

Mr. Jones: Even at Albany?

Mr. FOLEY: I do not know to what the hon. member is alluding. It may be a case of, to the pure all things are pure.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It was pretty sharp practice, giving a portfolio to a man not in Parliament and sending him along as the ministerial candidate.

Mr. FOLEY: I was just as much opposed to it as was the hon. member. I am against the Premier because he arrogated to himself the right to appoint to the Ministry one who was not a member of this Chamber.

Mr. Davies: It was a tribute to your old leader.

Mr. FOLEY: I do not recognise the member for Albany as being any leader of mine. While there was a National Government with national ideals I followed the party. The present Premier is no Nationalist, at least not from my point of view, and therefore I do not intend to follow him. Neither do I intend to follow or support the extreme section that is opposing him at present.

Mr. Lambert: Do you call us an extreme section?

Mr. FOLEY: The members of the old Labour party have a good policy, and I will support them in anything they may bring forward in the Chamber. I will support what is good from any party in the Chamber. Now I wish to say a word in regard to our present position.

Mr. Munsie: I do not think you know where you are.

Mr. FOLEY: At the next general elections I will be in Leonora as a candidate free and untrammelled. The hon. member can come along and have a try for the same seat.

Mr. Munsie: There will be someone else there besides you, and you will have a pretty difficult passage.

Mr. FOLEY: They have tried before.

Mr. Munsie: You were a Nationalist then, but you are not now.

Mr. FOLEY: I am ready for the grand bump when it comes.

Mr. Jones: We will get a penitent stool fixed up for you.

Mr. FOLEY: For goodness' sake do not send the hon. member for Fremantle up there. I never want to see him there. The member for Mt. Magnet did not do much good by opposing me. I do not think there has been enough done in the way of repatriation in this State. I see a good deal of those men who wish to be repatriated, and they tell me that the process is slow if they want to get land for farming purposes. After having had experience of what farming has meant to this State, and the conditions under which operations are carried on, I have arrived at the conclusion that, remembering the physical condition that a man should possess, I doubt very much whether some of the returned soldiers will make a success of it. These men are to be given a certain amount of money but that sum, in my opinion, is not sufficient, and the manner in which it is to be given to them is wrong. I believe that the expenditure of this money

should be under the control of a board, the members of which board should explain the conditions under which the land should be farmed. With reference to assistance to mining, that is very meagre at present. If a man has been a miner and he goes to the Repatriation Department he can get no assistance whatever. He is told that there is very little money for him, or very little to be devoted to mining. If there is one thing which will pull this State out of the mire, it is the development of the mining industry. Unfortunately, however, every commodity in connection with mining has advanced in price, and not only have those prices gone up but the cost of railage also has increased, even since 1918. I contend that the State is not doing anything for the mining industry and that a sum of money should be set apart to help those returned men who desire to embark in that occupation. If a man has been a miner he is debarred from any other avocation, but if a man has been on the land he can embark on almost any other work other than a business, and in many instances he is regarded as a business man. Our mines at the present time are going down in value and they are also going down in depth. During the past four years, while the war has been in progress, the efficiency of the men employed in our mines has been much below the mining standard. That means that developmental work has not been going on. That work has to be made up at the present time. During the past few months the late Minister for Mines removed the embargo on fracture. There are three or four other items on which there still remains a big embargo, which embargo must be shifted before mining can prosper again. I believe that if a mining company can show they can do legitimate developmental work during a certain time, there should be a board in this State, consisting of competent men, to say whether that mining company should be allowed so much as a set-off, so that mining operations might go on. If that were done, a greater amount of development and prospecting work would be done. I do not think there is any need for me to say much more just now on that question. I want the Government, however, to know that if they submit any proposal which will be for the benefit of the State, I will support it. I do not want them to count on me as a solid supporter. If the leader of the Opposition, or any other member, brings forward anything which I think is right in the interests of the State, so long as I am in this Chamber I will support it. That is the position I intend to take up.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex): I move—  
That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex): I regret the Government have not seen fit to grant me the adjournment of the debate. With regard to the Governor's Speech, because of its ambiguity there is little if anything in it which indicates the Government's sincere intention to grapple with those problems

which confront the State to-day. We have heard from the Minister for Mines a very wide interpretation of the amendment which was moved by the member for Pilbara. The Leader of the Opposition dealt fully with the position from his point of view, and his speech resulted in a motion of no-confidence. That motion met with a very sudden death, which I think was due to the fact that the leader of the Opposition and his party did not select anyone other than the member for Fremantle to continue the debate.

Hon. P. Collier: Why other than the member for Fremantle?

Mr. PICKERING: Because no one else with any self-respect cared to follow the line of debate taken up by that hon. member.

Hon. P. Collier: It was not necessary to follow his line of debate.

Mr. PICKERING: There are members in this Chamber, as has been evidenced by the speeches which have since been made, who are dissatisfied with the Government and who, when they wish to express their views, would prefer to express them on the lines adopted by the leader of the Opposition rather than those followed by the member for Fremantle.

Mr. Green: What is it that you object to?

Mr. PICKERING: It appears to me that members in this House are skating over thin ice. There have been great disturbances in this State since last we met. One of those was the tramway strike and another the Fremantle strike.

Mr. Jones: There was no strike at Fremantle.

Mr. PICKERING: The hon. member can call it what he likes.

Mr. Jones: Use the correct term. There was no strike at Fremantle.

Mr. PICKERING: We will call it a fiasco.

Mr. Jones: That will do.

Mr. PICKERING: My attitude so far as the Fremantle disturbance was concerned has been pretty definitely stated and I see no cause to withdraw what I said at the time. I still stand by all I wrote and the interpretation I put upon what I wrote—not the interpretation the member for Fremantle would put upon it. The only people who had any practical knowledge of the attempt which was made to settle that trouble at Fremantle were the members who comprised the Cabinet. Not one member outside Cabinet had any knowledge of the contemplated action of the Government. I was not a party in any way to what took place.

Hon. P. Collier: You share the responsibility.

Mr. PICKERING: I disclaimed the responsibility at the time.

Hon. P. Collier: You must have endorsed their action.

Mr. PICKERING: I consider the action of the Government in connection with that fiasco at Fremantle was not only ludicrous but criminal.

Mr. Green: It would have been criminal if it had been otherwise.

Mr. PICKERING: It was criminal. They looked upon such a serious position in the light of a picnic. People were selected in a haphazard manner to assist them. That was a disgrace to the Government. If the Government intended to take action with regard to that trouble, they could have taken it as a Government. They should not have gone down in a hole and corner way. They should have notified in a proper manner that it was their intention to take charge of the wharves. One of the most serious yet ambiguous statements made in the Speech is that dealing with the social unrest. This unrest is confined not only to Western Australia but is exhibited all over the world.

Mr. Green: Even in dear old England.

Mr. PICKERING: In England we find it even more so than in Western Australia to-day. We find there the Prime Minister is doing his utmost to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the problems and that he has appointed special committees to investigate different phases and endeavour to solve those problems as they arise. In this State we have no one devoting any particular attention to the social unrest which exists here. For some years we have tried the Arbitration Court as an expedient, but it has not given satisfaction to either side. I do not see that we can expect any satisfaction from it. The Arbitration Court is presided over by a judge who, on one side, has a representative of the workers anxious to get increased emoluments, and on the other side a representative of the employers anxious to keep the remuneration below what the men are entitled to, and the decision of the court, in my opinion, represents an evening up between the two parties. Having tried the Arbitration Court for many years and it having proved a failure, not only here but in the Commonwealth, it is up to this State to evolve some other system of settling disputes.

Member: Direct action.

Mr. PICKERING: No. The constitution of the court must be altered to successfully grapple with these difficulties. I suggest that the president of the court should be, not a judge, but a man with a knowledge of economies and with sociological training, one interested not in the advancement of either section, but in the advancement of the whole. To adjudicate in an Arbitration Court is not a question of evening up between the two parties, but arriving at what is true and just in both interests. The leader of the Opposition asked how it was that so many changes had taken place in the Government during the recess. The position is so apparent that it should be unnecessary to explain it. The "West Australian" stated that the Lefroy Administration was incompetent and that the strong man of Western Australia was Mr. Colebatch: The National party appreciated the truth of that statement, held a meeting and duly elected Mr. Colebatch as head of the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: In obedience to the "West Australian."

Mr. PICKERING: Yes, in obedience to the dictates of the "West Australian" Mr. Colebatch had a short and merry life of four weeks as Premier, and the strong man of Western Australia, lauded to the skies by the "West Australian," fell to pieces at the first conflict which confronted him. Then we had to find another Premier, and the "West Australian" said Mr. Mitchell was the heaven-sent saviour of the State. We appreciated that and duly elected him Premier.

Hon. P. Collier: You did the bidding of the "West Australian" for the second time.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes, and I can quite believe that if there was another re-construction and the "West Australian" recommended anyone else in this party, no matter whom, we should fall into line and elect him.

Hon. P. Collier: The "West Australian" is the dictator of the State.

Mr. PICKERING: That paper kindly stated how I voted on the occasion of the re-construction, and I am prepared to endorse it.

The Minister for Works: Because it was correct.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes. I was returned to this House as a member of the Country party to support the Nationalist Government. I gave Sir Henry Lefroy my allegiance and stuck to him in spite of the dictates of the "West Australian." To-day I am a Country party member, with a right to support the Nationalist Government, following a Government which has as its leader the only non-Nationalist on this side of the House.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Colonial Secretary: Why do not you go over to the other side?

Mr. PICKERING: Because my place is where I am, and I claim every right to express the views I hold and on which I was returned. If the Colonial Secretary chooses to sit closer to the Government than I do—a Government which is not a Nationalist Government—it is his pigeon. When I contested the election, part of the policy on which I was returned was economy in administration of the finances and now I find myself sitting behind a Government launching out into fresh avenues of wild expenditure, and which Government has as one of its lieutenants, a gentleman made notorious in the annals of the State as "Gone a million Jack." The main item in the Governor's Speech is repatriation, a question which is vital to the interests of the State. The Premier intends to confine most of his attention to the South-West. It has been said that members of the Country party objected to the Premier holding the office of Minister for Lands because of his mismanagement of the department in the settlement of the dry areas. When I stood for the Sussex seat on both occasions, one of the main things I



fought against was the settlement of the dry areas on those lines. The Premier is said to have an exact knowledge of the conditions in the dry areas. He induced people, through his propaganda, to take up areas in the eastern districts. They did so. The areas were surveyed before selection and, although there was good forest land beyond all question, the blocks were so cut up that the indifferent land in larger proportion was mixed with the good, with the result that the settlers have never been able to achieve success. The Industries Assistance Board and other people controlling advances readily made advances on this land, and encouraged people to take advances, and consequently most of the farmers under the Industries Assistance Board, whose debts are not of any value, are those who were settled on those mixed holdings. I have had this truth from men who have been eminently successful in the Wyalcatchem district. I have been on farms there, and better could not be found. Ten or twelve years ago when they took up this land they had nothing, but to-day they possess good homes, good farms, and motor cars.

Mr. Griffiths: Who was responsible for that?

Mr. PICKERING: Whoever put them there was right, but to put settlers on this mixed land was only to court disaster. The Premier had an exact knowledge of this particular country. Now we are told we are to have an extension of this principle to the South-West. The Premier knows nothing about the South-West. He has not farmed there. He has a property in the South-West not many miles from my own, but the farming done there is not worth considering. It is some of the best land in the South-West, and perhaps not more than £300 or £400 has been spent on the 2,500 acres. If he shows such poor confidence in his own property in the South-West, what can he expect in regard to other settlement? I have been in the South-West for 14 years, and I know a good deal about it. By the South-West I mean the area between the Great Southern and Albany, Busselton, and as far as Pinjarra. The Royal Commission on agriculture stated that there were only 500,000 acres of first class land left. I know some men who have spent nearly all their lives in classifying land in the South-West, and they admit that the area of first class land is not anything like commensurate with that stated by the Premier. There is any amount of good land, but it is already occupied. When the early settlement took place, people took the best land; they seemed to have sufficient knowledge to pick out the good land, although they were strangers to the country. There is still much good land which will respond to cultivation, but it is not first class land. I have 3,000 acres, and I know how difficult it is to work.

Mr. O'Loghlen: A man who takes up 3,000 acres in the South-West wants his head read.

Mr. PICKERING: He does. It has been said that a man who does that has a heart

like a lion and a head like an ass. When I took up my land I had both. After 15 years' experience I am thinking of those men who are to be settled in the South-West. If they are given improved land it will be all right, but if they are put on to virgin country with out improvements they will be condemned almost to slavery. I am anxious to see the South-West settled and settled on sound lines. I do not want it to be settled in the same way as the eastern areas were. I do not want the same misery to be experienced there as was the case in the dry areas. We have had from members accounts of settlers living in bag huts and undergoing other hardships. It is impossible to settle the South-West by surveying a million acres of land a year. The policy I enunciated for the South-West for the Country party is improved farms before settlement.

Mr. Malay: You cannot develop it by child labour.

Mr. PICKERING: I hope it never will be developed by that means. The Minister representing the Country party should investigate any accusation of that nature.

The Minister for Works: Do you advocate entirely clearing the ground?

Mr. PICKERING: I advocate partial clearing.

The Minister for Works: And putting up a homestead and all that sort of thing.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not advocate anything which is not on a good business basis. It is absolutely necessary to give these people a chance of making good from the start.

The Minister for Works: They must have something besides a bag house to live in.

Mr. PICKERING: They must have a home, of course. I would not withhold a home from any settler. We cannot think of settling the South-West on the lines adopted by the Premier some time ago when he was supplying cows imported from Victoria to men who only had scrub land on which to run them, for this is fatal to the settlement of the country.

Hon. P. Collier: Flag-flapping cows too.

Mr. PICKERING: They were good cows, but they died because they were used to the good pastures of Victoria. We cannot settle the South-West as a dairying proposition until there are good pastures for the cattle to run on.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Why not put in a plea for the Margaret River railway before dropping the subject?

Mr. PICKERING: We are going to have a million pounds worth of railways there yet. On the question of profiteering, a resolution was passed by the association to which I have the honour to belong, against profiteering. I am not sure that the idea of settling profiteering on the lines indicated by the Premier will bring about the desired results. If we are to settle the question it is not to be done by fixing prices. That is only an elementary way of dealing with it. To bring about a satisfactory solution of the question,

it must be done by a limitation of profits. It may not be possible for this to be a State measure, but if there was passed a Federal measure it would be a good way of bringing about a settlement. If we are to fix prices, we must fix the minimum as well as the maximum price. There has been a great outcry about the cost of potatoes. These cost something like £25 an acre to produce and the average yield is only about four tons per acre. If we are to fix the price of potatoes, we must fix the minimum at which men may farm them at a profit. The lowest at which it can be done to meet the distances found in this State is something like £7 10s. per ton.

Mr. O'Loghlen: No consumer would object to that.

Mr. PICKERING: If hon. members would agree to that, on behalf of those engaged in the potato industry I say, that they are prepared to produce as many potatoes as are required by the State. It costs about £25 per acre to grow potatoes, when we include the cost of bags. That is the opinion of potato growers with years of experience. I was recently at a conference in the South-West where we had potato growers from Bengier, who are all experienced men. We went analytically into the question and it was found to be impossible to market an acre of potatoes under £25.

The Minister for Works: The average yield is about three tons to the acre.

Mr. PICKERING: I put it down at four. The sum of £6 5s. per ton does not leave very much margin for the grower at £7 10s. The people of Denmark, who live very largely by potato growing, are not able to produce them at that price either. One of the things which to my mind is influencing the cost of living is the high protective tariff. I stand for a revenue tariff, as a member of the Country party. It is the only tariff which is going to benefit the State. Although in theory protection may seem sound, in practice it does not work out.

Mr. O'Loghlen: In a new country there is no other policy.

Mr. PICKERING: In a new country, where the main industries which support it are the primary industries, it is ridiculous to say that we must foster the secondary industries and strangle those which are of vital importance to us.

Mr. O'Loghlen: I realise that Australia cannot be very great without both.

Mr. PICKERING: Members representing the timber and gold-mining industries know that the tariff is inimical to the interests of these industries.

Mr. Davies: That is a matter for the Federal Parliament.

Mr. PICKERING: If we are never going to arouse interest in the tariff in this State, we are never going to affect the position in the Federal Parliament. The result of the tariff is this: it is put on certain commodities and the manufacturer finds that owing to the incidence of the tariff not being

heavy enough to protect those things he is manufacturing—

Mr. SPEAKER: This is more a matter for the Federal Parliament.

Mr. PICKERING: I understood that on the Address-in-reply I could deal with questions affecting profiteering and the high cost of living. The tariff has a very great effect on the high cost of living, and unless you rule me out of order, Sir, I intend to continue on these lines.

Mr. SPEAKER: This House has no power to deal with the tariff.

Mr. PICKERING: I am going to pursue this line of argument unless you rule me out of order. I believe this is one of the primary causes of the increased cost of living, and as long as I am in order I will pursue this line of argument.

Mr. SPEAKER: We will see how far the hon. member goes.

Mr. PICKERING: I will go as far as I can. It is an ever-widening circle. One commodity gets an advantage which increases the price of it to the consumer. Another commodity is then being manufactured and the wages not being great enough under the tariff which appertains to-day, an increase in that tariff is necessitated. So it goes on in circles, round and round. We are threatened by the Prime Minister with an increase in the tariff. What does he hold out as a result of the increase?

Mr. Smith: He is not sitting in this House.

Mr. Green: Where are you to get the revenue?

Mr. PICKERING: He says that a diminution in the revenue will result from an increase in the tariff. People who are paying prohibitive prices for the things they are consuming to-day will be confronted by an increase in their land and income tax. That is what it means. In a country of primary production like Western Australia, the breaking point will soon be reached. How we can pay high protective prices for what we need in ordinary life, and pay an additional tax which will follow in consequence of a reduction in revenue, it is impossible to understand. One of the remedies for the position socially will be by raising the age, before which children may not leave school, to 16. If we do that and the students have the advantage of the additional education derived from those two extra years, and they are technically equipped for the particular walks in life to which they are best suited, there will be some hope of getting efficiency imparted into the trades in operation in Western Australia. The apprenticeship system is practically non-existent here, and if we are to improve the output by our mechanics, we will have to technically equip them through our schools. It is quite impossible to do so through the ordinary courses.

The Minister for Works: Then you do not object to an increased expenditure on education.

Mr. PICKERING: No, I will support anything that will tend to give a higher education and training to the children. There are

too many square pegs in round holes. It is due to the fact that the children have not had an opportunity of being properly equipped for the avocations best fitted for them, that the present position arises. In connection with our State schools, if we had inspectors whose duty it was to find out the avocations for which our children are most fitted, there would be a prospect of properly equipping them for the battle of life. It is stated in a work, "Eclipse or Empire," which I have read that the output in America as compared with that of Great Britain is as three to one. That is a serious position to face. It does not only mean that it gives the advantage to America, but it means that owing to the decreased output in our State and Great Britain, we have to pay a higher price for the commodities we manufacture. The remedy is to properly educate our children and technically equip them to fill their positions in life. One of the evils of protection is that the higher the tariff the greater the price of the commodities. We do not find that if a particular industry is protected, the price falls in any way; on the contrary, it always goes up, but the output does not, strange to say, increase correspondingly.

Mr. O'Loghlen: The mechanics in the industry consume the products of the primary producer.

Mr. PICKERING: Quite so, but it is costing more to manufacture the articles. The protective tariff has a tendency to maintain inefficiency in the manufacturer, obsolete machinery, and obsolete methods.

Mr. Lambert: What about obsolete mining?

Mr. PICKERING: What I have said is true.

Mr. O'Loghlen: But you are inconsistent, because you have just told us that the United States produces three to one, and that under a protective tariff. It is the most highly protective tariff in the world, too.

Mr. PICKERING: But the United States market is much bigger than ours. It is a different position altogether.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I cannot in this debate allow the hon. member to proceed to discuss all the ramifications of freetrade and protection.

Mr. Troy: Why not?

Mr. PICKERING: It is one of the gravest problems of Western Australia today. The vicious policy of protection is increasing the cost of living and the cost of production considerably. I firmly believe in a revenue tariff, which would stimulate our manufacturers to equip their factories better, with improved machinery and more up-to-date power. The whole tendency of protection is to retard industries rather than to develop them; and we, the producers, have to bear the iniquitous burden of high prices in consequence.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Human nature is the same everywhere. Both you and I would be profiteers to-morrow if we could.

Mr. PICKERING: I regard a revenue tariff as the solution of the question. As regards usury, we have on our Statute-book an Act limiting the rate of interest to 12 per cent.

Mr. O'Loghlen: It is an Act that is never enforced.

Mr. PICKERING: But the power is there.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Nearly all the sufferers from usury suffer in silence.

Mr. PICKERING: If payments to professional men such as doctors, lawyers, and engineers are limited, and if usurers are restricted by law, why cannot limitations be imposed in other directions?

Mr. Lambert: The pawnbrokers of this town are infinitely more respectable than some of the merchants.

Mr. PICKERING: Very little reference was made in the Premier's policy speech to our relations with the Commonwealth, and yet some of the things most vital to this State are inseparable from our attitude towards the Federal Government. What attitude do the Western Australian Government propose to take regarding the proposed increase of tariff? Do they intend to protest against it in any way? Or are they going to submit in silence? I shall be glad to get an expression of the Government's opinion on this vital subject.

The Minister for Mines: Let your organisation make a protest. If the Western Australian Government attempted to interfere with the Federal Government in that respect, the Federal Government would want to interfere with our conduct of Western Australian affairs.

Mr. PICKERING: The leader of the Opposition has said that in nationalisation lies the panacea for all our ills. I cannot agree with him in that.

Mr. Lambert: What about the State Implement Works? Are you in favour of abolishing that State enterprise?

Mr. PICKERING: No. There are certain State enterprises in existence, and if I support one of them I must support all of them.

Mr. Lambert: Is it sound in principle? Don't humbug.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PICKERING: I am not in sympathy with the nationalisation of all industries, as suggested by the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Green: The leader of the Opposition suggested nothing of the kind.

Mr. PICKERING: The State Implement Works, the State Steamship Service, and one or two other State enterprises have proved themselves to be of value to the community, and I am going to support them as long as I am here. As regards the mining industry, I was glad to hear the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) suggest a mining advisory board. The "Sunday Times" in its last issue proved conclusively, assuming the figures adduced to be correct, that the attitude of the Government towards mining has been far less sympathetic than their attitude towards farming; and it appears as though in existing circumstances justice is not going to be

done to the mining industry. Ministers for Mines have not been sufficiently sympathetic, and the prospectors do not seem to have had a fair deal. We see the prospectors coming up for assistance and the Minister for Mines sitting down and saying no.

Hon. P. Collier: The remedy would be to make the Premier also Minister for Mines.

Mr. PICKERING: Perhaps; but the present Minister for Mines has a reputation for spending, too, though latterly he has not lived up to it. The mining advisory board should consist of the Government Geologist, the Chief Mining Engineer, a representative of the miners' union, a member of the Chamber of Mines, and a member of Parliament representing a mining constituency. The constitution of such a board might result in the adoption of a more reasonable attitude towards the mining industry.

Mr. Lambert: Would all the members of the board be paid?

Mr. PICKERING: I think they should be. An expert advisory board would solve many of the mining problems which are now found so perplexing.

Mr. Lambert: There are too many advisory boards functioning already.

Mr. PICKERING: I am surprised to find the representative of a mining constituency opposing something which might prove of advantage to the mining industry.

Hon. P. Collier: Would your advisory board deal with oil and coal, too?

Mr. PICKERING: Yes, with anything that comes within the scope of mining operations. On the question of oil, I would draw the Government's attention to developments in England, where oil was never expected to be found. Although the evidence placed before the Western Australian Government by our Government Geologist is not favourable to the prospects of a discovery of oil in this State, yet it does not absolutely negative the possibility; and Ministers might consider the advisability of placing on the Estimates an amount to encourage prospecting for oil. The Minister for Mines stated to-day that our steamers would need oil, and an oil discovery in Western Australia would not only supply that requirement but lift the State out of all its difficulties. I hardly care to suggest an amount, but I think at least £50,000 might be placed on the Estimates for that purpose. Another aspect of mining from which the suggested advisory board might prove very useful would be the repatriation of miner soldiers. A subject to which I must refer is that of bulk handling of wheat.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Government do not intend to do anything with that.

Mr. PICKERING: I am greatly surprised that members on this side of the Chamber have not asked the Government to re-instate last session's measure in this connection. That was one of the most important measures ever submitted to this Parliament. Its importance to the farming community is absolutely vital. Taking into consideration the price of bags to-day and the present

cost of handling, there is no argument against the bulk handling principle for Western Australia. What has caused me much regret is that, after this House passing the Bill, the measure should have been defeated in another place with the assistance of members of my own party.

Mr. Lambert: Are you going to discuss that matter in conference to-morrow?

Mr. PICKERING: I ask the Government will they consider the possibility of re-instating or re-introducing that measure during the current session?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The investigation into the bulk handling question was one of the best things that ever happened here. It served to throw out that Bill.

Mr. PICKERING: The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has always been opposed to the farming industry and everything appertaining to it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Royal Commission did not approve of bulk handling.

Mr. PICKERING: Another important matter to be dealt with is the question of immigration. For a considerable time there has been a vacancy in the Immigration Department—the position of officer in charge of immigration in London. The time has arrived when that office must be filled. I trust the Government will not be led into so foolish an action as the appointment of an officer simply on the ground that he has been receiving immigrants here, or anything of that sort.

Mr. Green: Would you be in favour of giving the appointment to an Englishman?

Mr. PICKERING: No. I favour the appointment of a man possessing an exact knowledge of farming in Western Australia.

Mr. Lambert: If the officer to be appointed has that knowledge and tells the truth, we shall never get any farming immigrants.

Mr. PICKERING: Better even than that to bring out deluded immigrants. I call attention to the matter because I have heard it rumoured that the Government contemplate the appointment of an officer who is eminently unsuited for the position.

Mr. Lambert: Name him.

Mr. PICKERING: If the truth is told about the State we shall get the right class of men to come out here, but if we continue to send out the propaganda issued from the London office, we shall get men totally unsuited to the life. The man for the position must have had long experience of Agricultural Bank work. He must know the industry thoroughly, must know what it costs to do things and what money is required. I hope the Government, when considering the filling of the position, will bear in mind that it is a matter of vital importance to the State. Another appointment that requires to be made is that of an officer in charge of child immigration. In this connection I would point to the gentleman who has been managing the Fairbridge Farm School for boys. It is much more desirable to get boys out here than to get men; because we can

get boys without any outside training foreign to the country, and we can bring them up as Australians in the very environment in which they are to pursue their avocation. It is a question of great importance to the farming community. The boys trained at the Fairbridge school are well fitted for the life they have to follow, and I believe it would be wise on the part of the Government to encourage child immigration. The British Government, I understand, are favourably considering a proposition for paying 6s. per week per capita for every boy brought out here. Well trained youths are very much needed in the dairying industry in the South-West, and the proposition, I am sure, will have the endorsement of members on this side of the House. Another matter to which I would draw attention is the provision of soldiers' homes. A sum of £500 per man is allowed for this purpose. This sum is altogether inadequate. The accommodation to be provided for £500 is not sufficient for any self-respecting person.

The Minister for Works: That is a question for the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. PICKERING: But I want the State Government to make representations. If they cannot do that, what is the use of the State Government? I myself drew several plans on the basis of £500, and I found that to be satisfactory they would cost £750.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The sum of £500 is quite heavy enough when it comes to repayment.

Mr. PICKERING: But you cannot build a decent home for £500.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Many of the homes built by the State board cost less.

Mr. PICKERING: That was before the war. Conditions are very different to-day. I believe that a worker, like anybody else in Australia, prefers a decent home, and I am opposed to providing kennel homes at £500. Only the other day an article on the subject appeared in the "West Australian." In the plans submitted the largest room was 14 by 12, while others were 10 by 8.

Mr. Green: A fine jarrah home can be built for £500.

Mr. PICKERING: Not if properly finished inside. I was returned on the score of economy.

Hon. P. Collier: They reckoned you would be cheaper than the late member.

Mr. PICKERING: The question of economy has been touched upon by the member for Pilbara, who spoke of the re-arrangement of the Government offices. There is a proper principle to adopt in such re-arrangement, namely the concentration of officers in as few buildings as possible. The outlay of those buildings should be on such lines as would be adopted by any modern business firm. In an up-to-date business office one will find that the officer in charge has complete control, whereas in the dog kennels known as Government offices every man has control for himself.

The Minister for Mines: Not in the new Mines offices.

Mr. PICKERING: I think the minute the Government can see their way clear they should set aside a certain sum of money for erecting proper offices for the housing of the different departments of State. That money, even if it had to be raised as a loan, would be of advantage to the State in the amount it would save. The one object most of us have at heart is to get industrial peace in Western Australia. We all believe that it can only be done by equitable methods, and that the State would advance rapidly if such peace could be attained. Whilst we are fighting one another, as we are doing to-day, it is hopeless to expect prosperity. If it cannot be achieved by present methods, I suggest that some other court of appeal be set up. I would welcome any means of arriving at improved conditions. To-day we are flying at each other's throats; we have even heard suggestions of lamp-posts and ropes. I am prepared to support any measure that will solve this industrial problem.

Mr. Green: You were talking machine guns a little while ago.

Mr. PICKERING: Nothing of the sort. When dealing with the Fremantle trouble I said that we should have gone to the country and got the country's verdict on the position. If we had gone to the country then, the country would have given us the verdict as to what it required us to do, and would have supported us in doing it.

The Minister for Mines: We have been to the country.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes, on one or two side issues.

The Minister for Mines: Not on any side issue at all. We have had the verdict of the country straight out.

Mr. PICKERING: We shall not solve these problems by mere platitudes. The Government can introduce the necessary legislation. Will the Government take the required steps? The conditions all round us have changed, and it is necessary we should realise that we are no longer in 1914. If we approach the problems confronting the State with earnestness, I believe we shall find a way out. If we reduce our tariff the price of commodities will become cheaper, the output will become greater, and the cost of living will fall. If we are going to maintain our tariff at the present exorbitant rates, it will be necessary to provide for a limitation of profits. That is the only way we can restrict the price of commodities and maintain our tariff. If, in addition, we properly educate our children, and so fit them for the battle of life, we will render them more efficient and, in consequence, production will be greatly increased. The present is not an occasion for merely doing our best. We have made it a question of getting the most for the least and paying the least for the most. That is the attitude of to-day, and that attitude has to be changed if we are to have the best in West-

ern Australia. There is nothing more dear to my heart than to have the best for Western Australia.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 13th August, 1919.*

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

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### Sixth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. E. DODD (South): In rising to make a few observations in connection with this debate, I desire to express my deep regret at the death of our late President, and I endorse all the sentiments that have been expressed in regard to him. I remember when I first came to the House knowing very little about it, the late Sir Henry Briggs was very kind indeed, and when I became a Minister of the Crown he often gave me hints which were helpful and useful, and I am sure it will be a long time before we become reconciled to his absence. I also wish to convey my congratulations to you, Sir, and I think we can fairly say you have won the position by reason of your knowledge of the Constitution by reason of your ability, and temperament, and I hope you will long live to enjoy it. I also wish to associate myself with the expressions which have been used in regard to Dr. Saw and Mr. Panton. The fact of these two gentlemen being in the House, both of whom have served their country on the battlefield, certainly enhances its prestige, and I sincerely hope that these hon. members' deliberations will be beneficial to us. Reference was made in the Governor's Speech to peace being proclaimed. Naturally we all agree with the sentiments expressed, and we all hope that the peace which has been signed by the Allies and our late enemies will be a lasting one. Despite the fact that there is so much turmoil in the world to-day, I think we can look forward to the future with some degree of confidence. I am inclined to think that

the courage which has been exhibited on the battlefields of Europe by our men will be brought into being in connection with their lives in Australia. I am not one of those who think that because our men have been away fighting that they have returned brutalised, and are going to be a menace to the country. I shall never be afraid of what the soldiers in Australia will do, provided we give them a fair deal. We can take credit to ourselves as a race for the manner in which we have come out of the war, and I was interested in reading the other day a report of the speech delivered by General Smuts. There are a few lines in that speech which I would like to read to hon. members. General Smuts said—

Before the war he and his friends had felt the might of the Empire, but one had to be at the Peace Conference to see what a part it played in the counsels of the world to realise not only its physical but moral preponderance. Whatever the past and whatever the future, the British Empire was far and away the most potent instrument for good or evil which ever existed in the world. The British Constitution gave the clearest clue and guidance as to the course to be pursued.

It is something that we can be proud of to think that a man in the position of General Smuts, who fought us tooth and nail during the Boer war—and I say it redounded to his credit that he did so—that after all these years he can say what he said the other day about the British Empire as it exists at the present time. I am proud to think that despite all the black spots that there are in our records—and there are some very dark ones—that we are to-day the greatest force in the world, and it is to the credit of the genius of our people that, whilst kings are falling and thrones are tumbling almost everywhere throughout the world, things are no worse in the British Empire than they are. Some people are inclined to think that things are very bad so far as industrial unrest is concerned. They are bad enough, but for all that I think the genius of our race will see us through, provided we get a little vision into our minds. I have spoken on one or two occasions with reference to the many war activities for good that were brought into operation during the four years which have just closed, and I would like to say a word or two with reference to that matter. While we stand appalled at the barbarism, at the horror engendered by the war, I think there is a contra account, and it is that I would like to see the Government and those who have an interest in our welfare try to take over. When we come to consider all the war activities brought into being to alleviate the horrors of war, the innumerable societies—Red Cross, Trench Comforts, and a hundred and one others, not only in one town and in one country, but in every village of the United Kingdom and the British Empire—when we come to consider that all these societies were brought into being to alleviate the horrors of war, and when we think that