

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SECOND SESSION OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT.

The Parliament was prorogued on the 26th March, 1915, until the 29th April, 1915. It was further prorogued to 29th June, and finally to 29th July, 1915, when it met for the despatch of business; and the Second Session commenced on that day.

Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Governor.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 29th July, 1915.

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OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at 3 o'clock p.m., pursuant to proclamation.

The President took the Chair.

The Clerk of Parliaments (Mr. G. F. Hillman) read the proclamation.

ELECTION RETURN—METROPOLITAN-SUBURBAN PROVINCE.

The President announced the receipt of the return to a writ issued for the election of a member for the Metropolitan-Suburban Province showing that Athelstan John Henton Saw had been elected.

The Hon. Athelstan John Henton Saw took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency Major-General Sir Harry Barron, K.C.M.G., C.V.O., en-

tered the Council Chamber at 3 p.m.; and the members of the Legislative Assembly having also attended in the Chamber obediently to summons, His Excellency was pleased to deliver the following speech:—

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly—

In opening the second session of the Ninth Parliament I and my advisers, and indeed the whole of the people of this State, keenly feel the sadness of the times. So many of our brave citizens have heroically fallen upon distant battlefields, and so many others are waging manly war in the trenches. Others are in transit or preparation to continue the struggle for the security of our Empire and the maintenance of British justice in the cause, not only of Britain, her dominions and dependencies, but in the cause of humanity itself. Never has the world seen such hosts in arms, and we trust that after the triumph of our cause, the like will never be witnessed again. Our Empire and her allies are fighting a foe stirred by the unceasing ambition of selfish conquest and territorial aggrandisement, and whose national vanity finds its unworthy expression in cruel and barbarous war. The British

people are peace-loving, and have seized the sword only to defend their cherished liberties, and to protect the weaker nations of Europe from unscrupulous aggression and the violation of sacred treaties and national honour.

Through our cause runs the eternal law of right and justice, and though the ordeal at present is severe, we are convinced that the armies of Britain and her allies in the end must conquer. Yet it would be unwise to under-estimate our difficulties, or the ferocious determination of our enemies. The situation is undoubtedly grave, and we need all our resources, both in men and money, to accomplish the task in hand. We know that the citizens of the Empire are equal to the sacrifices required, and that in courage, endurance, and the abnegation of self, they will prove themselves worthy of their sires and of the citizenship of that great Empire that has circled the world with civilisation, with freedom, and with blessings to mankind.

Whilst the stress of war has been upon us, dislocating normal finances and industry of every kind, the whole of Australia has been further oppressed with the failure of harvests due to an unprecedented drought. Happily, the outlook for the future is brighter. The copious rains which have fallen in this State give promise of a bountiful and record harvest, and greater activity in prospecting and mining. My advisers anticipate that the wheat yield will approach 20,000,000 bushels, over one million and a half acres having been placed under crop.

The combined misfortunes of the war and the drought, however, have put a severe strain upon the resources of the country. The great areas of land settled by our farmers were likely to revert to their original waste from lack of nature's productivity and the settlers' financial resources. The Government, realising the difficulties of the settlers, have made extra efforts to assist them: Not only have they supplied the great majority of them with seed wheat and fertilisers, but with the actual necessities of life, both for themselves and their stock. In addition to conserving and distributing the local

products of our soil, they have imported flour, wheat, and other commodities at a cost of approximately £250,000 from outside the State to meet the requirements of the people. Beyond this, financial assistance has been rendered on an increased scale through the Agricultural Bank and in other directions. Through the agency of the Industries Assistance Board approximately £500,000 has been advanced to the settlers to tide them over their difficulties.

The farmers are not the only section of the community on whom disaster has fallen. Certain branches of the mining industry, the timber industry, and other industries were brought to a standstill until the Government came to their assistance by direct advances, or with guarantees for over-draft accommodation. In this way the industries were kept going, and the people concerned in them kept employed.

My advisers were naturally concerned in warding off the heavy burdens that have fallen upon the State, and in decreasing the consequent suffering and consciousness of misfortune among the people. With this end in view, the Government has made every effort to keep the wheels of industry in normal motion. As far as has been possible it has proceeded with its public works, and so far as will be possible it will continue to do so in the future.

In the metropolitan area there has been carried out an improved sewerage and drainage system: 10,500 houses are now connected with this work. On the goldfields the water supply has been extended, and the supply from Mundaring Weir has been satisfactorily maintained. In the dry farming areas there has been a large volume of work done to supply the necessary water. In the North-West improvements in this respect have been effected, and new works have been provided where necessary. Irrigation works at Harvey are in course of active construction. At Geraldton, at Albany, and at Collie, works are in progress to grant adequate supplies to these important centres.

With the end in view of furthering the development of the country, even under most trying circumstances, railway works have been carried out on a fairly extensive scale. The number of miles of railways opened last financial year was 364, thus bringing the total length of railways opened for traffic to 3,331 miles, whilst a further 413 miles are in course of construction or have been authorised.

In other directions, also, the Government has been attentive to the requirements of the State's trade and commerce. Additional harbour facilities are being provided at Fremantle and other ports.

All this has entailed large expenditure, but it has kept our citizens employed, and the country progressing, and it has made the disasters of the war and the drought less noticeable in our State than in any other State of the Commonwealth.

Amid the depression brought about by the causes just referred to, it is pleasing to note the stability and growth of our mining industry. The great progress shown in this industry in 1914 has been maintained. For the first six months of the present year the gold output was £2,567,234. Coal to the value of £66,281 was raised during the same period. Other minerals were raised during the first five months to a value of £63,475. The testimony as to the value of this industry is shown by the dividends of the mining companies during 1914. In that year the dividends amounted to £799,392, and for the first six months of this year the dividends totalled £388,468. On the 30th June last this industry had paid in dividends a total sum of £25,090,537.

It is still more pleasing to note that not only the well-established fields continue to flourish, but goldfields such as Yilgarn, Pilbara, Phillips River, and Yalgoo are reviving, and in some cases are providing new centres, such as Warriedar, for energy and the production of wealth. Taken altogether the industry may be said to be in an exceedingly prosperous condition.

My advisers have not been inattentive to other needs of a great and growing State. More particularly is this evident in the domain of charity.

It is recognised that for the production of wealth from the mining industry human lives are endangered and sacrificed. The Government are putting into operation a scheme which will provide relief for those miners who have contracted diseases incidental to their employment. A Board has been created to manage the funds subscribed in common by the Government, the miners, and the mine-owners, for carrying out the scheme.

The Government has opened a sanatorium at Wooroloo for the treatment of pulmonary diseases.

My advisers have also dealt with cases of distress existing in the community (from the causes mentioned) by large expenditure upon charities of a collective and individual nature.

There has been established a male inebriates' home at Whitby, and it is anticipated that a similar institution for females will be opened at no distant date.

Provision is now being made for the opening of a central maternity hospital.

The Government has not neglected the education of the coming citizens. Though somewhat retarded by the strained conditions arising from the war and the drought, the educational policy of the Government has made sound progress during the past financial year. In that period forty-six new schools were opened, chiefly in the new agricultural areas, while additional accommodation was provided at many schools in the larger centres. The new curriculum, which came into force at the beginning of 1914, has now been sufficiently tested to warrant the statement that it has been found eminently suitable to the needs of the State.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly—

You will be required to give your attention to the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure at an early date.

In the meantime you will be asked to grant temporary supplies.

During the past year there has been an increase in expenditure in respect to interest on the cost of new agricultural railways and other works.

Owing to the amount of money required by Great Britain and her allies to successfully prosecute the war, we cannot expect the same assistance from the English money market as in previous years.

For the future we must rely chiefly upon our local resources and the liberality of the people of the State to supply the requirements of further loan expenditure.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly—

My advisers, fully conscious of the great struggle proceeding between the Empire as a whole and its enemies, and feeling that now is a time above all others when all citizens should act in concord and good fellowship, are not desirous of introducing controversial legislation for your consideration. It is anticipated that the session will be brief, yet it is necessary to introduce non-party and needful measures, among which are the following:—

Bills to amend—

The Mines Regulation Act.

The Health Act.

The Land Act.

A Licensing Act to provide for a referendum upon the hours of closing Licensed Houses.

The Bread Act.

A Bill to give Statutory Authority for the Management of the Miners' Relief Fund.

A Bill to establish Statutory Weights and Measures,

and Bills for the re-enactment of several necessary emergency measures.

Preliminary to the introduction of a Bill for the Regulation of Horse Racing, you will be asked to appoint a Joint Select Committee to inquire into the matter.

I now leave you to your labours, trusting that by the blessing of Divine Providence they will prove of material advantage to the people of Western Australia.

The Governor then retired and the President (Hon. H. Briggs) took the Chair.

OBITUARY—HON. D. G. GAWLER, HON. G. RANDELL, AND HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.20]: Since the last sitting of this House death has removed one of our members. On the 4th March of this year when Parliament prorogued, the Hon. D. G. Gawler was in good health and, to all appearances, had many years of useful life before him. In the brief interval which has elapsed he has passed away. I am voicing my sincere conviction and the feeling, I think, of every member when I say that the death of the hon. gentleman leaves this House the poorer. As one who was not in accord with the attitude taken up by the hon. gentleman in connection with many political questions, I can conscientiously state that I never encountered a more manly or more honourable opponent. He held decided views and he fearlessly expressed them, but always in the language of a true gentleman. Never once to my knowledge during the five years he was a member did he offend against good taste, indulge in personalities, or impute unworthy motives to those whose actions he felt called upon to criticise. He did not because he could not without changing his nature. While speaking on this mournful subject, I cannot avoid a reference to two ex-members of the Legislative Council whose deaths have also occurred since our last sitting—the Hon. George Randell and the Hon. Thomas F. O. Brimage. The late Mr. Randell had been a resident of this State for 65 years, during 40 of which he had devoted much of his time to laborious and conscientious service to the people, either in the highest civic posts or in the Parliament of the country—as mayor of Perth, as a member of the old Legislative Council before Responsible Government, as a member of the Legislative Assembly, as a member of this Chamber, as a Minister of the Crown, and as a respected and

revered leader of this House. Mr. Brimage occupied a seat in the Legislative Council from 1900 to 1912, and all who appreciated his good qualities and the great interest he manifested in the progress of the State will regret his demise at a comparatively early age. The families of both deceased gentlemen will have our deep sympathy. Mr. Gawler became a member of the Legislative Council at a period when Mr. Randell retired, and I may add that they had some characteristics in common, the same kindly manner, the same desire to faithfully discharge their legislative duties and the same honesty of purpose. At a time like this, another phase of Mr. Gawler's character is forced upon our attention. He was deeply loyal and he was prepared to make sacrifices to his patriotism. He was a loving husband and a fond father; yet he gave cheerfully two of his sons to assist in upholding the emblem of our freedom on the battlefields of Flanders. We shall miss the late Mr. Gawler in this House: we shall miss him because of the patient, intelligent and fruitful consideration he gave to measures submitted to his judgment, but we shall miss him most because of the example he set us all in the virtue of engaging in even animated controversy without leaving in our path any expressions which would cause pain to others and perhaps remorse to ourselves. I now move—

That a letter of condolence be sent by the Hon. the President to the widow and family of the late Hon. Douglas George Gawler.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.25]: I beg to second the motion. As the senior representative of the Metropolitan-Suburban Province and as an old personal friend I must attempt to put into words the sorrow that is felt, both inside and by many people outside this Chamber, at the unexpected and untimely death of Mr. Gawler. We have just listened to a striking tribute to the virtues he possessed, both privately and publicly, and coming from a political opponent they carry the greater weight. I always think it is difficult at any time in public to deal with personal sorrows

and at the present moment with an Empire in mourning it is almost unseemly to wear one's heart upon one's sleeve. We have to bear up with what fortitude we possess, but perhaps a reference may be permitted to pay respectful homage to the sad figure of the bereaved widow, and what consolation is given by human sympathy is hers abundantly. I myself shall always remember with gratitude his personal kindness to me. His knowledge and experience were always freely placed at the disposal of every member of this House. I pass, therefore, from the private to the public loss. I remember once, half in jest, referring in this Chamber and in his presence to the illustrious lineage of the deceased. That was perfectly true: the family to which he belonged had a tradition of public service. His name is well known throughout South Australia, and this tradition of public service was shown by the life of the deceased, and, as has been pointed out by the leader of the House, this family tradition is being carried on by his sons. In addition to other public duties which he performed, I think it may be mentioned that he was the consul for France in this State, and we can truly say that that great Republic, which is one of our Allies in the war, has lost a faithful representative. Reference has been made elsewhere in the courts where he practised to his high professional reputation. We had the benefit of his professional skill in this Chamber and we shall miss very much indeed his trained and experienced criticism in the questions which come before us in this Council. I will say no more. We mourn his loss, and his memory will be precious to us, while his example will, I think, be an inspiration.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan) [3.31]: I did not intend to speak at this stage, but rather to reserve my remarks to a later one. Perhaps, however, I may be permitted to say that in Mr. Gawler I lost more than a colleague—I lost a life-long friend and an old school fellow. I lost a man whom I had known all my life, and the longer I knew him the more I respected him. When, in 1910, I resigned from the representation of the

Metropolitan-Suburban Province, one consolation was felt by me in the fact that an old friend and, as I have already said, an old school fellow assumed that representation in my stead. And how well he carried it out is known to this House, is known to the province, and is known to Western Australia. I may say that Mr. Gawler died with a reputation of which any man might be proud. To his State he gave his services, to the Empire he gave his sons. Allusion has been made to the late Hon. George Randell, and it is a peculiar thing that I personally have been connected with both these gentlemen. In the one case Mr. Gawler was my successor in the representation of this province; in the other case I was the successor, the unworthy successor I fear, of the Hon. George Randell. Of that gentleman, anyone who took an interest in the proceedings of this House must have held that he was a model Parliamentarian. It is often said by the unthinking that the representation of a province in Parliament should form, as it were, one of the lesser interests in one's life, that to enter upon a pursuit which, after all, represents one of the most important and one of the most honourable pursuits which can be taken up by anyone, namely to help in the government of our country, should form the lesser part of the life of the representative. To this mistaken view the Hon. George Randell was a living refutation. I do not think that anybody gave more painstaking care to the details of Parliamentary work and to the details of Parliamentary life than did that hon. gentleman. He was one of whom it might be said, as the leader of the House has said of Mr. Gawler, that to disagree with him was perhaps to respect him all the more. As leader of this House I have had grievous and irreconcilable differences of opinion with the late Mr. Randell, but I may say that after we had argued them out and come to one conclusion or the other, so far as I was concerned at all events, I felt the highest possible respect for such an antagonist. With regard to Mr. Brimage, speaking for myself and, I think, for the majority of hon. members, in this House, we wel-

come the representation of every shade of opinion, and the services of Mr. Brimage were eminently acceptable because he brought to us the opinion of the goldfields, because he brought with him to the Chamber a breath from the wide, open spaces of Western Australia. We can ill, as a community, as a representative Chamber, bear the losses which have fallen upon us. I beg most heartily to support the vote of condolence which you, Sir, will communicate to the bereaved widow of Mr. Gawler.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [3.35]: As one who possibly has differed from the views of Mr. Gawler more than the average member of this House, I too desire to express a feeling of sorrow which I am sure is shared by everyone who knew the late Mr. Gawler. The feeling that I think we all in this House have is that the late Mr. Gawler was a model of what a member should be—extremely conscientious in the discharge of his duties, most painstaking in everything that he undertook, courteous in debate, considerate and tolerant towards the views of others, and possessing a mind that was always open to conviction. When Mr. Sanderson was speaking about the late Mr. Gawler's lineage, some lines of Tennyson occurred to me which I think peculiarly applicable to our late colleague—

And so he kept without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Profaned by every charlatan
And soiled by all ignoble use.

I am sure that this House, and indeed everyone, entertains towards his sorrowing widow and his relatives the profoundest sympathy, and more especially towards those gallant sons of his who are now so bravely fighting our battles at the front. Of the Hon. George Randell I well remember that, as the Colonial Secretary said, he possessed many of the characteristics of Mr. Gawler as a Parliamentarian. Mr. Randell was a careful examiner of every Bill that came before this House, and those members who remember him will also remember how frequently he pointed to anomalies and errors in draftsmanship, how frequently his action was responsible for the removal of blemishes

which otherwise would have appeared on our statute-book. Of Mr. Brimage, I can speak as he is remembered on the goldfields. During the twelve years that that hon. gentleman represented a goldfields constituency he invariably carried out the promises under which he was returned. Mr. Brimage could always go back to the goldfields, and was always assured of a warm welcome from every section of the community there, and indeed from all political parties, because he was a man who faithfully did his duty in accordance with the terms under which he was elected.

The PRESIDENT [3.37]: Before putting the motion, I may be permitted to add a stone to the cairn of respect and remembrance of our late members. Diverse qualities marked each man's character, which had been moulded and coloured by his life's experience and surroundings, but all of our late members had one thing in common—an earnest desire to deserve the confidence which had been placed in them as representatives. George Randell was one of the pioneers of municipal and social service in the State, and was for some years a servant of the Crown. The lot of Thomas Frederick Brimage was cast in the early days of the goldfields, and he took his share in the local government of the new community. Douglas George Gawler became a member at a time when industrial and economic questions were forcing their way to the front, and these he met with a kindly mind and with a suavity of manner that nothing could sour. Thus equipped with knowledge, experience, and personal gifts, all our late members won our respect, and may still instruct us if we follow their example. The late George Randell, from his longer acquaintance, made a deep impression on me. I felt that the motive power of his many activities was his sense of responsibility. Now, responsibility is one of those great words which shape the thoughts, the wills, and the lives of men. It seems to me even stronger than another great word, duty. Duty looks to the present, responsibility looks to the present and to the future. I believe that it was this thought

of having to answer, to render an account, for every opportunity of service to his day and generation, that made George Randell's presence here so productive of good; and the conduct of public business was raised by his constant endeavour to do what was right and just in the best interests of the State.

Question put and passed, members standing.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

The Colonial Secretary laid on the table reports and papers similar to those presented by Ministers in the Assembly.

BILL—ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.45]: In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation, I move, without notice, for leave to introduce a Bill entitled "An Act to amend the Adoption of Children Act, 1896."

Leave given; Bill introduced, and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [3.47]: I desire to move that the following Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to us:—

May it please your Excellency, We, the Legislative Council of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and to thank your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

On an occasion like the present it is but meet that the custom should be followed of the older members welcoming the new members. I therefore feel sure that I am echoing the feelings of all members in welcoming to this Chamber the hon.

Dr. Saw. From what I know of that hon. gentleman I think I can say that he will prove a not altogether unworthy successor of his predecessor. Than that, I think, no higher recommendation can be made to the members of this Chamber. I appreciate the fact that I was invited by the Government to move the adoption of the Address-in-reply; the more so because I am not a member of the Government party. My attitude towards the Labour party is to-day exactly identical with what it was when I was returned to this Chamber first in 1908, and with what it was when I was re-elected to this Chamber last year. I do not now belong and never have belonged to any of the political parties of this State. Nearly all members of Parliament belong to parties, but I believe they are party men more by force of circumstance than by any strong faith in the party system of government. I think all old Parliamentarians will agree as to the many defects of the party system, defects that some times occasion members to support Bills they do not approve of, because their opposition to them might imperil a Government that may favour other measures which those members heartily support. Then there are the defects which bring about a constant struggle for office, a constant battle on the part of the men who are out of office to replace the men who are in office, a condition of affairs usually very undesirable and productive of very objectionable results. But whatever views we may hold regarding the party system, I am quite sure that the feelings of the average man towards the political strife of parties must border on contempt at a time like the present, when the fate of the Empire is hanging in the balance; for it must be remembered that the fate of the Empire means the fate also of our most cherished institutions and of all we hold most dear. I think the average man is neither a fanatical supporter of the Labour party nor a fanatical supporter of the Liberal party or of the Country party. The average man does not care a snap of the fingers for any party; he wants good legislation and good ad-

ministration, and he cares not what particular party it comes from. I feel convinced that the average man would not expect that at a time such as this criticism of Government actions should altogether cease; because after all criticism is essential to the proper conduct of public affairs; but I think that every reasonable man has a right to say that any criticism which may be indulged in at present should be designed, not with the intention of embarrassing or discrediting those who have the reins of Government in their hands, but rather for the purposes of helping them. I will illustrate what I mean by reference to what has taken place in connection with certain actions of the Government. Although the financial position of this State is serious, still we must remember that the financial position of the Commonwealth and of every State of the Commonwealth is serious at the present time. With the source from which we drew our loan money, namely the London market, closed, and with an influential member of the Commonwealth Parliament such as Sir William Irvine suggesting that it may be necessary in the interests of the Commonwealth and the Empire to abrogate the Financial Agreement, it is scarcely necessary to dwell upon the gravity of the financial position. Anyone who studied public affairs could have seen as soon as the war broke out that we were to be brought to some such pass. The Government at that time proposed something that would help in the direction of improving the financial position. They brought in a measure which the Government themselves strongly objected to, a measure of increased taxation. Taxation is always objectionable. It is a necessary evil. Increased taxation in a time of difficulty and stress is an aggravation of the evil. However, as the Government explained at the time, they could not see any less objectionable means of improving the financial position of the State. This House rejected that proposal, and then the Government were determined to adopt some other means of helping to improve the financial position. As the legislators of the country refused

to sanction the course that the Government suggested, so by means of administration the Government endeavoured to do something to improve the finances. The two administrative measures which they adopted were measures which the Government themselves described as highly objectionable. One was a reduction of the hours of public servants. No one can deny that such a proposal involves a waste of time and energy. One can but agree with the critics of the Government in that respect. There was another proposal, namely the increase of railway rates. Taxation by means of railway rates is always objectionable, because its incidence is unjust. Its incidence is such that the taxation falls with undue severity upon the men who use the railways most, the men who live in the back-blocks and who have to rely absolutely on the railways for all their supplies. Taxation by means of railway rates falls upon one particular section of the people with undue severity; and moreover, it falls upon some who at the end of the year have a debit, instead of a credit, balance. However, the Government fully explained at the time that they recognised all the objections to the administrative reforms they introduced; what they pleaded was that some other reform should be suggested. When the proposal for increased taxation came before this House I was one of those who recognised the many objections to it, but in the absence of any better proposal I was forced to vote in favour of it. My position now is that I cannot honestly condemn the Government for those two administrative reforms by which they have endeavoured to improve the financial position, the reason being, of course, the difficulty of seeing any other means of improving that position. I know there are some hon. members of this House and another place who, as critics of the Government, point to the State trading concerns. They blame the State trading concerns as being to a considerable extent responsible for the deficit. I would ask those critics, as I have asked them over and over again, to be good enough to be definite with reference to

those State trading concerns. I have never been wildly enthusiastic in favour of them. Some of them, I believe, are very good; but as soon as ever it has been satisfactorily proved, as soon as they have had a fair trial and it is found that any one of those State trading concerns is not of benefit to the State, I feel certain the Government will be only too happy to cut their loss and shut down such a concern. I would plead with those hon. members who are constantly criticising the Government to be definite and clear as to the particular State trading concerns they would shut down.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: All of them.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I thank the hon. member for being so definite. It is certainly a clear and distinct statement coming from a gentleman representative of the Opposition. I would like to ask, furthermore, whether hon. members, critics of the Government, would, for instance, stop a project like that of the Wyndham freezing works which is a highly socialistic proposition? I think everybody ought to agree that, whatever we may feel regarding the State trading concerns, the Government should be very slow in extending such enterprises at present. During the closing days of last session, when the war had raged for six or seven months, what was my surprise when the Government brought forward a proposal to establish freezing works at Wyndham! I admit that freezing works at Wyndham may be very desirable if circumstances admit of their establishment. I take it there is a great deal to be said in their favour, for to carry live stock between Fremantle and Wyndham means an economic waste. But there is a time for everything. I question the advisableness of starting at a time of stress like the present a project which is, after all, highly experimental, and which no private individuals thought sufficiently profitable to undertake. I fully expected that when the Bill was brought before this Chamber, which is a stronghold of the anti-socialists, no one would listen to the proposal, that it would at once be rejected. What was my surprise, therefore, when the Colonial

Secretary (Hon. J. M. Drew) during war time brought into this stronghold of anti-socialism a proposal to extend the socialistic enterprises of the Government, and it did not meet with a storm of opposition as I expected. What happened? From every quarter of the House, from which he was formerly strongly condemned, Mr. Drew received nothing but congratulations. The hon. gentleman is so unaccustomed to receive praise in this Chamber that I felt pity for his embarrassment, and I saw him blush to the roots of his hair. Where was the hon. Mr. Cullen, who now wants to shut down all socialistic enterprises, when this fresh socialistic enterprise was started? Where were all those opponents of socialism when a proposal of that kind came forward? I was, in fact, the only one who opposed the proposal in this House. I did not find a single supporter here. I only mention this because those hon. members can perhaps subsequently render their actions on that occasion consistent with their usual attitude towards the State trading concerns. Not long ago, in another place, the Premier, I think it was, appealed to the leader of the Opposition to tell him what he would do to improve the financial position of affairs if he had charge of the reins of Government.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Create a new Administration.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: That was practically the reply that was made by the leader of the Opposition, only he put it in a somewhat flippant way. I suppose it was a very smart way in which to put it. He said that if a ship was being steered on to the rocks the best way to save that ship was to change the pilot. That certainly seems good advice, until it is examined. What has happened lately? Those who had the right to say who should pilot the ship of State have lately been appealed to. The result of that appeal has been this, that, although the Government majority has been decreased, the Opposition did not gain one single member in addition to the members they had in the last Parliament. The

position now is that there are three parties in another place. The party, however, that is stronger than the other two combined has the reins of Government in its hands. To the patriotic public man, it seems that irrespective of what party is in power that party ought to be given the loyal support of every other party in the State in a time of crisis such as this, instead of carping criticism being indulged in and an endeavour being made to discredit that party, obstacles being placed in its way, and the difficult work the Government have in hand being rendered more difficult. It is, in fact, the duty of every loyal and patriotic citizen to give that party every possible help. They can give that help. I should like again to ask those critics of the Government, those who are so ready to find fault with everything that is done—and it is very easy to find fault, for critics are always ready made—I should like to ask those gentlemen to exercise what constructive ability they may possess by laying down what they consider to be the clear and definite policy which ought to be pursued in the present serious crisis that we have reached. If the leader of the Opposition knows of a better course for the ship of State to be steered, it is his patriotic duty to point it out. Why talk of a change of administration when the electors have just spoken? I have the greatest respect for these critics and for their constructive ability and capacity to govern the affairs of the country, and if their policy be outlined and found to be better than the policy which has been pursued by the Government, I think I can assure for these critics the support, not only of the Government, but of every part of the country. If they can frame a policy that will be an improvement on that of the present Government, the Government themselves would be prepared to adopt it. What more can the Government do than they have done? These critics have refused increased taxation; they opposed strongly the reduction of the hours of public servants, and they opposed increased rail-

way rates. What more is there to do? Would they be in favour of a reduction of hands in the public service? Will they say "yes" or "no" to that? Mr. Cullen is silent, so are all the other members of the House. Are they in favour of reducing the hands engaged in the public service? Not a single one of these critics, who are so strong in their criticism, will say "yes" or "no." Are they in favour of the reduction of wages? Will they say "yes" or "no" to that? They will not do so. I am not in favour of either a reduction of hands or of wages, but they will not say "yes" or "no." Everything that is done by the Government—and the Government are striving hard with many difficulties—is condemned, but they decline to say "yes" or "no" even to such direct questions as I have propounded. If it be not a reduction of hands engaged in the civil service, and if it be not a reduction of wages, what other course ought in their opinion to be pursued in order to straighten out the financial position of the State? The Speech that we have just heard read by His Excellency the Governor forecasts a number of Bills, not many Bills; but I am given to understand that these Bills are of a non-party nature. By describing them as of a non-party nature I do not wish to imply that they should be non-contentious. There is a great difference between a non-party Bill and a non-contentious Bill. Let us take any of these Bills—the Licensing Bill, the Mines Regulation Bill, the Health Bill, the Land Bill, the Grain Bill, and so on. Any of these Bills may contain contentious matters, but none of them need be of a party nature. Take the proposal to control racing! That question is highly contentious but ought to be non-party. I am quite sure that every one, or nearly every one, would agree that there is too much racing, that racing is carried on in this State to the extent that it has degenerated almost into an evil. The best means of dealing with the problem has, of course, yet to be discovered. It has been suggested by the Government that they would submit the Bill to a select committee, or appoint a select

committee to investigate and report upon the question, and this will probably be the means by which a solution of the difficulty can be found. I feel that none of these Bills should occupy much of the time of Parliament. The session ought not to be of long duration. I would suggest that at a time like the present there is work outside for all public men to do. There is work outside that is certainly not less important; that is, in fact, more important than any work that can be done in Parliament. There is work to be done in the stimulation of recruiting. There is work to be done in assisting the various movements to swell the patriotic funds. There is work to be done for the Red Cross. There is also work to be done in assisting those noble ladies who throughout the length and breadth of the State, under the leadership of Lady Barron, are so unselfishly devoting their time and their energy to providing necessaries and comforts for the sick and wounded, and for the men fighting in the trenches. I would respectfully suggest that members of Parliament might be better engaged in that kind of work than in wrangling over party differences, the breadth and depth of which may be likened to the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee, differences which are trifling and insignificant as compared with the terrible time of crisis and of anxiety such as we are now passing through. I desire to move the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (North-East) [4.11]: I second the motion.

On motion by Hon. H. P. Colebatch, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 4.12 p.m.