

Melville tramways just before the outbreak of war. There was a delay of some considerable time owing to the inability to secure rails for the work. Eventually the rails were obtained from the Government and the work was completed. Since then, as we are all aware, a large number of residents have gone to the Front, and the Melville Roads Board are not enforcing the payment of rates so far as those persons are concerned. The tramway, of course, is not paying at the present time, principally on account of the war and the fact that Point Walter is not being used as a pleasure resort to the same extent as was the case formerly. The Melville authorities, before approaching the House to ask for the postponement of the payment of the sinking fund, thought it advisable to interview the society which advanced to the board the money on debentures. The society sent an inspector to the district, and they were satisfied on that inspector's report to permit the payment of the sinking fund to stand over. I will read a copy of the letter which was sent by the society in question to the board. It reads—

The Australasian T. & G. Mutual Life Assurance Society, Ltd., Melbourne, 18th May, 1917. The Secretary, Melville Road Board, Bicton. Dear Sir,—*Re* debentures No. 1/130 for the sum of £13,000. Your letter of the 8th inst. was laid before my Board of Directors to-day, and I have to inform you that the society is prepared to fall in with your request and waive the provision of a sinking fund in connection with the above loan for a further term of five years. Yours faithfully. Signed, J. McKenzie Henry, General Manager.

I think, therefore, that we are justified in asking the House to pass the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 5.43 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 31st July, 1917.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAY REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

Hon. H. STEWART asked the Colonial Secretary: Whether he can supply the House with the following details relating to the revenue and expenditure of the Railways for the year ending 30th June, 1916, viz.:—1, The revenue and expenditure for "passenger and coaching" traffic—(a) on the metropolitan-suburban area; (b) on traffic from the last-mentioned area to the country; (c) on traffic from the country to stations and sidings wherever situated? 2, The same particulars as regards the "goods and live stock" and "miscellaneous" traffic?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: To obtain the information asked for would necessitate the employment of three extra clerks for one month, at a cost of between £40 and £50. If the hon. member still desires the information, will he move for a return?

QUESTION—KIMBERLEY CATTLE, GOVERNMENT PURCHASE.

Hon. J. A. GREIG (for Hon. H. Carson) asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is it a fact that a Mr. Fleming passes the cattle bought by the Government from Emanuel Bros. on behalf of that firm, and his son passes them on behalf of the Government at the port of shipment; if not, who does this work? 2, Is it a fact that a Mr. Watson averages these cattle at Fre-

mantle on behalf of Emanuel Bros., and the engineer in charge of the Abattoirs averages on behalf of the Government; if not, who does the work? 3, What number of cattle contracted for have been delivered? 4, What has been the profit or loss so far on the number supplied to date?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Mr. Fleming, sen., who has had 30 years' experience in this business, and is acknowledged to be one of the best judges in the State, passes the cattle bought by the Government from Emanuel Bros. So far as we know, Mr. Fleming, sen., is not in any way connected with Messrs. Emanuel Bros. Mr. Fleming, jun., has nothing whatever to do with the Government. 2, Mr. Watson averages the cattle at Fremantle on behalf of Emanuel Bros. Mr. Golding, who is manager of the abattoirs, at Fremantle, averages the whole of the cattle purchased by the Government. There is no engineer-in-charge of the abattoirs. 3, Emanuel Bros., under the terms of their contract, have delivered 5,849 cattle. 4, The loss to date is £217.

PAPERS—WALLISTON AND PIESSE'S GULLY RESERVES.

On motion by Hon. A. SANDERSON ordered: That there be laid on the Table of the House (a) file 1819/04 containing correspondence between the Lands and Railways Departments *re* Railway Reserve No. 7278 at Walliston, and any further papers relating thereto, and (b) the file and correspondence between the Lands and Water Supply Departments *re* Piesse's Gully Reserve.

The Colonial Secretary laid the papers on the Table.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

The PRESIDENT: I have received the report of the Auditor General for the year ended 30th June, 1917.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Health Act, 1911-15, Amendment of By-laws—(a) Maylands, (b) South Perth, (c)

Bridgetown, (d) Westonia, (e) Gosnells, (f) Osborne Park, (g) Midland Junction, (h) Belmont Park. 2, By-law for the declaration of anthrax as an infectious disease. 3, Prohibition under the Pearling Act, 1912. 4, (a) File 1819/04 containing correspondence between the Lands and Railways Departments *re* railway reserve No. 7278 at Walliston, and papers relating thereto; (b) the file and correspondence between the Lands and Water Supply Departments *re* Piesse's Gully reserve. (Ordered on motion by Hon. A. Sanderson.)

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth day—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the 26th July.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (North-East) [4.37]: In speaking upon the Address-in-reply I may say that, up to date, taking notice of the statements made by the Government, I have searched in vain for the policy of the present Administration. The only thing I can see is that disclosed by their statement that the Ministry is composed of the men, the people, we have to look to. Therefore, instead of a policy, we find that we have in this instance to depend on men. We have to give them a blank cheque and trust to them to carry out what they consider is in the best interests of the people. I do not know how much we have to expect from this conglomeration of discordant elements which now form the present Ministry, but we will have to take them as we find them. To get an idea of what they do propose to do, and to see their excuse for forming this Ministry, we find that their window dressing consists of—especially after knowing the case they put up on the Eastern Goldfields—a Premier with whom, they say, no fault can be found, and of whom they say it is palpable he has no past to which any exception can be taken. They are, therefore, quite confident that the present Ministry is going to be popular and will meet with the approval of the whole of the electors of the State. There are other members of the Ministry who also have qualifications which commend them to the Nationalists. We know that the representative in this

Chamber, the Colonial Secretary, is a man who has a peculiar aptitude for presenting the Liberal cause, and I have no doubt that the National programme will also be equally well presented by him. The present Attorney General, who was Attorney General in the late Administration, also understands campaigning very well. We remember some time ago, in his campaign for the Canning election that he made a name for himself by promising all things imaginable to the electors on that occasion. I cannot say that since that time any of his promises have been fulfilled, but at the same time the electors have a good representative, Liberal and Nationalist as well. As for the present Minister for Mines and Railways, there appear to have been no less than three changes in about as many months in that portfolio. If we go on like that we should at least be able to get an efficient Minister for Mines and Railways. All I can see to commend the present occupant of the position is dilatoriness, and I think he can be presented as carrying out the Liberal or Nationalist policy of doing nothing, so that there should be nothing criticised. In reference to the Treasurer, at present it is unnecessary to say anything regarding him. We quite recognise the importance of the position he holds, and everyone is prepared to give him a chance. I was rather disconcerted about the remark of the Colonial Secretary when he said that the financial policy of this Government was the same as the financial policy of the previous Government. If that is so we have not a great deal to hope for from the present Administration, for the simple reason that the previous Government, in connection with financial matters, had a programme of some description. They introduced measures for taxation, for instance, and they promised that rigid economy should be practised, but as far as we can see from the taxation proposals that they insisted on—because they had a majority in another place—the only taxation proposals to-day that they have put through is the trifling tax on receipts to the extent of one penny. That is their idea of stemming the financial drift. They are going behind to the extent, on their own admission, of £700,000 a year, and their idea of squaring the finances and making both ends meet is

in putting a tax on receipts of a penny. It is absolutely a ridiculous thing to talk of squaring the finances of the State by dropping pennypieces into the public coffers. That was the statesmanlike manner in which they dealt with the finances. Now we have the Colonial Secretary assuring us that the present Administration are going to continue on the same lines. We will wait until the Treasurer discloses his policy, and I do hope that when it is disclosed the weakness which was shown by the previous Government in connection with taxation proposals will not be continued by the present Administration. In connection with the financial position, everyone has to admit its seriousness. It did not take the party to which I belong three years of war and three years of present stress to discover that something would have to be done to stem the financial drift. We have heard a great deal about a strong man being required to tell the people their duty and what is required of them. I would like to point out, however, that, as far as the people of the State are concerned, they have long ago requested Parliament to do its duty. It is not the people who are at fault but Parliament, for not putting into operation the measures they were authorised to. In 1911 the party to which I belong was elected to office with a definite taxation policy and as will be remembered, attempted to put this policy into operation straight away. They recognised that to carry out their policy of humane legislation would certainly mean additional expenditure, and that to give better conditions to the civil service and to give better services to the people it was necessary to have additional revenue. They made no secret of the fact that more revenue was needed to put their policy into operation and they asked that that extra revenue might be provided. This was made perfectly clear by the Labour party when seeking election, and they were authorised in 1911 by an overwhelming majority to put their policy into operation. This House, however, when the taxation measure was introduced, consigned it to the waste-paper basket. I do not know what was said on that occasion, but later when measures of taxation were introduced and passed in another place and referred to the Legislative Council we were told in no

uncertain measure by the present Colonial Secretary, who was then in opposition to the Government, that he would not give the Labour party any more money to waste and that it was not necessary to have additional revenue. He was quite confident that all that was required was that the affairs of the State should be administered on sound lines, and that economies should be instituted in the departments, and that the wastage in the various departments should cease. Then he added that he was confident there would be no need for additional revenue. This same attitude was taken up when a taxation measure was reintroduced, or perhaps a similar measure, after the 1914 elections. The cry still was that additional revenue was not required and that all that was needed was better administration and economy in the departments. This continued until the Labour party were put out of office by a combination of the Liberals and the Country party. Then we have the spectacle of the present Colonial Secretary making a financial statement, and he then admitted after his party had assumed control of the Treasury bench that it was impossible for the present Government to square the finances. They showed all that they were able to do on the lines of economy, and even with the supermen they placed in charge of the Treasury and the various departments they failed to square the finances. In fact, things have become worse than when the Labour party were administering the affairs of the State. The Colonial Secretary then made an admission that, owing to the increased interest and sinking fund, and the decreased amount received from the Commonwealth, the two items alone totalling between £600,000 and £800,000—expenditure which had to be met and which no economy could assist—that it was absolutely impossible with the present revenue to square the finances. The present Administration and the last Administration took a long time to discover that the affairs of the State could not be financed on the revenue being received. I hope that they have at last discovered this fact, and that they are prepared to admit the position, and to remember also that it is not a case of telling the people what they should do, but rather a case of saying that now, although they

have waited three or four years, they are going to give the people the opportunity of paying for what they receive. I cannot imagine how it is that it was considered necessary by the last Administration to fool the people to the extent that the present Premier did. I am satisfied, so far as the taxpayers are concerned, that they are prepared to pay sufficient revenue for the services that are given to them in return. They know perfectly well that owing to the manner in which the expenditure has been increased in this State, considering that the revenue has not increased to any appreciable extent, it is impossible to go along as we are doing. In addition to the items I have mentioned which have been admitted by the Colonial Secretary, we have excess expenditure which was incurred by the Labour Government and which we considered was justifiably incurred. At the same time, this has to be met. To the credit of the Labour Government be it said they endeavoured to meet it, but the Legislative Council took charge of the finances of the State and prevented it being met. It is merely a matter of form electing members to another place; it matters not what the majority may be in the Legislative Assembly, this Council takes upon itself the full responsibility of deciding the financial policy of the State. The Liberal Government during its term of office increased the expenditure in various departments, and so far as I can gather, the last Administration made no attempt to decrease the amounts spent in these departments, and I find that the present Government have no intention of decreasing amounts in connection with certain other departments, either. For instance, in regard to education, the old Liberal policy prior to 1911 was to starve that department. The Labour Government immediately reformed that department and incurred additional expenditure per annum to the extent of over £100,000. During their term of office, extending over four years, they spent £400,000 more than did the previous Liberal Government in a similar term. We find the Colonial Secretary, in speaking on the question of education recently, instead of saying that he was going to curtail expenditure in regard to that department, made no secret of the fact that he was going

to increase expenditure, and he has already done so. The pace set by the Labour Government has livened up the old Liberal crowd and they now realise the benefits of providing increased educational facilities. They recognise that they have to march with the times. So in regard to that item, in addition to the others I have mentioned, I have not heard any statements to the effect that they are going to decrease expenditure. In connection with the railways, the increase in the minimum wage amounted to £104,000 per annum. I do not know whether the present Government intend to revert to the old rates, which were considered adequate by the Liberal party, or whether they are prepared to continue the extra expenditure incurred by the Labour Government. If so, there is another £104,000 which will have to be found. The Health and Charities votes have been increased, and the four items which I have mentioned amount to at least a quarter of a million per annum. That is all in addition to the extra money required for interest and sinking fund. As for increased revenue during all that period, as near as I can gather, it amounts to practically nothing. So that as in 1911 when the revenue and expenditure very nearly met, we now find that while the revenue has not increased to any great extent, the expenditure has certainly increased by over a million per annum. And with the experience of the late Government when they tried their methods of economy, and when they tried to improve the administration which they alleged they brought to bear, the fact remains that they went behind to the extent of over £700,000 per annum. So that if they now say they are going to grapple with the finances of the State and are going to place them on a sound basis—I presume they consider they have practised rigid economy and that in many instances, in the language of the present Treasurer, they have cut right to the bone—while the avenues of economy are almost exhausted so far as bettering the present condition of the finances is concerned, it means that unless they intend to cut down various services which the Government give to the State, additional revenue is absolutely imperative. I sincerely hope, despite the statement of the Colonial Secretary that they are going to pursue

the same financial policy as the previous Government, that they will show a little more backbone in connection with their taxation proposals than did the previous Government. I do not think we ever had such a spectacle as the bringing down of necessary taxation measures and then dropping them in an unaccountable manner as was done last session. All I wish to say in connection with this matter is that I believe the people of the State realise that whatever services they get from the State they have to pay for them, and that instead of the Treasurer being crucified, if he tells the people this, I believe they will be prepared to give him credit for informing them in plain language what they are to do, and if he is worthy of his position I am satisfied he will do it. I do not know anyone who will object to taxation proposals which will have the effect of straightening out the finances of the State. We are all saying what we are prepared to do in connection with this, that, and the other thing. I should say at least the people of Western Australia are prepared to make an attempt to pay their debts, and when we consider no attempt has been made to stem the financial drift during the past five years, it is about time we made an attempt to do it. One hon. member mentioned that he would like to have the candid opinion of Mr. Boan on the financial question. I can assure this House that I, too, would like to have that hon. member's candid opinion. I have an idea that if he were managing the affairs of a big concern which were going behind to the extent of £700,000 per annum, he would not suggest as an effective remedy the sacking of the office boy or the cutting down of petty expenditure. I think he would adopt a more drastic proposal than that, and if he gave his candid opinion of the finances of the State he would say that if the people are to have these services, money must be found in order that they may be paid for. It is not a fair proposition for this generation to be continually passing on its liabilities to future generations. At least we should make an attempt to square the finances and show that we are prepared to do our duty so far as this State is concerned. Just a word also in connection with the economies which have from time

to time been practised in this State. We are all quite prepared to admit that where expenditure can be legitimately cut down, it should be cut down at a time like the present, but there has been a practice adopted in the past, particularly by Liberal Governments, of starving certain State services and taking credit for economies by so doing. As a matter of fact before the Labour Administration came into power there had been very little money spent on the maintenance of our railways, and they had to provide a matter of £150,000 to put the lines in order. That was on account of the scandalous way in which the railways had been starved. The position was the same in regard to rolling stock, and an enormous sum had to be spent to bring the rolling stock up to what it should be. Any Government which attempts to effect economies, in my opinion, has no right to do it by starving the railways; and it is to be hoped that if we must have economy, this system of false economy will not be practised and that the assets of the State will not be allowed to be depreciated through neglect in the future. Mr. Sanderson quoted a set of figures showing what a fearful condition the Treasury is in on account of the huge loan expenditure; but I think some other hon. members have already pointed out, our expenditure from revenue in this State is proportionately greater than in many of the other States, for the reason that in this State a greater number of activities are controlled by the State. The real question is whether the money that has been spent from loan funds has been wisely expended and whether we have proportionate assets to offset against the expenditure. I hope the Colonial Secretary when touching on the subject of the deficit will give credit to the Labour Government. We have been told that that Government have the credit of having spent money lavishly; but what we want to know is how the revenue has been expended and how it is proposed by the present Government to effect the economies which have been so much spoken of. The main question is whether the bulk of our expenditure has or has not been wisely spent. Although the Labour Government have been blamed for its loan expenditure, it must be remembered that to many of those works, as hon.

members are perfectly well aware, the Labour Government were committed before they came into office. Further, a good deal of that expenditure has been on railways and other works that were absolutely justified, and to which at the time no one took exception. There is also another question which is of very vital interest to this State at the present time, and in respect of which the people are anxious to know whether the Government propose taking any action to bring about a better state of affairs. I refer to the matter of the cost of living, which has increased enormously during the term of the war. The Labour Government did make an attempt to regulate the cost of commodities. Members of this Chamber will recollect that an Act was in operation for some twelve months and that this Chamber took the responsibility of removing that Act from the statute-book. Some members stated that it was an unjustifiable interference with the law of supply and demand, that it was not justified, and the Colonial Secretary, I think, said he took full responsibility for speaking and voting against that measure.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: Are prices any higher now than then?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: At that time the cost of living was lower in this State than in any other State of the Commonwealth with the exception, probably, of New South Wales, where a similar Act was on the statute-book and where the Attorney General issued a pamphlet in which he showed that State interference had saved over £400,000 to the people by the operation of that Act. When that Act came into operation in Western Australia it had a salutary effect on the commercial people of the State; it had the effect of regulating food prices and of stopping increases from being put on the necessities of life. To those who say that the regulation of the prices of commodities is not a matter for the State, I would point out that the present National Government are in favour of the principle of a court of arbitration for the purpose of deciding on any increase in wages. They realise that the best way of dealing with this question is by going to a court where evidence is taken and the rates fixed according to the evidence given. A great

portion of the evidence tendered in the Arbitration Court deals with this question of the cost of living, and the evidence as to the cost of living is a great factor in the award. But the difficulty is that when an award is issued based on the arguments and evidence tendered and considered by the court, immediately the award issues, if an increased wage is granted to those who applied to the court, the plea is immediately made that on account of the increase in wages the prices of various commodities must go up. This in effect means that the evidence given before the court is flouted, because the set of figures given to the court as an argument in favour of an increase of wages is really altered after the award is given, with the result that those who obtain the award do not get the benefit they should. There should be some method of either fixing or regulating prices after an award has been issued. If it is a fair thing to fix by arbitration the rate of wages a man shall receive for his day's work I want to know why it is not as justifiable to fix the rate of prices that one man must observe in selling to another. We want also to know why it is, when these matters have to be dealt with in a judicial tribunal and decided on evidence, commercial people have a right to fix their own prices. They can raise the price of certain commodities without having to put in evidence showing that it is imperative that such prices should be increased. They have not to show their expenditure has increased or anything of that kind; they simply act in an arbitrary manner and fix prices for themselves. There is a shrewd suspicion that it is not entirely the cost of production of any commodity which governs its selling price, but that prices are fixed by interested parties and not by independent parties as in the case of the Arbitration Court. When the Control of Trade in War Time Act was in operation it had a good effect, and I am confident that if a similar Act was passed now it would have a salutary effect also. Mr. Kingsmill said on that occasion that if the Act was necessary he thought it was necessary also to put it into operation. I would go further and say that, since we have a court for the fixing of wages, we should also, in order to be logical, have a court for

the fixing of prices, which after all has a direct bearing on the purchasing value of a man's wages, and he is entitled to have an idea of what the purchasing power of those wages will be. For the purpose of showing how this question bears on the man in business and the wage earner respectively, I should like to quote some extracts in reply to those who say that the profits being made at the present time are justifiable. The profits of a certain shipping company in 1913 amounted to £20,000,000; in 1916 they totalled £188,000,000. Again, to show the necessity for some regulation and for some methods being adopted to restrict the inflation of prices, I will quote an extract from a newspaper published no longer ago than July 26th—

Mr. Smillie presiding at the Miners' Federation Conference at Glasgow yesterday, said that the Government had only taken control of the output of the mines. It had not seen its way to nationalise the mines. He contended that, in view of the fact that the Government guaranteed the mine owners pre-war profits—
Members will note that so far as capital was concerned the Government guaranteed the owners pre-war profits.

the miners were entitled to be placed on an equal footing. He hoped the Government would act promptly on the Industrial Unrest Commission's report. Dealing with the increased cost of living, he said the miners were in a position at any time to force an increase of wages, but they did not desire to use their power. They preferred that the cost of living should come down, but if it were not, reduced wages must be increased.

As far as profits are concerned, when industries are taken over by the Government, the principle is adopted that the owners shall be entitled to pre-war profits. We on our part would like that also, and we do not think we are asking too much in suggesting that the same principle should apply to those who are engaged in working for wages. We contend that if capital, even when commandeered by the Government, should still have the same value to the owner as it had in pre-war times, there is no reason why the man compelled to work for wages—which, in my opinion, are never too high—should not have

those wages maintained at the same value to him to-day as in pre-war times. When people are told to practise economy, it is always one particular class that is told to do the economising. The man who every day of his life has to practise miracles of economy is now told that he must work still greater miracles. In fact, wages have increased very slightly since the war, whilst, as pointed out in the extracts which I read, the increase in the cost of living has amounted to 75 per cent. Now what our party want is that the wages which are being earned to-day should be of the same purchasing power to-day as they were before the war. Whilst the workers of this State and of other parts of the world are prepared to make any sacrifices in the interests of the nation, and have proved that they are prepared to make such sacrifices, it is not a fair thing, and we will never agree that it is their duty, to make increased profits for those who are handling the commercial concerns of this country or any other country. The workers are prepared to make sacrifices provided the nation gets the benefit of those sacrifices.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Especially at Fremantle.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: That question can be dealt with also. The workers are not prepared to make sacrifices in the interests of a few profiteers who are dodging their responsibilities and failing in their duty by the nation. I noticed recently that the Perth Chamber of Commerce were tendering advice to the people of the State and telling them to practise economy. Members of the Chamber showed how the expenditure on this Parliament could be considerably reduced. The foresight of those gentlemen is really remarkable. Perhaps it may not be out of place to inquire into some of their business methods. We often hear Mr. Duffell, who is not now present, referring to the Chamber of Commerce, those who undertake distribution right throughout the State—glorified middlemen. Mr. Garner has told us that the system which Parliament has adopted is most wasteful. I have observed the manner in which members of the Chamber of Commerce conduct their affairs in this State, and I think they can also be told that their expenditure could be curtailed,

and that a good deal of the expenditure which they pass on to the people could be saved. We find that practically every day in the week they have an army of commercial travellers going out into the country with various wares. I happened to talk to a commercial traveller in the train recently. He showed me his price list, and candidly told me that in a great many instances his prices and those of opposing firms were uniform, having been mutually agreed upon and fixed, and that in the great majority of cases he could not alter his prices by way of giving inducement to a particular buyer to deal with his firm. Candidly admitting this, he said that the business he secured was due to his personality, and that he spent a few pounds in getting business.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: He shouted?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: That is exactly the point. He said, "I go to a place like Westonia, a fine place for business, no doubt about that; but I cannot give these people any inducement to deal with me in preference to the other fellow, and I have to depend on buying my business." And he bought it all right. The fact remains that an army of commercial travellers and other agents travel throughout the country. That is the Chamber of Commerce system of doing work which in many instances could be done by writing a few lines and affixing a penny stamp to an envelope. Then there are the various agents throughout the country. I think members of the Country party, the representatives of the farmers and their interests, should also wake up to what is being done. I believe they are waking up. A man out-back wanting a harvester comes to Perth, goes straight to the firm selling the machine, and pays cash for it. That man will find that some man of whom he knows nothing and whom he has never seen collects 25 per cent. of the price as commission. Such are some of the commercial methods of the men who now tell us that we have to economise on Parliamentary expenditure and that we are working under a very wasteful system. If there is any system that is wasteful and requires reform, and that one day will be reformed, it is the present commercial system. Personally I am pleased that the farmers have decided to co-operate,

that they are going to cut out some of the middlemen. Undoubtedly the Chamber of Commerce will put every obstacle in their way. I believe such an attempt has already been made, but in that case the Chamber of Commerce were up against an organisation able to compete, and I believe the eventual result will be the saving to the farmers of a great deal of unnecessary expenditure. Only a couple of years ago I myself observed a case where two able-bodied men in a motor-car travelled out from Northam a distance of about 100 miles to sell a farmer here and there a few balls of twine. It amounted to this, that the farmers were charged for the twine and also for the expenses of the two men and the motor-car. The same thing applies to the sale of machinery. Machinery agents are going all round the country pushing their manufactures, whereas a man with any common sense at all does not go to the auctioneer or salesman for a reference as to what he wants, but takes the trouble to find out which is the article he requires, quite irrespective of the recommendation of the seller. On the subject of economy I think there is more need for reform in the present commercial system than there is in connection with the system of government, which has been criticised by the Chamber of Commerce as extravagant and wasteful. One matter which has received a good deal of prominence is the Esperance railway. We know the attitude taken up by the previous Government regarding this railway, and yet it was made an electioneering dodge during the recent by-election for Brownhill-Ivanhoe. I sincerely hope the present Government will make themselves clear as to what they intend to do. This is certainly not a party question, but, at the same time, I do not want to see the Esperance people fooled any longer. They were told that the line would be constructed as soon as practicable. I think it is due from the Government, unless they intend to fool these people, to tell them straight out that it is impossible to construct the railway even for the first 60 miles, let alone to carry out the Royal Commission's recommendation and put the line right through to Norseman. Such a declaration is necessary for the protection of the people who are there, and also for that of

intending settlers. If men who have settled nearly 60 miles from the coast have an impression, such as they might derive from the promises recently made at Kalgoorlie, that the line is to be constructed, they are likely to incur additional expenditure and be influenced to put in crops and so forth. The Government are in a position to know that the line cannot be constructed, as they have neither the material nor the money; and I think it would be only a fair thing in the interests of the people settled there and of intending settlers to state plainly that the Esperance railway cannot at present be built. I hope that there will be no more fooling in connection with the question, but that the Government will make a straight out declaration of their policy as to this railway. Generally, I would like to say that the policy which the Labour party have advocated in the past, and which was good in normal times, is the policy we still advocate. We hope the present Government will at last agree to what we have been contending for during years past, the necessity for additional taxation. I should like to see a tax placed on the unimproved value of land, or, if that does not meet with the approval of the Government, any equitable tax will be supported by me, because I fully realise that additional taxation is necessary and even imperative, and that the time has gone by for fooling and for promising economies which it is impossible to carry out. Further, I should like to see another trial given to the Labour party's proposal for overcoming the difficulty of the increased cost of living, by means of fixation of prices. I heard one member of the present Government say publicly in Kalgoorlie, though of course this was at election time, "I have been speaking with the Premier and the Attorney General, and they assure me that they are quite in accord with the idea of price fixing. I am going to try to induce the National Government to re-enact the Scaddan Act, which was struck off the Statute Book." That was stated by Mr. Thomas, the member for Bunbury. I do not know whether the Government still hold the view that that measure should be re-enacted.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Mr. Thomas was not in the Cabinet then.

Hon. H MILLINGTON: But he was a member of the National party. He explained to me that the beauty of the party was that its members were absolutely untrammelled. He said, "I am as free as air; I have been a party hack too long; now, on the floor of the House, I shall have a free hand; I shall be almost as important as Mr. Lefroy himself." He also told me that in connection with Government measures there was no such thing as any member being bound to vote for them. He said, "If a Minister introduces a Bill I am free to vote whichever way I like, and if the Government introduce a Bill and it is thrown out that does not in any way affect the life of the Government." So it would appear that Mr. Thomas has a perfect right to speak for himself, irrespective of the head of the Ministry. Mr. Thomas evidently has his own policy, and is going right ahead with it. At least, now that he is included in the Ministry, I do not know how it will be. He has an idea that each and every member of the National party has a free hand. So far as policy is concerned, I believe that holds good; and so we have at least one member of the Cabinet in favour of the fixing of prices. I sincerely hope that member will make his influence felt. I also hope that the industries of this State, about which so much has been said, will be encouraged. I do not want the gold-mining industry to be encouraged in the same manner as the previous Government encouraged it. For instance, they considered it a fair thing, when purchasing the support of the Country party, to give that party concessions equivalent to about £60,000 per annum. I refer to the reduced freight on fertilisers. It was quite a fair proposal to carry superphosphate at about a quarter of the cost of transport, because that was for the development of the farming industry. But we also have some outbackers who require a little consideration too. Particularly is this the case in places as far back as Laverton. The way they were assisted was by an increase of ten per cent. in railway freights. The manner in which the Government assisted the farmer was all right, but we cannot see why the prospector outback should not be assisted as well, for he, in his capacity as citizen, has to pay

taxes in order to provide the assistance for the farmer. I hope a little more consideration will be given to those men outback than was given by the Liberal Government. Also when going to the present Ministry and asking assistance for mining, as Mr. Cunningham and I did a little while ago, we find we can get a promise which does not materialise. The instance had to do with a party of men who had been working for four years on a mine. The developmental work was stopped owing to an influx of water, and pumping operations became necessary. An oil engine was used. The price of kerosene has gone up considerably, and in addition the freight went up ten per cent. also. In these circumstances it was impossible for those four men to carry on. They estimated that it would take four months to prove their mine. We went to the Mines Department, and the Minister, on the particulars being placed before him, said, "Oh yes, I see no reason why you should not be assisted." But after the department had considered it, we were told that there was no possible hope of getting any assistance. All that the four men required was £50 a month for four months, which would have determined whether or not the mine was payable. It is all very well to make promises for the assistance of the mining industry, but if it can be assisted in a practical manner it is by extending assistance to cases of this description, to men who have done a lot of developmental work and require only a little aid to allow them to decide finally whether or not their mine is payable. I know of no other way in which money might be better spent than in the assistance of such men. Conversely, if assistance cannot be given to such men, I fail to see how assistance can be rendered to the mining industry at all. I hope the various services which past Governments have rendered to the State will not be starved. I hope that the educational facilities will be maintained, and that other services, such as health and charities, will be made a special consideration with the present Government. As I have said, we are quite prepared to give any assistance we possibly can to the Government, but we are not prepared to go along merely relying on abstract promises of what the Government

are prepared to do. We want them to definitely take charge of the reform in respect of the National policy, otherwise we fail to see any use in making glib promises of stemming the financial drift. We sincerely hope also that something will be done in order to protect the people of the State from increases in the prices of commodities.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH (North-East) [5.35]: I desire in the first place to congratulate the leader of the House on having accepted a portfolio in the National Government. Let me also extend the same compliment to Mr. Baxter. I am one of those who, when the crisis came about, could not see eye to eye with many of my colleagues in the party, and consequently I, like Mr. Dodd and others, have been expelled from the party. However, I wish to say from the floor of the House that, whilst I have been a member of the Labour party almost ever since I can remember, I claim that I am still so. But when this great crisis came about, when this war was thrust upon us, when the country was at stake, when I had to take the word of those far greater than myself, I, like many others, was prepared to put my country before my party politics. In doing so, may I say, I had no regrets. I notice in His Excellency's Speech the announcement that the Government are out to make as much saving as possible. They say that in view of the financial stringency they hope, by careful economy in administration and the amalgamation of offices, to make material savings. There is one matter that I consider the Government might well take in hand, namely, the entering into negotiations with the Federal authorities with a view to the amalgamation of the Electoral Departments, State and Commonwealth. I fail to see why there should be two sets of officers and two separate departments. I believe that the one set of officers could carry out the work with very little extra assistance, and the amalgamation would effect a big saving to both the Federal and State Governments. Further than that, I believe that not only would economy be brought about, but greater efficiency would result, and increased satisfaction would be given to the people of the State, for, after all, there is but one set of electors. Many of our pre-

sent difficulties would be overcome if we had but one set of officers compiling the rolls. At the recent Brownhill-Ivanhoe by-election a great number of people who had recently voted at the Federal elections found their names removed from the rolls. They could not understand why. In many instances, perhaps, it was chiefly their own fault, but there were other instances in which the officers of the department were to blame. If we had one set of officers compiling the rolls, both Federal and State, there would not be so much difficulty as at present. I notice in His Excellency's Speech it is said that, notwithstanding the financial stress, it is the obligation of the Government to provide funds to aid in developing all industries, both primary and secondary. I believe that in the past insufficient money has been spent in connection with the development of the mining industry, in the assistance of prospectors outback who have tried to earn a living and at the same time aid the development of the industry. Take the Ida H. mine, which has been worked for years by a company. It has been taken over by tributers, and those men are spending about £1,400 a month in wages. This money has to come out of the mine. If it were not for tributers the mine would probably have been shut down long ago, which would have meant a great loss to the district and to the State. Consequently I think the men responsible for carrying on are deserving of every assistance. At the present time, if I am informed correctly, they are being somewhat harassed by the mining laws in regard to air ventilation. I am credibly told that the air ventilation to-day, with the mine 1,600 feet deep, is better than when the property was being worked by a mining company. The inspector is not too well satisfied with the conditions. They do not comply with the strict letter of the law. But in a case like this I think a point might be strained in order to keep the mine going and the men employed, until better arrangements can be made in regard to ventilation. The increased cost of mining requisites is a question worthy of the consideration of the Government. Dynamite has greatly increased in price; in fact, full strength dynamite is almost unprocureable

in the State. The last quote given me was £6 a case. Yet I am informed that it is manufactured in South Africa for less than 30s. a case. If that is so I think there is ample room for investigation by the Mines Department, with a view to seeing if better results could not be obtained—better from the point of view of the users of dynamite. At Kalgoorlie some attention is being given to the question of the effectiveness of diamond drilling. Personally I believe that diamond drilling is a good process, more especially in those districts where mines have been worked to a certain depth and, for want of capital, abandoned. There are many mines at the north end of the Kalgoorlie field, at Broad Arrow, Menzies, Coolgardie, and Malcolm, which, I believe, if the Mines Department were courageous enough to supply the diamond drills, would give good results. Such a development would probably be the means of attracting capital to these places and livening them up once more. The other evening Mr. Lynn made some reference to grievances in the Police Department and from what I can gather there is ground for the complaints. I fail to see why a special examination should be given to some officers while other men who have been in the force many years longer and have given the greater part of their lives to the State in the back blocks of the country have not been given the same chance of advancement. Many of these men at times have taken their lives in their hands and done their best to explore and develop the State. These men should be given the same opportunity as those who sat for a special examination some few months ago. An injustice has been done to those men who have spent so many years in the black blocks. Some police officials have been in the service close on 30 years; they have been almost pioneers in the outback districts. They have rendered faithful and good service to the State and I fail to see why these men who are now getting on in years should have to pass an examination alongside of younger men who have a better opportunity of qualifying for an examination by living in the City all the time. The men in the back blocks have given the best part of their lives to the State and should not be required to pass an examination.

Their long experience and faithful service without a black mark against them should be sufficient guarantee without an examination.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY (Central) [5.47]: It was my intention to deal with a matter that Mr. Millington dealt so exhaustively with and which has been agitating the public mind. I refer to the excessive cost of living. I could never understand the reason which actuated the members of this Chamber in refusing to pass the Control of Trade in War Time Bill some time ago. I attribute my presence in this Chamber to a great extent to the fact that my opponent supported the striking out of that measure. However, whatever motives actuated members in defeating the Bill they should have had good reason for altering their opinion since. They should trust the people to a great extent. Members of this Chamber should take into consideration the judgment of the people on these matters. If members followed the prices closely and considered the facts which have been put forward at recent meetings and demonstrations held as to the high cost of living, they would see that there is something behind the whole question. The figures quoted at demonstrations have been accurate in detail or they would have been challenged on many occasions. Only on one occasion were the figures challenged and then on the next day in the Press I believe they were contradicted. Without dealing too closely with this matter I would say the figures used in the Arbitration Court recently shows that if a man wishes to keep his family, and a small family too, he requires more money than he is getting to-day so as to enable them to be kept on a scale equal to the prisoners in the Fremantle gaol.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: There is a very high standard down there.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: That may be so, but for a man to keep a family of four children it requires a wage of £4 14s. 8d. per week to keep them on the same scale as the prisoners are kept in the Fremantle gaol. It is said that the Control of Trade in War Time Bill has interfered with the industries of the State and I think it is up to us to interfere with them because they are exploiting the people to a very great

extent. The figures which have been put forward have been proved to be correct by the statistics of Mr. Knibbs. For a man to keep a wife and four children up to 14 years of age on the same diet as is given at the Fremantle prison it requires £4 14s. 8d. a week. This should excite the sympathy of members and should appeal to the Government.

Hon. C. Sommers: It might be an argument for reducing the standard at the gaol.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: If a man is incarcerated for the worst crime we should not reduce the standard which is now in force and our standard is not as high as that of the prisoners of war in Great Britain. The German prisoners of war get more, comparatively speaking. It requires £3 4s. 3d. to keep the prisoners of war in Britain. That is reducing the amount as given by Mr. Knibbs of 11s. 8d. for rent and taking figures which Mr. Alanwater, who is recognised as an authority by Britain and America. I think the Government should do something in this direction. We fully recognise that in these times all should make some sacrifices but the sacrifices are too one-sided. I have had an opportunity of collecting evidence for the Arbitration Court and at times it is necessary to show the lowest cost of living as well as the highest cost, and it has been my province on occasion to prove that with the cost of living as low as possible and reducing it to a minimum it is an impossibility for a man with a wife and family to pull through. I think the Government should do something for the man who is working on the minimum to-day. I notice that the Government notwithstanding the existing financial difficulties are anxious for the development and progress of the industries throughout the State. Many matters have been dealt with but small mention has been made of the mining industry. The Government have no better opportunity than the present for developing the mining industry at such places as Narra Tarra and Tuckabianna. Some notice should be taken of the granting of exemptions by the late Minister for Mines. I desire to refer to the Sirdar mine at Mt. Magnet about which a great deal of controversy has taken place. Mr. Shallcross took over this particular

mine on a 12 months' option. For the first seven months he closed the mine down. After the exemption had been refused on two occasions by the warden of the district this gentleman succeeded in getting exemption. If this is to be allowed anyone can come along and shut up a mine as long as it suits him. This gentleman took the mine in question from a party of shareholders and the mine has lain idle ever since. This is not the only mine that this gentleman has under his control but it is the most glaring case which has come under notice. If this is going on in the mining industry, instead of being of assistance to the State, it will prevent prospectors trying to do anything for the industry. I hope the Government will take into consideration the desirability of doing something for the benefit of the people in the matter of the cost of living and the indiscriminate granting of exemptions especially to men of the description I have named. In connection with the education vote, I admit it is large and I trust that if any economies are to be exercised in connection with the Education Department it will be in the larger centres. Money on education is well spent, particularly in the back portions of the State, and I speak particularly of the farming districts. I hope that no economies will be practised in the back portions of this country and if there is to be any reduction it will be in the larger centres and in the metropolitan area. There is one matter which has been mentioned previously, I refer to the supply of school books by the Government. I do not say that at the present juncture the Government should grant free books, and free facilities in every direction, but something should be done to assist the people in this way. It is hard indeed for a man with a family to pull through while providing his children with the necessary educational facilities. When children go from class to class year by year they have to be provided with fresh books and I should like the Government to do something in providing the books free of cost, thus giving the people some assistance.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (North-East) [5.58]: I have a word or two to say in connection with the remarks made by Mr. Sommers a few evenings ago with regard

to the action taken by the Fremantle lumpers a month or six weeks since. One would gather from Mr. Sommers' remarks that the wharf labourers at Fremantle are men who should be deported from Western Australia. I feel quite sure that had Mr. Sommers known the true position in connection with the little trouble at Fremantle he would not have made the remarks which he did in this Chamber. Mr. Sommers referred to the matter of loading a transport in Fremantle and also in connection with the loading of wheat ships. With reference to the work on the transport it is as well to point out that the people in charge of that particular work were to blame for any friction which occurred in the loading of that transport. These people are working under an agreement. I believe that agreement was drawn up and made by the president of the Federal Arbitration Court. In that agreement are a set of conditions and the rates of pay dealing with Sunday work, night work, and the ordinary day work. That was entered upon by the labourers working on the wharves. I may say that I went to Fremantle recently to get as near as I could to the facts in connection with the trouble, seeing that one of the hon. members of this Chamber representing that part of the State had not thought it his duty, perhaps, to have anything to say in that connection. I found that the transport could have been got ready for this work to be taken in hand, as far as I could see, about 11 o'clock on Sunday. The people responsible for getting the boat away, if necessary as early as they desired, hung up the work during the whole of Sunday, and asked the men to come in after midnight. The only reason why this attitude was adopted towards the lumpers is the fact that the people responsible would have had to pay something like 5s. 3d. per hour for Sunday work. It was evidently their desire to get the work done at a cheaper rate and they were therefore prepared to ask the men to come in on the night work.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Not at the cheaper rate, but at the arbitration award rate.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: That is a cheaper rate. The rate for night work after midnight on Sunday is at a cheaper rate than the rate set out in the agreement for work done during Sunday. These people

were prepared to take advantage of that particular clause in the agreement with a view to having cheap work done. In that agreement there is also a provision giving the men the option as to whether they shall work at night or not. As a matter of fact, the judge of the Federal Arbitration Court set out that the men could please themselves as to whether they worked night work or otherwise.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Or work at all.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Or work at all at night. That being the case, the men looked at it in this light—that one party to this business, for the purpose of getting the work done cheaper than the Sunday rate of pay, desired the men to come in and work night work; and the men, having a right to say whether they would work night work or not, were prepared to come in, if the people responsible for the loading of the vessel made it worth their while, that is to say, gave them a little extra pay.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: They did not do that with the P. & O. boat. They were paid all day for nothing and would not work at night.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The rate asked by the lumpers was nothing extraordinary. It had been paid on previous occasions and has been paid since. There has been a certain amount of misrepresentation, and this has been spread through what I might, perhaps, call a biased press, for the purpose of injuring these men known as the Fremantle Wharf labourers. With reference to the wheat ship, there was a considerable amount of publicity given to the action of the men in connection with the loading of that vessel, but we find that after the vessel had been loaded, irrespective of the great outcry which had gone forth, she lay in the harbour or just outside the river, for something like five days. Yet we find the Fremantle lumpers have this charge levelled against them, that they did something which was hanging up what one might say was food for the Australian and British soldiers fighting in France. With regard to the other vessel, although a little trouble took place in connection with the night loading, and the men refused to go on unless the people concerned were prepared to pay an

extra amount, the work in connection with the loading was completed by the wharf labourers at about 5 o'clock on the Monday, but the vessel did not leave the wharf until between 5 and 6 o'clock on the Tuesday. Who was responsible for that delay; not altogether the wharf labourers! There seem also to be some other persons who assisted in delaying the vessel after she was ready to go. It seems to me that the people who had the matter in hand did not desire that she should leave any earlier than she actually did. The fact of the lumpers having taken up this certain attitude in connection with the loading of the vessel did not interfere in any way with her departure from Fremantle.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Give us the mail steamer, when they were paid all day for doing nothing.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I do not know anything about the mail steamer. There is another matter that I wish to refer to. I understood Mr. Sommers to say that he had an employee leaving with the intention of going to Fremantle to participate in the £14 per week earned by the wharf lumpers. Surely Mr. Sommers knows that only on one or two occasions has anything like that amount of money been earned by the wharf labourers of Fremantle. The occasions of which I speak arose in connection with removing coal which was on fire in two vessels, and the rate of pay for that work was 7s. per hour. It is only in work of that nature that the rate of pay approaches anything like that amount. I think the hon. member will agree with me that to take on work of that description entitles a man to receive something more than the average rate of pay.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: The union are asking 7s. 6d.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: We hear so much about the high rate of pay at Fremantle in connection with wharf work that it sets one thinking. At all events I went to Fremantle to find out all about it. I found that men who were getting this burning coal out of the vessels were overcome by the heat and fumes, and I am sure hon. members will agree with me that the work is worth fully 7s. per hour. The men cannot go on with that sort of work, and when we

find unhealthy work like this which takes the vigour out of a man, we should allow him something over the ordinary rate of pay. My object in making these remarks is to try and clear up some of the misrepresentation which has been spread throughout the State.

Hon. C. Sommers: Why would they not unload this ship on Sunday when they would unload another?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I do not know. At all events, one party wanted to save something and the other party said if that were the case and they wanted the work done, seeing they had the right to refuse, they would do it if they received a little more for it. Not only do I desire to draw the attention of the members of the House to these exaggerated reports which have appeared in the Press of Western Australia in connection with this section of the working people, but I think it is just as well to get down to facts, so that the public generally may know the position. By getting down to facts, we will not be doing any section of the community an injustice, whereas an injustice has been done in this case. Mr. Sommers said that if he had his way he would deport these people, but I believe that if he now went to Fremantle and found out the facts of the case, he would not be prepared to deport them. I know that there are something like between 400 and 500 wharf labourers out of work at Fremantle.

Hon. C. Sommers: No wonder!

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I found one strong, healthy man who had been working there for about 20 years, had during the last five weeks not earned more than £2 5s.

Hon. C. Sommers: He has killed the goose that laid the golden egg.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must not interrupt; he has already had his say.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I tried to get on the track of the people who, as has been said, are earning this big money. I interviewed a number of people and have every reason to believe the statements made to me. I learned that the majority of men at Fremantle were not averaging £3 per week. Taking into consideration what Mr. Hickey has already referred to, namely, the high

cost of living, I think hon. members will admit that £3 per week is not such a very great wage to keep a wife and family together on, and in addition pay the house rent which most of the men have to do. There has been a great injustice done to the wharf lumpers, and I think I have done right in trying to clear up the matter here. I also desire to refer to the present position of the mining industry in the State. I have recently had a trip through the back country north of Kalgoorlie. What struck me most was the scarcity of prospectors. I have been in this country for a number of years, but believe that at the present time we have fewer prospectors than we have ever had in the history of the gold-fields. One of the great reasons for the scarcity of men taking an interest in the development of gold mining in this State is that the cost of living has increased so enormously that storekeepers who, in the past, had assisted the prospector, and thus assisted the industry, are no longer able to do this. I believe it is not the retail storekeeper who is putting up the prices of commodities, for I know a number of storekeepers in the back country who have always assisted in every possible way to open up that part of Western Australia through what they have done for the prospectors. The fact is that the railway freights have increased so much and the cost of commodities has gone up to such an extent that the storekeepers have been unable to continue their assistance to the industry as they did in the past. The result is, as we find it today, these heavy imposts in connection with the cost of living are starving the mining industry of Western Australia. I think that any Government—Liberal, Labour, or National—should do everything possible to bring some relief for the purpose of holding together one of our greatest assets, namely, the mining industry. I wish to refer to a remark made by Mr. Ardagh. He said that he had been expelled from the Labour party in Western Australia. Neither Mr. Ardagh nor any other man in this State has been expelled from the Labour movement. There is quite a number of ex-Labourites in this State who have left the Labour movement of their own volition. That being so, I can see very little reason for com-

plaint on the part of Mr. Ardagh, or any other ex-Labour member of Western Australia. This, too, has been promulgated throughout the State by men on the platform and through the Press that we have in the metropolitan area, for the purpose of trying to injure that party to which I belong, the Labour party. If those men have made up their minds to leave the Labour movement, why do they not come out and say straight out that they have done so? If they desire to join the Nationalist party, why do they not become members of that party and say so. I believe in the principles of Labour and intend to stick to them, and if people disagree with them, let them leave the party altogether. They should not, however, lead the people to believe that they have been expelled from the party, for nothing of the kind has taken place so far as this State is concerned. I am thoroughly in accord with the remarks of Mr. Sanderson on unification.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Before tea I said I was in accord with the statement of Mr. Sanderson when he referred to the matter of unification. It seems to me that at the present time, as well as also for some years past, the cost of government to the people of Australia has been altogether too great. We have only to take into consideration that we have something like 666 legislators as well as seven Governors, and all other expenses connected with the government of the States. I am glad the matter has been mentioned in this House. It points to the fact that at last quite a number of people are considering the matter of unification. To my mind it is only a question of time when we will find the people of Australia taking the subject up in an earnest way. I hope Mr. Sanderson will go further with it and will do his best to awaken the public of Western Australia to the desirability of giving the subject early consideration. There is another matter I desire to touch upon and it is in connection with the recruiting campaign which has been carried out in Western Australia since the war started, more particularly the methods that have been adopted recently in the metropolitan area.

We find that there are recruiting committees and other people interesting themselves in the matter of recruiting in this State, and evidently they think it the proper thing to approach employers with a view of forcing men into enlisting. My contention is that this is not carrying out the spirit if the people of Australia as expressed on the 28th October last. On that occasion Australia declared in favour of the voluntary system. My contention is that every encouragement should be given to our fit men to enlist, but at the same time I strongly resent anything in the way of an economic conscription. No doubt these people are of the opinion that, by approaching employers, pressure can be brought to bear on the men engaged in the different trades throughout the country, with a view of forcing them into camp. This might also apply to the employers themselves. If it is necessary to bring pressure to bear on the employees, why not adopt similar measures with a view of getting eligible employers to go into camp? That has not been done and only this morning I happened to see in the *West Australian* where the Prime Minister was having a conference with employers in the Eastern States. The Prime Minister has made the statement on more than one occasion that it is not his intention to introduce conscription without first approaching the people of Australia through a referendum, and that that course will not be adopted until some great disaster overtakes the Empire. That disaster has not overtaken the Empire, and it seems to me that he has got right away from his previous promise, in his action in approaching the employers of the Eastern States. I can see no other object in the conference between the Prime Minister and the employers referred to in the Press than to bring pressure to bear on the eligibles in the employ of those people. In my opinion that is not in accord with the spirit and decision of the people, and I certainly do think it is a practice that should be discontinued. I believe that, rather than assist in the matter of recruiting, it will have a detrimental effect. There is another question in connection with the matter of enlisting and returned soldiers that I wish to touch upon. We have heard it stated on the platform, and it has also been referred to in the Press,

that preference must be given to returned soldiers. It is my desire to see every returned soldier, who is capable of doing anything in the direction of earning his living, given employment, but I do not think it is the desire of the returned soldiers to get preference. I rather think that the returned soldiers look upon it as the duty of the people of Australia to see that they are employed on returning, and they also, as Australians, desire to see those who have not been in a position to enlist, or are medically unfit continue in their occupations, and to my way of thinking both State and Federal Governments should get to work immediately for the very purpose of creating those avenues of employment that will not only absorb the returned soldier but also other people who have been doing their part and their duty in some direction towards assisting in the war. The matter of preference to returned soldiers, I believe, is practised at the present time. I did hear only a day or two ago that a married man with four or five children, and unfit for service, who was employed in the postal stores, had been discharged to make way for a returned soldier. I believe if that matter were brought under the notice of the Returned Soldiers' Association, that association would not agree with the action of the Commonwealth authorities in pushing out that man who was medically unfit, so that a returned soldier might get his position. That is not the spirit with which we should face the question of repatriation, nor is it the spirit which will work for the general good of the Commonwealth. It is not only essential that we should have our returned soldiers employed, but in the interests of the prosperity of Western Australia and Australia, employment should be found for all men who are prepared to work. That is the position as I look at it, and I think the Government should in the near future, and as early as possible, take up the matter of bringing about such a system in the industries of Australia, so that at the end of the war they will absorb all our workers. We hear of different schemes suggested with regard to repatriation, but if something is done in the direction of placing our industries on a sound footing, so as to provide employment for all, that will be a measure in the direc-

tion of repatriation. I know a number of men who left Western Australia and who, on returning, would not go on the land. That matter has been mentioned by the present and by the previous Government. Something has already been done in the direction of preparing land for the purpose of providing settlement for returned soldiers. The majority of the returned soldiers will be men who have been drawn from the various industries in Western Australia, and it will be found that these men will make their way back into the industries they were engaged in before they enlisted, and anything that can be done in the direction of bringing about a sound position at the end of the war in the direction of getting the industries going, will be, as far as I can see, something in the direction of absorbing the returned soldiers outside of any specific scheme, and it will be allowing them every opportunity of engaging in whatever producing industry they were working in previously. Another matter dealt with is the condition of the rolls of the Brownhill-Ivanhoe electorate. The National party, or the National-Labour party, is not the only party that can complain in regard to the state of that roll. I know a number of people, supporters of the Labour party, who on that occasion were not on the roll for the Brownhill-Ivanhoe electorate. It may have been, perhaps, through their own fault, and it may have been brought about by the fact that many people confuse the State and Federal rolls, and others believe that when they enrol on one their names will appear on both. Something should be done by the Commonwealth and State Governments with a view of getting a national roll for both State and Federal elections.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [7.43]: I do not propose to detain hon. members very long. So little has been said in the way of hostile criticism of the present Administration—a fact possibly to some extent accounted for by the short period during which they have been in office—that it will be quite unnecessary for me to reply at any length to the remarks of hon. members. I desire to join in the congratulations that have been bestowed on the two newly elected members, Mr. Boan and Mr. Stewart. I have no doubt

both these gentlemen will be an asset to this House. Personally I listened with a great deal of interest to the remarks of Mr. Boan in moving the Address-in-reply. Although it was his maiden effort, he told us a good many things that are well worth thinking over. I am sure his first action, on being elected, in making a comprehensive tour of the north-west portion of the State is likely to be of advantage to that portion of the State and incidentally to the country generally. I was interested in his references to the locality in which one can live on nothing a week—and save money. It may be to some extent an exaggeration, but I am sure the hon. member is on the right track in directing attention to the great possibilities existing in the North-West. Another suggestion of the hon. member has reference to economies. I have recently had the experience of endeavouring to press upon members of the community in the metropolitan area the desirability during war time of doing away with bookmakers and doing away with shouting; and I might say that my experience in that connection has not been altogether too satisfactory. If Mr. Boan has marked me to assist him in the task of inducing people to substitute chicken feeding for mixed bathing, I shall have to ask him to get somebody else; although here again I am sure that there is a great deal of common sense underlying the hon. member's remarks. One cannot move about the country and note what is going on, without realising that there is far too much time and far too much money being spent on luxuries and non-essentials to the neglect of effort to increase production. I realise that for anyone to talk economy during war time is like a voice crying in the wilderness, but obviously extravagance in war time is not the best policy for a country. Mr. Sommers made reference to the subject of repatriation, and suggested that the Government are confining their efforts on this question to settling people on the land. I would remind hon. members that that is the particular function of the State Government under the repatriation scheme; there are other matters probably, but these are dealt with by the Federal Government. Of course, it is realised to be necessary that the State Government

should co-operate in every possible way, and also the local authorities; but the time is scarcely ripe to go into the details. The Federal Government's Repatriation Bill has not yet been passed, and no doubt it will be circulated as soon as possible in order that the State Governments and local governing authorities may have the fullest possible details to enable them to assist in this great movement. So far as the settlement of returned soldiers on the land is concerned, I may say that a scheme was practically completed by the late Minister for Industries (Hon. J. Mitchell) before leaving office. That scheme is being reviewed by members of the Government and also by a departmental board, and it is now practically complete. I hope to place the details before hon. members before this session closes, probably to-morrow.

Hon. A. Sanderson interjected.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I submit that the hon. member has a very incomplete knowledge of the scheme. Mr. Mitchell did not contemplate sending returned soldiers anywhere where they did not want to go. His scheme contemplated making available the widest possible selection to the returned soldiers, and Nornalup was merely an incident in the scheme.

Hon. A. Sanderson: There was no compulsion?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No compulsion whatever. Reference has also been made in the course of the debate to the repurchased estates. Under the Act passed last session it will be possible for the land in the repurchased estates to be made available for use by returned soldiers. The scheme has not yet been finalised. A board has been appointed departmentally, one of whose duties is to ascertain exactly what land is available and where it is available. If necessary, although the Government hope that the necessity will not arise, provision is made for the further repurchase of estates for settlement of returned soldiers. But the scheme is not one setting apart particular localities for returned soldiers. I believe that when the details of the scheme are placed before hon. members they will agree that it is a generous scheme. Care will be taken to see that returned soldiers are adapted to the work upon which they

will be engaged. A second board has been appointed for the purpose of investigating the question of the suitability of returned soldiers for certain occupations. I agree fully with the remarks which have been made by several hon. members that only a small percentage of our returned men will go on to the land, and that it is necessary that everything possible should be done to extend all our existing industries and to create new ones, in order that these men may be absorbed into the industries of the country. It is certain that the scarcity of shipping, which will continue for a long time after the war, and this—as compensation for its many drawbacks—will have a considerable effect in aiding us to build up our local industries because we shall be forced to make certain things for ourselves for which previously we depended on importation. I have no doubt that so long as the Government do all they can to stimulate industries, and so long as the people put forth an energetic effort to assist, we shall be able to establish new industries and to make those already established larger. In this connection, I listened with considerable interest to the speech of Mr. Stewart, particularly his remarks on education as affecting the question of agricultural and industrial development. As members are aware, a committee is at present inquiring into this matter, comprising professors of the University, a representative of the Education Department, a representative of the Agricultural Department, and a practical farmer. This committee is collecting information from all parts of the Commonwealth and other parts of the world with a view to seeing what we can do towards making our education system, primary, secondary and university, of greater practical use to the different industries of the State. To my mind, co-operation between science and industry is a matter of supreme importance. We have to face the fact that when this war is over there will be great need for effort in every avenue of employment and for effort towards increased production. And when we realise the greatly increased burden which will be placed on industry by reason of the higher interest and the higher cost of money added to the higher wages—and no one wants to see

wages reduced or the standard of comfort of the community reduced—the only way we can do this is by having the best possible methods and the highest possible efficiency amongst our workers. It is for this reason that I contend the action of the Government can be justified in increasing at the present time the vote on education. Mr. Stewart referred to the fact that in the Imperial Parliament this year, notwithstanding the enormous taxation which the British people have to bear, the education vote was increased by no less a sum than four millions. He might have gone further and told the House that practically the whole of that four million pounds is devoted to increasing the wages and status of the school teachers. The assumption is that only by that means can the best minds be attracted to a profession, the value of which the people at home are only just beginning to realise. That is only one aspect. As soon as the war is over it is intended by the Imperial Parliament to extend the educational system very largely. For instance, the compulsory standard is to be increased to 14 years. At present it is irregular; in some parts of England it is 14 years, and in other parts the local authorities, who have control, have fixed the age at 13. But even in those parts where the age is 14, wide exemptions are granted on the ground of poverty and on the ground that the children's wages are required in order to supplement the earnings of the home. And it is the unanimous opinion of a very large departmental committee, whose report was received with general approval, that those exemptions must cease and that some other means must be found to meet the poverty of the parents, because it only perpetuates poverty in future generations to neglect the education of the children. It is felt to be impracticable to introduce this reform until after the war; and in addition it is intended that children who leave school at the age of 14 years shall be compelled to attend continuation classes for four hours per week; and those four hours per week are not to be taken during the night time, when the children are tired, but out of the time for which they are paid by their employers. To my mind, the best feature of this proposal is that it received the approval of practically all the employers who gave evi-

dence. They are of opinion that it will pay them to allow their employees off for four hours per week for the purpose of attending continuation schools. If some such scheme as this were adopted in Western Australia, I feel sure it would not be many years before we would see a very decided improvement in the general standard of education, an improvement which would enable our industries to bear the increased burden of dearer money which will be with us after the war. In this connection I should like to refer briefly to the increased expenditure on education, and to point out that the cost of education in this State is at the rate of £6 2s. 6d. per child. The increase in the number of scholars between the 30th June, 1916, and the 30th June, 1917, was not less than 3,000. So that, if the number of children is to increase at the rate of 3,000 per annum, it follows that our education vote must go up, apart from any new enterprises of an educational character which may be undertaken. I should also like to point out that the increased salaries amount to £10,000 per annum, an increase confined entirely to teachers in receipt of salaries of less than £204 per annum. I do not think any hon. member is likely to object to such an increase. So far as the new departures in education are concerned, the cost has been little indeed, and I would like to point out to members that the primary object has been an endeavour to give to the country child the same facilities for education as were formerly enjoyed only by the city child. We have in the metropolitan area a number of very fine secondary schools. The fees are moderate, and it is easy for parents residing in the metropolitan area, whose children can live at home, to get the advantages of these schools. We have also a modern school in the metropolitan area, and we have a high school in Kalgoorlie. But up to the present it has been impossible for any country child to obtain education after attaining the age of fourteen years unless the parents were able to pay the cost of sending the child to the school. Consequently, I am perfectly prepared to defend the action of the Government in this respect. I say "the action of the Government," because it is not the policy of the Minister for Education, but a policy which has been deliberately ap-

proved by, not only the previous Liberal Government, but also by the present National Government, and a policy which was emphasised by the Premier in his speech at Moora the other day. This policy is to establish, where circumstances justify it, in the country districts high schools. Two have been established—one at Northam and one at Geraldton. Two more are to be established at the beginning of next year—one at Albany and one at Bunbury. In connection with these schools scholarships are instituted to enable children of the small schools in the country districts to attend the district high schools. It is hoped, by this means, at very small expenditure to enable some four hundred or five hundred country children whose education would otherwise stop at fourteen to carry it on to fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen years of age. By that means we shall give something like fair play to the country children. At the present time the cost of education is spread over the people of the whole State, but in the past the advantages have been too narrowly confined to those who happened to live in the metropolitan area. So that, apart from the increased expenditure due to the increase in consequence of the larger number of scholars and the increase of salaries of teachers receiving below £204 per annum, practically the whole of the extra expense on education has been for the purpose of endeavouring to give to the country children some of the facilities which were previously confined entirely to the city children. It is a policy which I and every member of the Government are prepared to justify at any time and in any place, because, speaking of economy, we believe that the greatest economy which can be effected is to save human material. We believe that the greatest waste is to educate all the children up to the age of fourteen years and then turn them out to forget whatever they have learned. While I would do everything possible for the city child, I admit that I believe the country child is the best asset the State has. I believe that if the matter is gone into exhaustively it will be found that those children born and reared "near to Nature's heart" invariably or almost invariably make the best men; that they are the material above all other—notwithstanding Mr. Sanderson's reference to

"the dense bucolic intellect"—that we cannot afford to see run to waste. Mr. Dodd expressed his regret that the members of the official Labour party had not seen their way clear to join in the formation of the National Government. I have only to say that they were invited to join, and that I myself think it is a pity, in a time like this, that all parties in a State like Western Australia could not agree to sink their differences and work together for the common good. However, it is a matter entirely for each party, and if the official Labour party think they can do better for the State of Western Australia by refusing to join in coalition with any other party, then it is purely a matter for their own judgment. If we are to be guided by the debates not only in this Chamber but in another place, we cannot but admit that the members of the official Labour party who have spoken are earnest in their endeavour to assist the Government in a very difficult and trying period. Mr. Dodd made some reference to a motion which he tabled during last session in favour of an alteration in our railway policy, an alteration which would have the effect of making the whole of the interest on the cost of construction a national charge. There is a good deal to be said in favour of that policy, but it presents certain difficulties which I do not think have been taken fully into account by those who advocate it. To start with, it would mean increasing direct taxation to the extent of about £650,000 per annum. Our annual interest bill on the railways is £650,000, and if it were accepted, as a matter of policy, that the users of the railways should not be required to find any portion of that money, it would mean that in addition to taxation which we have to impose now in order to bring the revenue nearer to the expenditure, we should have to impose additional taxation yielding £650,000 annually. I do not know that any scheme of taxing the land benefited by the construction of the railways would produce that sum of £650,000 without doing an infinite amount of harm to the industries in which that land is employed. It is also necessary to remember that our railways pass through a good deal of useless land, which it would be quite impossible to tax. So that, whilst admitting that many

arguments may be used in favour of the suggestion put forward by Mr. Dodd, I would point out to him these practical difficulties.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: There is a great deal of unused useful land, too.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is some, but not a very great deal of, unused useful land. If we were to start taxing the land through which the railways passed in order to make up this £650,000 per annum, I think we should find ourselves placed in a very difficult position indeed. Reference has been made to the Esperance Northwards railway. As is well known, I opposed the passage of the Bill for the construction of that railway; and I still think it was a mistake, when we were already embarked upon the war, to pass the Bill and to proceed to construct the railway. However, the Government are bound by the decision of the Royal Commission on Esperance lands. I am not in a position to say when it will be practicable to construct that line. I do not know when we shall be able to obtain the rails. But I do say, as I said at the time the Bill was before the House, that I have always regarded the construction of a railway from Esperance to a point sixty miles northwards as an entirely useless proposition. I said then that I hoped if the Bill were passed it would not be long before another Bill was passed to carry the line right through to Kalgoorlie. I still take up that attitude. I maintain that that is the only way to give the line some reasonable chance of paying its way. If constructed merely for a distance of sixty miles north of Esperance, the line would be a very heavy burden on the State, without proving of much use to the producers of the Esperance district. Cut off from their best market—the goldfields—the Esperance producers must inevitably fail, even if they have a railway to their natural port.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I am in agreement with you at last.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am merely repeating the remarks I made a few years ago, when the Esperance Railway Bill was before the House, as the hon. member will see if he looks up *Hansard*. I said that if the Bill were passed I hoped there would be no delay in putting the railway

right through to Kalgoorlie. There is no inconsistency, therefore, in what I say now.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But you said that the Government were bound by the report of the Royal Commission.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Quite so. Unfortunately the report of the Royal Commission does not enable us to obtain the rails necessary to construct the line. I repeat, I think it was a mistake to put the line in hand at the time it was begun. A good deal has been said about the high cost of living and the matter of prices. I am free to confess that I took a prominent part in the rejection of The Control of Trade in War Time Bill a couple of years ago. I think I was justified in the attitude I took up on that occasion. I am not going to say that price fixing is altogether bad. We live in abnormal times, during which it may occasionally be necessary to do things that one would not think of doing in peace time. But I am satisfied that as a general principle price fixing is economically wrong and will not do any good. I have read a good deal on the subject recently. A number of writers have been examining the effects of the two methods. The German Government resorted, directly after the outbreak of war, to rigid price fixing, while the British Government relied mainly upon the law of supply and demand. So far as I can see, the writers without exception have come to the one conclusion—that price fixing destroys its own object. The effect of the law of supply and demand is this: Price fixing is chiefly required when goods are in short supply and the price must be fixed, in order to achieve what is desirable from the price fixer's point of view, at less than the goods would command in the open market. By adopting that course one removes on the one hand the necessity for economy and on the other hand the encouragement of increased production. A couple of years' experience in both Germany and Great Britain has convinced the German people that there are very serious difficulties in the principle of price fixing, and has convinced the British people that whatever price fixing one goes in for, one must handle it very gently indeed, and that one must take care on the one hand not to destroy the insistence on economy which the

law of supply and demand always imposes and on the other hand not to destroy the encouragement of production which the law of supply and demand also invariably affords. I say again that whilst I admit there may be cases in which some control of trade in war time is necessary, I believe that price fixing will never serve a good object, because it will not have the effect of bringing about the economy that is necessary when things are short, nor will it have the effect of bringing about the increased production that alone can afford a permanent remedy. It has been suggested that there is a close analogy between price fixing and the awards of the Arbitration Court; but let me remind hon. members that the Arbitration Court makes an award of a minimum wage and tells the worker, "When your labour is in demand you are entitled to ask for more." But the price fixing fixes a maximum price. It does not say to the grower or producer, "When your things are in short supply you are entitled to ask for more." It fixes a maximum price which the grower or producer must take when his goods are in short supply; and, generally speaking, it gives him no assurance of getting anything like that maximum price when there is a superabundance of his product. I am prepared to admit that at the present time something has been done in the way of fixing a minimum price for wheat, and that I believe it will have a good effect. But I certainly do not regard it as anything except a temporary expedient; and I am sure that directly normal freighting conditions are restored it will be found entirely impossible to fix a price for wheat in Australia that is not governed by the value of wheat in the markets of the world. I would willingly be a party to the enactment of any legislation which would prevent the making of undue profits in war time and I think the method which was employed during the French Revolution with the profiteers, who were shortened by a head, was really a very brutal but a splendidly efficacious way of dealing with people who tried to make improper profits out of the necessities of their country in war time. But I am afraid that those who think they are going to make living cheap by a wholesale system of price fixing would find be-

fore very long that they had done greater harm than good by what they attempted. I have to make a brief reference to some statements of Mr. Lynn in regard to promotions in the police force. The hon. member criticised the appointment as inspector of Detective Sergeant Mann. But the hon. member seemed to overlook the fact that Sergt. Mann was appointed, not an inspector in the uniform branch, but an inspector in the Criminal Investigation Department, a force in which he has served for nearly 20 years. I am inclined to think—and I have made pretty exhaustive inquiries into the matter—that Sergt. Mann was best qualified for this particular promotion. He has had a very successful and a very distinguished career, being the holder of the King's medal, which is granted for special skill in the investigation of crime, and which is issued in but very rare cases, and is considered a high distinction. Moreover, I think it is recognised in all services that special promotion should be given where special merit and ability are displayed. I have no hesitation in saying that the promotion was made in accordance with that principle. But Mr. Lynn's complaint seemed to be chiefly in regard to the promotion of two second class sergeants as first class sergeants; and on that matter he made some very sweeping and very inaccurate assertions. He said that all the police inspectors from Albany to Geraldton had been brought to Perth at great expense in order to recommend two sergeants for a promotion of sixpence per day. Nothing of the sort occurred. There is a promotion board, provided for by regulation, and this board consists of the whole of these inspectors. Their duty was, not merely to recommend these two sergeants for promotion, but to recommend for promotion, as vacancies occurred, thirteen different officers in different ranks. Mr. Lynn's complaint is that Sergt. Thomas and Sergt. Lean were promoted as first-class sergeants whereas another sergeant whom he referred to, but not by name, was overlooked, and the only reason he had for his complaint was that this particular sergeant was 10 years senior to Sergt. Lean. He admits that Sergt. Thomas' promotion was a good one, but he says for his other ser-

geant that he was, in point of service, 10 years senior to Sergt. Lean. In this regard Sergt. Lean was slightly senior to Sergt. Thomas, and only four years junior to the other sergeant. But the point is that the promotions are not made entirely on length of service. In the police force in particular it would be impossible to regard length of service as the one and only qualification. The regulation reads—

Names of candidates who are qualified will be registered, and it does not always follow that because a man passes a good examination he will make a capable officer or N.C.O. A board consisting of district officers stationed between Geraldton and Albany will sit in Perth as required and select in order of merit those members who in their opinion should be promoted, bearing in mind that efficiency in its truest sense must be their first consideration.

Mr. Lynn's charge is practically based on this: that an officer who joined the force in 1892, and who, therefore, has had 25 years of service, was promoted to a first-class sergeant in preference to an officer who joined the service in 1888, and who has, therefore, had four years greater service. The point is that the selection is made by half a dozen inspectors who have an exact knowledge of all the qualifications of these men. They make their selection, recommend to the Commissioner, and the Commissioner passes his recommendation. As Minister controlling the Police Department I must say I find not the slightest justification for interfering with the decision of that board, merely because one man has been in the force four years longer than another. This board of inspectors say that the 25-year man is the best man for the position, and I think it would be ridiculous for me to set myself up against the opinion of that board. I also think it would be ridiculous to ask the Public Service Commissioner, who cannot possibly know anything about the qualifications of these men, to pronounce judgment on the work of the board. The system of a promotions board of this kind is recognised in the army, in the navy, and in the police force elsewhere. This particular promotion is one very much prized by members of the police force, because it

is a step toward an inspectorship, and the particular sergeant on whose behalf Mr. Lynn spoke was not the only one who had a good many friends trying to advance his cause in this promotion. I was very glad to know that the senior officers in different districts were so well thought of by the people of those districts. At the same time it is necessary we should have discipline, and I intend to resist, if it is persisted in, the motion asking that the confidential papers of all these officers be placed on the Table of the House. Unless Mr. Lynn makes out a very much stronger case than he did on the Address-in-reply I hope hon. members, in the interests of the discipline of the police force, will not agree to the passing of the motion. Mr. Cunningham made reference to the question of recruiting. I do not know that the hon. member is wise in laying too much stress on the decision of the people on the 28th October. I think that those who took a leading part in inducing the people to come to that decision received a very rude awakening during the recent Commonwealth elections. I, for one, hope that the Prime Minister—I do not know whether Mr. Cunningham has exactly quoted him—will not wait for some grave disaster before taking steps which will allow Australia to do its part fully in the prosecution of this war. I know that the recent recruiting movement has not been entirely successful. The fault I have to find with it is not so much that the numbers have not been produced as that recently far too large a proportion of married men with considerable families and heavy obligations are going to the Front. Eventually we must suffer for it, because we are sending the wrong men, and it may yet become the duty of this Government and of this Parliament to assist the Commonwealth Government in taking steps to secure the required number of the right class of men. Incidentally, I may say that that was practically what brought this National Government into existence. I do not intend to say anything further in regard to finance. I discussed this at some length on the Supply Bill, but I repeat that the financial policy of this Government is the same as that of the Ministry that has just gone out of office. There is this difference: I hope this Government

will have an opportunity and the power to carry their policy into effect, which the previous Government did not have. It will be remembered that they had not a majority in Parliament. They held office by will of the Country party, which at that time was not prepared to accept its full responsibilities and join the Government by including one or more of its representatives in the Ministry. The present National Government hold office by will of a considerable majority of the Assembly, and if their position is confirmed at the forthcoming elections, they will have power to carry their policy into effect. The Liberal Government had no power to do that, because they had not a majority, and hon. members know the conditions under which recent sessions of Parliament have been carried on. Mr. Sanderson spoke a good deal on the question of unification. I do not intend to make reference to that subject beyond this: whilst I do not believe in unification, I feel that the spirit of the Federal Constitution, from a financial standpoint, has not been carried into effect. It was never intended that the Federal Government should control the financial position as between the States and the Commonwealth. At the present time nothing can be done, but after the war it will be found necessary to arrive at an understanding in regard to finance as between the Federal and State authorities. The hon. member also said we were all agreed on the question of doing everything to win the war. I wish I could think the whole of the people of Western Australia were so agreed. Only a little while ago I attended a meeting at which a casual remark about the necessity for winning the war, made by the Archbishop of Perth—who had returned from the trenches, who had been submarined, and who therefore knew what he was talking about—was treated with shouts of derisive laughter. Therefore, I am afraid the whole of the people of Western Australia are not as unanimous as I could wish on this question of doing everything possible to win the war. In reading the newspapers we think one day that everything is all right, but the next day we think everything is all wrong. It seems highly probable that the war will last a considerable time and that we shall have to make

greater sacrifices than we have made in the past. It is our hope that by sinking minor differences we shall do better than we have done hitherto, and it is to this end that the National Government have been brought into being. I desire to thank hon. members for the generally favourable reception they have given to the National movement.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

1. Melville Tramways Act Amendment.
2. University Act Amendment.
3. War Council Act Amendment.
4. Licensing Act Amendment Act Continuance.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—PERMANENT RESERVE (KING'S PARK).

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch (East) [8.29] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short Bill. Its object is to effect an exchange of land between the King's Park Board and the University. For some time past the King's Park Board has had this matter under consideration, particularly with a view to endeavouring to improve the approach to the Crawley entrance to King's Park. The opportunity for improvement to this approach arose when it was discovered that the King's Park Board had a block of land of practically the same size as the University block which had previously interfered with the making of a satisfactory approach to the park. It is considered that this better approach is necessary in the interests of safety, as well as for an improvement in the appearance of the park approaches. There is another reason for the Bill, and that is that the land which the University owns on that particular spot is not of nearly so much value to the University as the block owned by the King's Park Board a little further along the road towards Crawley. The area of

each of the blocks is about the same, namely, a little over three acres. At the same time this Bill provides for the closure of that portion of the Government road fronting Lot 127, in order that this new approach may be made. Lot 132 referred to will then be excised from the Board's reserve and handed over to the University, and that section of the Government road fronting Lot 127, at present owned by the University, will be included in the King's Park Board reserve. When this necessary exchange of ground has been effected the construction of a new drive and a new entrance to the park will be a matter for the King's Park Board. The proposed exchange has been considered by both the University authorities and the King's Park Board, and both are anxious that it should be effected. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 8.34 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 31st July, 1917.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Speaker: Report of Auditor General for the year ended 30th June, 1916.

By the Premier: 1, Royal Commission on the Agricultural Industry, interim report. 2, Returned Soldiers and Sailors' Settlement Scheme.

By the Minister for Works: By-laws relating to motor and vehicular traffic of the municipalities of Perth, Claremont, and Fremantle.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY—PRESENTATION.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to inform the House that I have to-day presented the Address-in-reply to His Excellency the Governor, and that I have received the following—

Mr. Speaker and hon. members of the Legislative Assembly: In the name and on behalf of His Most Gracious Majesty the King, I thank you for your address. Signed, William Grey Ellison-Macartney, Governor.