

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 1st September, 1920.

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

QUESTION—WILUNA STATE BATTERY, ENGINEER.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is the Minister aware that the Government are calling for applications for the position of engineer to the Wiluna State battery? 2, What are the qualifications required and what is the salary offered? 3, Is he of the opinion that the salary offered is adequate? 4, If not, will he urge upon the Minister for Mines the necessity for increasing the salary offered?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, A sound knowledge of blacksmithing, fitting and turning; also a knowledge of gas engines and general milling work. 3, Yes. 4, Answered by No. 3.

QUESTION—ROYAL DINING CAR, CROCKERY.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is he aware that the crockery purchased by the Government for the use of the Prince and his staff in the special railway dining car was, by instructions, destroyed? 2, On whose authority was the smashing of this crockery carried out? 3, Are the Government prepared to give the name of the public officer responsible? 4, Do the Government condone the act?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, No. 2, 3, 4, Answered by No. 1. If the hon. member desires to purchase a cup or saucer as a souvenir, any offer he makes will be considered.

QUESTION—SAVINGS BANK DEPOSITS, INTEREST.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM asked the Minister for Education: Is it the intention of the Government to take action similar to that taken by the Government of New South Wales regarding State Savings Bank deposits, and increase the rate of interest to 4 per cent. on deposits up to £500?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: Interest at 4 per cent. is paid by State Government Savings Bank on fixed deposits up to £1,000 for 12 months, and 3½ per cent. on deposits on current account,

which is limited to £1,000. It is not the present intention of the Government to raise the rate of interest on deposits on current account.

QUESTION—OLD AGE PENSIONERS, RELIEF.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY asked the Minister for Education: 1, Are the Government prepared to reconsider the question of granting relief to old age pensioners? 2, Has the officer who makes recommendations with respect to assistance to old age pensioners been acquainted with the Government's decision? 3, If so, when?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, No. 2, Yes. 3, About three weeks ago.

QUESTION—STALLIONS REGISTRATION BILL.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY asked the Honorary Minister: In the interests of horse breeding, is it the intention of the Government to bring down this session a measure to provide for the registration of stallions?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (for the Honorary Minister) replied: The matter is under consideration.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Tenth Day, Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES (North) [4.35]: I wish to offer my congratulations to the new members, and also to Mr. Ewing on his appointment to the position of Chairman of Committees. I congratulate the leader of the House on his appointment as Minister for the North-West. I regret that my colleague, Sir Edward Wittenoom, is not present this afternoon. I was rather surprised at the views he expressed, more particularly in regard to State trading concerns. I was surprised that he had joined the ranks of the followers of the present Government in advocating these concerns, in that he said he was in favour of State railways, steamships, and implement works. It is gratifying to learn from the Governor's Speech that such a good season is being experienced and that the outlook for production throughout the State is most promising. I am glad that the Government are doing such good work in settling our returned soldiers on the land. During the course of the debate on the amendment to the Address-in-reply Mr. Baglin referred to the repurchase of estates. I think the Government are doing quite right in repurchasing estates on which to settle returned soldiers provided they are not buying out one settler and putting only one man on that area. In those cases where the Government have purchased estates they are settling three or four soldiers on areas previously occupied by only one settler. Para-

graph 9 of the Speech refers to the development of the North and I am pleased to see references to what the Government intend to do. A vigorous immigration policy is being adopted and if this is carried out it will be one means of helping us to straighten our finances. While on this question I would offer my congratulations to the Ugly Men's Association, who are doing such good work for immigrants arriving here by assisting to place them on the land. Regarding finance and taxation I have said before on the subject of the income tax that those people who propose the taxation of other members of the community and desire exemption for themselves—an exemption is only a bogey—would be well advised to withdraw the opposition which they always display when the question of the income tax is before Parliament. Everyone, whether earning £1 or £10 a week, should pay something in the way of taxation. If this were the law the employer could be required to see that a stamp was attached to the wages sheet, and the income tax could be collected in that way. Thus a man earning £1 a week would pay 1d., and a man earning £4 a week would pay 4d. The taxation could be graduated in that way, and could be made as high as the Government liked. If my suggestion were carried out, there would be a considerable saving in the cost of collecting the income tax, and it could no longer be said to be class taxation, as all persons in the community in receipt of incomes would be paying their share. The workers complain of getting low wages, and of being unable to live on their wages. My reply to that is that their wages could be increased in order to enable them to pay the taxation. If they would only think over this suggestion and endorse it, they would be doing good work for themselves and for the whole of the community.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: Increase the wages first of all.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: The workers' wages could be increased, and they are being increased. It is only a bogey to say that a man earning £4 a week cannot pay 4d. in taxation. He could do with one long beer less per week, and pay that amount by way of taxation. Then it could not be thrown up at such people that only one section of the community was contributing to the taxation of the country. Under a scheme of this kind a good deal more revenue would be collected and the Taxation Department would need to deal only with the employers. It would cost nothing to collect the taxation from salaried and wages men, excepting the cost of printing the stamps. I hope that if the Government have any intention of increasing the income tax they will consider this suggestion. The taxation on unimproved land should be increased, and the Government could obtain additional revenue from that source. In order to effect economies, numbers of members have advocated an amalgamation of the Federal and State Taxation Departments.

If that could be brought about, another considerable saving could be effected to the people of the State. The Federal and State Savings Banks' business could well be conducted by one institution, and surely some agreement could be arrived at between the two Governments so that the State would get the use of a fair share of the money deposited with the bank. I regret that the Government have considered it necessary to increase the railway fares and freights. Personally, I think it is wrong to tax the man out back. The further away a miner or wheat grower is, the higher are the rates he is called upon to pay, particularly in freights and fares. In the metropolitan area the railways carry passengers and goods at a very nominal figure, whereas a man, say at Meekatharra, has to pay a higher rate per mile than does a man who is travelling to a picture show or theatre in Perth or Fremantle. This is a wrong principle to adopt if we wish to develop the country. I hope the Government will go into the question again and adopt the zone system. According to the programme of legislation mentioned in the Governor's Speech, the Government intend to introduce a Bill to amend the Mining Development Act. I hope they will accept the suggestion thrown out by Mr. Dodd and Mr. Cunningham in regard to the Mines Regulation Act and the Workers' Compensation Act. I congratulate both of those gentlemen on the arguments they advanced, particularly with regard to the Workers' Compensation Act. That law ought to be brought up to date. As Mr. Cunningham pointed out, the £2 per week allowed now is insufficient. I endorse what he said with regard to the people having to go to the insurance companies, by whom they are told that if they want the cash they must accept something less than £2 per week. The insurance companies take the view that if cash is paid, the recipients should be satisfied with a smaller amount. The Government could very well increase the allowance to the men who come under that Act. I regret that the strike of civil servants took place. As I told some of the heads at the time, it was a standing disgrace to those responsible for it. That a body of educated men should bring about such a position that, when the children went to school, they found their teachers on strike, was indeed a bad example to the rising generation. Whatever happened, the civil servants should not have gone to the extent of striking. I admit that the Government have not done their duty towards the civil service, and I do not single out the present Government any more than previous Governments. I endorse what Mr. Ewing said that, if the service had been placed on proper lines years ago, the work of the State could be carried on by probably one-third of the number of employees, who could be paid better wages and who would give more efficient service. My suggestion is that a board consisting of three business men should be appointed to reclassify the whole

of the service. If this were done, the civil service would be perfectly satisfied. Business men would not wish to see any employee working for a low rate of wages. They would be desirous of paying men according to their work, but I regret to say that Governments in the past have not recognised that brains and ability must be paid for. I have pointed out in previous years that, if I had control, I would double the salaries of heads of departments at once, and tell them to run the departments on business lines, and that if the right men are not at the head of the departments, they would have to make room for others. If that method were adopted we should have an efficient service, and it would be the means of eventually saving hundreds of thousands of pounds to the State. I am pleased to see that the Government are at last going to do something to settle the South-West portion of the State. In our South-West, as I have said before, we have a territory as rich as Victoria, and one which would be carrying as many people as Victoria if it were properly handled and developed. I hope the Government will go right through the swamp lands as far as Busseton and open them up. All the dairy products we are now importing could, I feel sure, be grown in that area, with the help of the eastern portion of the State. I am glad to know that the Government intend to go on with the construction of the Margaret River railway, and I hope they will carry out their promise to the people of Esperance and complete the Esperance Northwards railway at an early date. I was pleased to hear Mr. Ewing's argument with regard to Collie coal, and I compliment him on the able manner in which he put the case for the industry. Undoubtedly Collie coal has been one of our very best assets. Coal and iron are the two best minerals that any country can have, and their further development here will mean the establishment of an industry which will give employment to thousands of people in this State. I observe that it is the intention of the Government to carry out the Labour policy, especially with regard to ships. I regret that we now find practically the whole of the members of this House agreeing to carry out the policy of State trading concerns. I hope Ministers will be rewarded for this at the next election by being returned unopposed, in view of the fact that they are carrying out the policy of the Opposition. With regard to ship building, when the ships are being built I hope the Government will adopt a type of steamer that can burn Collie coal. It can be done if the right kind of bunker is provided. On that phase of the Collie coal industry I have said before, and I think it is worth repeating, that the engineer of the "Minderoo" has informed me that, taking cost into consideration, he gets better results from Collie coal than from any imported coal. Steamers can be built suitable for burning our local fuel, and that is

a point which should be observed if the Government intend to persevere with State trading concerns. With regard to the North-West, I have already complimented the leader of the House upon his appointment as Minister for the North-West. In that capacity he has an opportunity of making a name for himself and for his Government by developing the North of this country. In forming his department I hope he will pay decent salaries so as to get the right men. If there is to be a Commissioner for the North-West, nothing less than £1,500 a year should be offered him. That is, of course, provided we get the right man; and if we do not give the right salary we shall not get the right man, and the result will be that the new department will drift into the old red-tape methods of the departments generally. As regards the shipping service to the North-West coast, I have always maintained that if the State had not interfered in the shipping there would have been a decent service on the coast. Prior to the establishment of the State Steamship Service we had a decent service on the North-West coast, with three companies competing and a regular mail service. The State got the £5,000 Commonwealth subsidy for the carriage of mails, though the State Steamship Service has never fulfilled the contract. If the Government of this State paid the fines due to the Commonwealth for failure to carry out the mail contract, they would be paying the Commonwealth about £10,000 a year instead of receiving £5,000 subsidy annually. If the State were to get right out of the business now, the private shipping companies would come in and provide a better service. In fact, private ships are to-day bringing down cattle for the workers of Perth at 10s. per head less than the State charges.

The Minister for Education: Where did you get that information?

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: I got it on pretty good authority.

The Minister for Education: It is ridiculous.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: It is not ridiculous. If the Government are going to run a State Steamship Service or any other service of the kind, let them appoint business men who understand such matters to run them. I have previously referred in this House to the appointment of the manager of the State Steamship Service. The Labour party offered £400 a year for a manager—a salary subsequently increased to £600. Then applications were called, and it was stated that the Government were prepared to give preference to returned soldiers. What happened? They appointed a man who had previously been accountant to the service, as general manager. Why is it that the workers are so much in favour of these State trading concerns? To get men at lower salaries than they receive from private employers? To-

day the captain of a private steamer gets 50 per cent. more salary than the general manager of the State Steamship Service.

Hon. T. Moore: Is the manager of our State Steamship Service a returned soldier?

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: No; but a returned soldier who had some experience on the North-West coast and had been trained on a ship was turned down. If the Government are going to continue State trading concerns, they must pay decent salaries. The proper salary for the manager of the State Steamship Service would be £1,500 or £2,000 a year. It is no use going on with the State trading concerns as they have been run in the past. We find the Government now sending Home a man to confer with the Admiralty in regard to the building of steamers. In another place, the Minister said he did not know whether this man had any qualifications or not; at any rate, the Minister said something next door to that. I think it was stated in this House that the gentleman in question was not a marine engineer. Had the Government appointed a qualified marine engineer to the position of superintendent, the State would have been saved tens of thousands of pounds. On the last occasion when the "Kwinana" went to Singapore the so-called superintendent sent the steamer into dock on a Saturday and wanted her out on the Monday. The dock engineer said this was impossible. "Oh," said the superintendent, "we only want her bottom attended to; we will attend to the rest in Fremantle." The engineer asked, "How is her tail shaft?" It was ascertained from one of the steamer's engineers that the tail shaft was down half an inch. I do not think the superintendent knew what the tail shaft was. It appears also that he did not know whether it made any difference that the tail shaft was down half an inch. The ship was in dock at Singapore for a few weeks, and when she came back to Fremantle she had to spend another three weeks in dock, which at £100 a day must mean a very considerable loss to the State on this one transaction. If, as appears from the notification of a Bill to appoint a Commissioner to control State trading concerns, it is the intention of the Government to carry on these things, they must be prepared to face the music, and that means, pay men who understand these businesses to run them. In this connection let me mention that the State Steamship Service at one time had a superintendent named Butcher. I do not know the gentleman. I do not know any of these gentlemen even by sight. Mr. Butcher had an extra engineer's certificate, and because he would not risk his reputation at the will of the head of the department and give a certificate of seaworthiness for a ship when she was not seaworthy, he eventually left the service. At that particular stage I believe the leader of the House was the Minister controlling the State Steamship Service, and he upheld the engineer and said that the ship had to be repaired before she went to sea. However, the result is that Mr.

Butcher is now employed by the Commonwealth Government. He is a competent man. So far as I know the only qualification possessed by the man who has been appointed superintendent is that he had charge of a launch on the Swan River, the "Cygnet." He is the marine engineer we have running our ships. Moreover, the Government have sent this man Home to advise as to the class of ship that should be built. It seems to me a scandalous state of affairs when we have a Government of supposed business men, returned as opponents of State enterprises, continuing to run them in this slipshod manner. As regards North-Western shipping, the North-West wants nothing that it is not prepared to pay for. We do not want the State to run a service at a loss for us. If, however, the Government insist on running a service, let them get a business man to run it on business lines. I am glad to see that the Government intend bringing in a Bill to amend the law relating to pastoral leases. I hope that when the Bill does come forward the Government will have correct information to give to members of Parliament regarding the various clauses. The Government did not intentionally mislead us on a previous occasion, but when the Bill was going through we understood that certain conditions would apply—for instance, that there was a limit of one million acres to single holdings. We find, however, that the pastoralists are getting round that limitation. They are not doing anything unlawful; the flaw is in the Act, and is due to bad drafting. It is necessary that a pastoralist whether he is a big holder or a small holder should have security of tenure. The only safeguard the community to-day have is that the leases were extended to 1948 subject to the land being classified. In the meantime the pastoralist has to pay double rent until the land has been classified. I want to see the land classified and a fair rent fixed. Otherwise the Government will have given the heritage of the people away until 1948. When that land has been classified then, if the owner is not satisfied with the classification, he will be able to appeal to a board which is to be appointed by the Government. It has been recommended by the North Australian Railway League that there should be a provision in our land legislation by which a pastoralist who is dissatisfied with the classification of his land can appeal to the board, the decision of the board to be final. The classifiers are appointed by the Government. In the first place they should not make the classification too low, but yet they should not make it too high. It is better, however, that it should be too high than that it should be too low; for this reason, that if it is not made high enough it cannot be dealt with again under the existing law until after 15 years; and there is a further section providing that the rent can only be increased by 50 per cent. So my advice to the Government is to see that the land is properly classified, and then there will be an opportunity to obtain from our pastoral areas a considerable amount of revenue. I hope the work of

classification will be proceeded with immediately. The pastoralists are anxious to know what their rents will be. If the advice which I have offered is taken, the State will get more revenue out of its pastoral lands than most people in the city think. As I have already pointed out, the argument I used was that the pastoralists asked for nothing for which they were not prepared to pay, and for the extra 20 years they said they would be prepared to surrender their leases and take them up again at double the rent, subject of course to classification. That is what has happened, and if the Government will see that the leases are properly classified, the interests of the community will be properly protected.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Many will be looking for a refund.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: In some cases that may be so, because the pastoralists may be entitled to a refund, but in other cases where the land is worth pounds per thousand acres they are paying at the present time only shillings. In advocating the construction of the North-West railway, I am very keen on seeing it built, and if it goes through the North-West, as I hope it will, its construction will have to be taken into consideration when the pastoral areas are being classified. In the amending Bill which it is proposed to introduce there should be provision for the insertion of a clause in the lease to provide that if the railway does go through the district the land should be once more reclassified. As Mr. Rose advocated last night, that the construction of a railway line through the Peel estate should be carried out on the betterment principle, so I would advocate the construction of a railway in the North-West. If that is brought about, instead of it being a wild-cat scheme, as some of my friends stated when we first advocated the construction of the line, a great deal of country will be opened up, and we shall be able to give pastoralists facilities for getting their stock and their produce away by rail to other parts of the State, and also to the freezing and canning works, and ships can be obtained to remove the stock and the produce from the ports. In connection with the shipping service for the North-West coast, it has been said to me outside the House that if I had put as much energy into advocating a shipping service as I have done in connection with my advocacy of the North-West railway, I would have done some good for the country. But hon. members know that no one has talked more about ships for the North-West coast than I have. The gutter-snipe knows that we want ships on the coast, and it is not necessary for me to impress it on the House any more than I have already done. My contention, however, is that we shall always get a better service from ships controlled by private enterprise.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: Why not build the railway by private enterprise?

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: It is not the policy of the State to allow private enterprise to build railways. I do not think hon.

members would like to see private enterprise control the railways of the State. With regard to the development of the North, I had the pleasure the other day of entertaining Mr. Kidman who had just returned from America and England, and when he saw some of the plans that we had prepared, and observed Mr. Canning's surveyed stock route from Hall's Creek to Wiluna, and the stretch of country where water could be obtained at depths of from 6ft. to 60ft., at distances of 12 or 13 miles, he said, "You do not mean to say that you have this well-watered country unstocked." This country is 150 miles east of the railway line, the construction of which we are advocating, and Mr. Kidman told me that in America they truck stock 2,000 miles. There they take the stock out of the trains every 26 hours and feed them on oil cake and lucerne. What a saving it would be if we had this railway constructed to enable us to get our stock down to market. On the occasion of the recent visit the country that we had the pleasure of seeing was a great surprise to everybody, and I want to thank the Premier and the leader of the House for giving those members who made the trip the opportunity of going there and seeing what the Kimberley portion of the areas we visited was like. I had not had the opportunity of seeing that territory before and I regretted very much that all the members of Parliament did not join us on that trip. Years ago when the Hon. Frank Wilson was alive, that gentleman, together with Mr. Holmes and Mr. Colebatch—they are still alive I am glad to say—I had the honour to entertain at dinner with some Kimberley people, the object being to educate them as to the possibilities of the Kimberley country. The scheme which was outlined then we have gone on with, and we have now the people of the whole of Australia interested in our north. We have also His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales interested in it, and we also interested the British Pressmen who accompanied the Prince to Australia. In speaking at a re-union dinner which we had after the trip through the north, I said then and I want to repeat it now, that the Japanese laundryman knows more of Australia than the average Australian himself. Our last plan which we prepared on a scale of 50 miles to the inch is taken from a Japanese magazine published two years ago, and it shows the British Isles and the countries of Europe dotted around the fringe of Australia, while the centre of Australia is left blank and in the shape of Australia. The blank which remains is half as big as Russia and Europe. We have a community who are trying to govern a country about which they know not nearly so much as a Japanese laundryman. It is regrettable to think that more members of Parliament have not the opportunity of seeing the country they are out to govern, and as I have said before, I thank the Premier and the Minister for Education for giving us an opportunity of going

through it. I also thank Mr. Hamersley and the Chairman of Committees in another place for accompanying the party. They have seen what the country is like, and they have had their eyes opened as to the possibilities of the territory. Anything that I said about that country in the past has been more than confirmed by the visit which we paid to it. When we stood on the Antrim Plateau and remembered that we were there in a drought period—only 10 inches of rain had fallen instead of the usual 20 inches—we could see as far as the eye could reach rich pastures of Mitchell and Flinders grasses a foot and two feet high. These grasses extend to the Northern Territory. The question of the development of the North is more than a State matter; it is an Imperial matter and when I had the honour of speaking to the Prince I told him that Australia had been handed to us by our forefathers, and it was never intended that only five million people should hold it, and that unless we were prepared to populate it and defend it we could never expect to hold it for any length of time. If the Commonwealth cannot assist us to develop the northern part of Australia, the British authorities will have to do so. I am sorry Mr. Dodd is not in the Chamber. He reckons I am a socialist because I declared it was the duty of medical men when appointed to fill positions to treat their patients decently. In the past we in the far North have had drunken derelicts foisted on us to fill positions of doctors and resident magistrates. The policy of the Government, now that we have a North-West Department created, should be to reorganise everything affecting the North-West. I desire to pay a tribute to the Inland Mission, which has established hospitals along the coast for the treatment of the sick, and if we can arrange through them to get doctors we will get a different class of man, one who is not a drunkard or who will not go to those distant places for the sole purpose of bleeding the people. How can we expect to develop the far North or to populate it when it costs between £30 and £40 to bring a child into the world? A scheme should be formulated so that better medical treatment can be provided for the people of the North than they have had in the past, and with the aid of the Inland Mission I am sure that will be possible. That body can introduce to the northern part of Australia a type of medical man who will consider it an honour to go out there and assist in the pioneering work which has to be done. I hope the Minister for the North-West will deal with this matter in a proper manner. It should be the duty also of the men in the city to treat decently those pioneers who have done so much good for their country by opening up the outback parts. Only a little while back, Mr. President, I met an old prospector from Marble Bar, a man who I think was an old friend of yours, a Mr. Francis. He is prospecting to-day in the Leopold Ranges and he is the type of man to whom the people of the State should

take off their hats, but he is not appreciated. What do the people down here think of such a man? Then, again, only to-day I met a man in St. George's-terrace, a Mr. Rooney, who has been in the North for many years past opening up the country.

Hon. V. Hamersley: What about Isdell?

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: Yes, he is another. But how do we find these people treated when they come to the city? We find them slightly referred to and the people in town prepared to take them down.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: Have they a vote for this Chamber?

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: Yes, they have had sufficient energy and enterprise to save a bit of their earnings and they are paying their 7s. 6d. a week in rent. Another matter which might be given consideration so far as the North is concerned, as well, of course, as other parts of the State, is that of the establishment of circuit courts. Judges should be sent to various parts of the State to try cases. At the present time people neglect to prosecute because of the cost and the time it takes to get to a court of law.

Hon. A. H. Panton: To try the niggers?

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: There are many other people who have to be tried besides niggers, especially at this end of the country. I know that in the district I represent cases where men should have been sent to gaol were allowed to drop entirely because the people concerned could not afford to go 300 or 400 miles away to Roebourne to attend the court. This question has been before different Governments for a number of years past, but it seems to me that it makes no difference whether one is in Parliament or out of it, no notice is taken of a request that is made. Now, however, that we have a Minister representing the North-West, I trust that the suggestion will be taken notice of. After the Minister for Education had been through the North and we heard him speak in Derby, no one was more gratified than I was to listen to him, and I said that if he were sincere there would not be any need for North-West members in the future because the Minister would attend to all the requirements of the North himself. In appointing the leader of the House as the Minister for the North-West the Mitchell Government made a wise selection. They have done the right thing and I am sure he will see that we get better treatment in the future than we have had in the past. With regard to water supplies for the different back portions of the State, I hope the Government will see that something is done for the residents of the Port Hedland district. I was twitted by the local scribe at Port Hedland recently with neglecting things. "Why do not you attend to our local requirements," he said to me. I am trying to attend to the affairs of the State, and the enthusiasm I put into my work resulted in the Minister for Education coming along and seeing for himself. He has now seen the disabilities which we in

the North have laboured under in the past, and to use his own phrase, "things seen are mightier than things heard." Now that he has seen things for himself we can go to him and he will listen to us intelligently. Before he went to see for himself one might as well have talked to a wall as to a Minister of the Crown about anything in regard to the North-West. I hope something will be done very shortly to see that a water supply is given to Port Hedland. It is the duty of the member for the district to urge local requirements upon the Government. I do not claim to be a roads and bridges member, but I am out to assist the member for the district in getting any requirements for any localities wherever they may be. Another point I wish to bring under the notice of the Minister is that the whole of our Government plans are not kept up to date. I had occasion to go to an office in Marble Bar last year. I wanted to apply for a few acres of land which were marked in the Nullagine land office as vacant. I applied for this block, and when I got to Perth I found it had been taken up a year ago. This year I found still the same old plans that have been in existence for upwards of three years. This is another instance of the centralising policy of the past. It is only a small item but I am sure the Minister will attend to it. In all the plans of Western Australia and of Australia the authorities have shown the portion of the North between the Kimberleys and the Pilbara as a desert basin. That is there for every visitor to see. The same thing is found on the plans in Parliament House here. Visitors, on looking at that plan, can see in what manner the Government are writing down the assets of the State. I told the Federal Treasurer when I was in Melbourne that the Commonwealth were just as bad as the State in this matter, and I also had the pleasure of telling the editor of the "Age" that his paper was worse than them all in writing down Northern Australia, as it did in an article published early in March. I pointed out, too, that the North was a bigger asset to Melbourne and Sydney than either Perth or Adelaide, because both Melbourne and Sydney had all their secondary industries already established. On the Commonwealth plans this locality is marked as a great sandy desert, when as a matter of fact, it is one of the biggest artesian basins in the Commonwealth. The Federal Government have this map shown in every railway carriage, for every visitor to the country to see how our assets are written down. Apparently the Government run our business for us and write down our assets, and yet we talk about what a wonderful country this is. I can hardly find words to express my disgust at the way the government of the country has been run in the past. How men can advocate that the State should take over these trading concerns, I cannot under-

stand. The State makes a bigger mess than ever in these matters. They could not run a poultry farm.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do you advocate a change of government?

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: We have had many changes of Government, but the Government now in office are carrying out the policy of my hon. friends who are sitting behind them. I do, however, congratulate the Government on the assistance they have given to the pearling industry. This assistance has been greatly appreciated by the pearlers. The pearlers are primary producers just as much as the wheatgrowers are, although, of course, one cannot eat either pearshell or pearls. The Government have done quite right in assisting them, and I hope they will assist every primary industry, more particularly the mining industry. Unless something is done to foster and assist our mining it will soon go out of existence. The latest advance that the Government have offered pearlers on pearl shell is £180 per ton, and this has meant that buyers are now offering £210. This also means that the pearlers will be able to carry on. But it costs £210 a ton to produce the pearl shell to-day, and if the Government could put that guarantee up to £200, the shell buyer would offer £220. The Government are not called upon, in guaranteeing the amount, to put up any cash. During the war a guarantee was made by the Government which assisted the pearlers over a difficulty. The buyers came along and offered a greater amount than the Government did, with the result that it was good business for the pearler. I want to see the Government do something to assist returned soldier shell openers. It is said that it is a Federal matter to repatriate our returned men on the land, but the State is assisting too because they say that in this direction they have a tangible asset for their advances. There is no district in the State that has sent men in greater numbers to the war than the North-West, to keep our name upon the paper white. Unless these men, who came back, were master pearlers before they went away they have not received any assistance. In some cases the shell opener knows more about pearling than the master pearler himself. He is afloat in the lugger for a long space of time. One poor shell opener was recently run down by one of the State steamships. It will thus be seen that the shell openers risk their lives in staying afloat as long as they do. Probably in the case I have mentioned there was some fault on the side of the unfortunate man himself in not having a light showing, and in being anchored in a passage through which ships travel. These shell openers, as I say, are risking their lives. If the Government would assist the returned soldier shell opener to get a boat, which could be had for £700 or £800, I feel sure they would get their money back from him as a pearler.

far quicker than they would from the man they assist on the land. I hope, at all events, the Government will do something in this regard. I notice there is a Bill to be presented to permit of the appointment of harbour boards. It is most necessary that if boards of this nature are appointed men shall be put upon them who know something about the matters to be dealt with, especially if such matters have to do with the licensing of boats or determining what men shall handle boats. It is most necessary that there should be a marine man on the board, or someone who has a knowledge of the sea. In some cases on the north-west coast we have a doctor as chairman of the licensing board, and, as members, a policeman and the local butcher. That is a fine state of affairs, especially when we know the class of doctors we get in some of these parts. These are the men who have to decide whether an individual is qualified to handle a steam launch or a motor launch. Owners of vessels have to go before such a board. The mail contractor in one port went before this board. A pearler spoke to me at one of the ports about him and told me that he was thoroughly competent to handle a boat, and yet the licensing board refused his license. The man had run his launch for 12 months and is a mail contractor and carries the mails ashore, and they now want him to pay another man, which means that the settler who goes ashore will have to pay 10s. to land from the ship instead of 5s. That is the way the business of the country is run. I hope some provision will be made in this Bill to ensure that boards are appointed, to conduct affairs of this sort, upon which there is at least one man who knows something about the business to be dealt with. This question of the development of the North is more than a State question; it is an Australian question. I have read some of the remarks by the Commonwealth engineer which have been published, and in these remarks he refers to a line to Wyndham. That line will come up from the South Australian border and open up the whole of the Northern Territory. I hope the Federal authorities will see that this great heritage of the people in the Northern Territory is not handed over to a few men for a nominal amount for a large number of years. If we are to hold this country the development there must take place very soon, and much sooner than most people think. By giving these facilities the land in this part of Australia will be increased in value, and the pastoralist will be prepared to pay pounds per thousand acres whereas to-day he is only paying shillings. Furthermore, the extra land rents collected will pay interest on the 10 millions of money required for the construction of the line, apart altogether from the benefit it will be to the southern portion of the community in giving them meat at decent prices. I was

pleased to receive a pamphlet from the Hon. Mr. McDonald who advocates a line from Bourke to Camooweal, which will connect up with this system eventually. We must look at this question, not from a parochial standpoint but from an Australian standpoint, if we all cannot look at it from the Imperial standpoint. Unless something is done to develop this country I say that we shall not be allowed to hold it. I gave an address at the Trades Hall upon the subject of indentured labour for the North.

Hon. A. H. Panton: And you are still alive!

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: Yes. I was thanked for bringing this question forward, and told that if they did not agree with me, it certainly was a problem which would have to be solved. I said, "It is up to you to put up an alternative scheme if you will not support the scheme I have advocated." In putting up this railway scheme I put it up as an alternative to indentured labour. The council of the North Australian Railway League is representative of all shades of political thought. At present we have on our executive the president of the A.N.A., and they are supporting our movement. It is too big a question to be dropped. Our motto is, "Do it now." We cannot shelve this question for another century. Through the courtesy of the Premier and the Minister for Education I had the pleasure of meeting the Prime Minister when he returned from England. I said to him, "You have held this country for the last century with five millions of people. There is room for 100 million people." Since then Mr. Hughes has said there is room for 250 million people, and I quite agree with him. I said that my scheme was one for indentured labour for the North. Mr. Watt was with the Prime Minister, and he said to him "We cannot give him indentured labour." Mr. Watt agreed. I then said, "I suppose not, after the pledges you have made at the peace conference, but it will have to come later if you are to get full results from that territory." I also had in mind the growing of those products referred to by Mr. Nicholson last night. Since then, that was in October last, we have formed our railway league. This is no new idea. In 1911 I had a card prepared for me by the late warden, when we were advocating the construction of our railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar. This railway has demonstrated that we can carry sheep 200 miles further back than could be done before. If we had been allowed to classify the land at that time, the Government would not be charging 6d. per ton per mile to the settlers instead of the 1d. and 1½d. that is being charged down here. The late Hon. H. Daglish had the honour of opening this railway. The locality plans we had, showing the district, provided for the extension of this railway and we stated then that it would ultimately go

through the Northern Territory. I hope I have said enough to interest hon. members in this matter, and that they will look at it from the Australian point of view, and do something that will enable us to hold this country. The railway will open up land 1,000 feet above sea level, where white men can live and work. If the country is opened up in those parts, where the rainfall is from 20 to 30 inches, that is in the Kimberleys, an era of prosperity lies before us. Water can be conserved along the rivers and small holdings can be taken up, and in that way we should have hundreds of thousands of people who will be able to produce butter, cheese, bacon, and other things that will more than supply the requirements of the State, irrespective altogether of the production that should come from the land in the Peel district. I hope that some steps will be taken to see that the development of the North is immediately proceeded with, since by developing the North we shall be developing the South and every portion of the State.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN (West) [5.31]: I want to express my great disappointment in the Ministers responsible for the compilation of the Governor's Speech. Before coming to Parliament I imagined that the Governor's Speech would show some indication of the policy of the Government for the session. All I can now say is that if the Speech is an indication of the policy of the Government it is a poor lookout for the country. I desire to confine myself as nearly as possible to the subjects contained in the Speech, but the things left out of the Speech are of the greatest importance, and consequently while I may be addressing myself to the Speech it will be necessary to mention many other matters of importance. We have been informed that the harvest prospects are excellent. I do not know whether it was necessary to put that into the Governor's Speech, or that the Government can take any great credit to themselves for it. Nature has been kind to Western Australia. We have had a remarkably good season, and consequently we are likely to have an excellent harvest. But we needed no Speech from the King's representative to teach us this. The Speech goes on to tell us that we can expect some development in the direction of bulk handling of wheat. That a State which set out 15 or more years ago to make wheat-growing one of its staple industries should be to-day without a scheme for bulk handling, does not reflect great credit on Ministers past and present. There has been neglect, and seeing that the present Government have been in office for over three years and now tell us that we can expect some development, it shows that they have neglected the matter in the past.

Hon. J. Duffell: It shows they are learning.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: It shows they are learning late in the day. We are still with-

out a scheme, and I am of opinion that this Parliament will die ere any definite scheme is placed before it. There is a twang of complacent conceit in the references to mining and the secondary industries. The assurance that the conditions of the gold mining industry are occasioning Ministers grave concern, would carry greater reassurance if some definite scheme were proposed. What is wanted to revive the mining industry is a clear-cut policy on the part of the Government. There is no indication in the Speech of any definite scheme for reviving the industry. I am not at present representing a mining province, but, as Mr. Miles has just said, we should represent, not provinces, but Western Australia, and, if possible, Australia. It is the duty of all of us to regard the interests of all provinces as those of our own. I realise that if we can revive the mining industry it will bring prosperity to the West Province as well as to the mining provinces. I consider that the question of secondary industries is the most important contained in the Speech. I do not agree with the suggestion by the Government that a State council should be appointed to inquire into and practically control our secondary industries. Do the Government intend to take an intelligent interest in the doings of this proposed council? The Speech promises no such attention. I should like to know what secondary industries, established or potential, are to engage the attention of that council. Surely, if the Government have a policy at all, they should take the House into their confidence and tell us where we stand. I am very anxious to see the fishing industry established. Have the Government any intention of asking the proposed State council to take up the question of the fishing industry? This is one of those industries which should receive the earliest attention. If established on a sound basis it would prove of great benefit to the State. Western Australia should be possessed of one of the largest canned and smoked fish trades in the world. What is required is, not theoretical investigations, but the provision of a few practical facilities. If we could offer sufficient encouragement there are plenty of experienced men in Western Australia who would readily take up the industry and carry it on successfully.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It has been tried.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Yes; under a scheme which was never thought out, which was doomed to failure in the first place.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The wages killed it.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Not at all. Before starting the fishing industry it will be necessary to build a fishing harbour. What is the use of asking men to go out and catch fish if there is no harbour in which they can lay their boats? I am prepared to admit that it has been suggested—indeed Parliament authorised it, but it has never been carried out—that a breakwater should be built south of the old jetty at Fremantle. Had that breakwater been constructed it would at

least provide an anchorage for the fishing boats. Until that or a similar anchorage is provided we cannot expect very much success from the fishing industry. It will be necessary also for the Government to give some attention to the provision of up-to-date handling facilities. Further than that, there should be an extension of State marketing and distributing. Men will not be induced to go into the fishing industry unless a market is provided for their product. A scheme under the control of the returned soldiers, or some co-operative company, should be devised and provided with modern trawling and canning plants. If the industry were placed on a solid basis, such as I suggest, it would be worth thousands of pounds per annum to the State. The Government should assume the responsibility themselves, but if a State council is appointed I trust that one of the first industries to which attention will be given is that of fishing. This would help to bring about a reduction in the cost of living. Mr. Ewing yesterday declared that the whole question of the cost of living could be summed up in the law of supply and demand. It seems to me that during and since the war that law has gone by the board. Australia to-day is producing more than ever before, notwithstanding which we have to pay a greatly enhanced price for the produce. The supply is much greater, the demand very little greater, than before, yet we have to pay much more.

Hon. J. Duffell: The demand is greater than the supply.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Nothing of the sort. However, if we could get the fishing industry established it would bring to the market a wholesome and useful diet, and thus would probably reduce the cost of living. The appointment of this State council savours of a suspicion that the Government's object is not to shoulder their own responsibilities as regards the secondary industries. It is the duty of the Government to foster secondary industries and they should shoulder the responsibility and not make a State council the scapegoat. Another matter in the Speech on which the Government congratulate themselves is the settling of 3,000 returned soldiers on the land. It is significant that almost as many soldiers are awaiting farms. Something like 3,000 have been settled and 2,500 remain to be settled. At the present rate of settlement, it will take something like another 12 months before the Government are able to absorb the soldiers who are applying for farms. This does not take into consideration the fact that the gratuities have not yet been paid in cash and, when they are paid in cash, there will be increased applications for farms. Yet, in the face of the fact that it is going to take another 12 months to settle the balance of our soldiers on the land the Government tell us they are embarking on an immigration policy.

Hon. A. H. Pantton: They are buying out established settlers.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Immigrants arriving in this State should be directed into the channels of primary production. We understand that the policy of the State is to assist immigrants to come here. When they do arrive here we expect them to settle on the land. Yet the Government have 2,500 soldiers to place and it will take them 12 months to place them. The leader of the House should give us an explanation as to what the Government intend to do with the immigrants who arrive here. If it is going to take the Government 12 months to settle the balance of the returned soldiers on the land, it will be impossible to settle the immigrants on the land. Doubtless they will be brought into an already overstocked labour market in the city or, as the only alternative, they will elbow out the returned soldiers. I cannot see how the Government can congratulate themselves on the handling of the soldier settlement problem.

Hon. T. Moore: The Commonwealth finds the money, too.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I wish to be satisfied as to the intentions of the Government. If the Government bring immigrants here they should not allow them to remain in the city.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do not you believe in an immigration policy?

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Yes, when properly managed. But the best way to manage it is to make the conditions so good for the immigrants who arrive here that they will give the State a good advertisement and it will then be no longer necessary to assist immigrants to come here. Immigrants will come without assistance if those who precede them are able to tell them that this is the best place possible to live in. I should like to know what is going to happen to the immigrants who arrive during the next 12 months. How are the Government going to settle them on the land if they will be fully occupied in settling the returned soldiers? It seems that any immigrants who arrive here will go into competition with the workers in the city and be thrown on the labour market. The Government should take the House into their confidence and tell us exactly what they intend to do. This brings me to one of the most important sins of omission on the part of the Government. There is no reference whatever in the Speech to industrial legislation save the mention of an antending Factories and Shops Bill which is carried forward from last session, and a Bill to continue the operation of the Prices Regulation Act. Employees are thoroughly dissatisfied with the Factories and Shops Bill which was introduced last session. It is described by them as a most unsatisfactory measure and I trust it will not be placed on the statute book in that form. I understand Mr. Pantton intends to move for a select committee to consider the Bill and the desires of shop and factory employees. As regards the Prices Regulation Act surely the Government have learned, from their experience of the Commission during the past six months, the absolute futility of continuing the Act. The

Commission have become almost a byword with the man in the street. Anyone can tell us that instead of being called the Prices Regulation Commission they are known as the Prices Raising Commission. Apparently all the Commission have done has been to raise the prices of commodities. The Commission have been a failure; yet we are to be asked to extend the life of the Commission.

Hon. J. Duffell: Would you wipe them out of existence?

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I would wipe out the present Commission because they have not succeeded in giving any relief and because prices are not being regulated. To retain the present Commission would be an absolute waste of money.

Hon. J. Duffell: They are not capable.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: The whole law relating to the regulation of prices needs to be re-drafted. It is necessary to make the law effective.

Hon. J. Duffell: The Act is all right.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Experience has proved that the Act is altogether wrong and has accomplished no good.

Hon. J. Duffell: It is the personnel of the Commission.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Seeing that the Act has done no good, we should amend it and make it effective.

The PRESIDENT: I would point out to the hon. member that he must not anticipate discussion of a measure which appears on the Notice Paper.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: We are told in the Governor's Speech that the Government intend to continue the Prices Regulation Act.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must not say so. I would point out for his information that Standing Order 390 provides that no member shall discuss the subject matter of any question of the same session not then under discussion nor anticipate the discussion of any subject which appears on the Notice Paper.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I maintain that we should have an effective Act to regulate the prices of commodities.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Perhaps the hon. member did not hear what I said. He must not anticipate the discussion of a measure which appears on the Notice Paper. The Prices Regulation Act Amendment Bill does appear on the Notice Paper and the hon. member is out of order in continuing to discuss it.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Then I shall pass on. I was only endeavouring to explain my ideas as to the kind of legislation required. It seems to me that, since the termination of the war, industrial unrest has increased. Almost every member has made reference to this point. Our minds, of course, are agitated and every one is anxious to find a remedy and to bring about more unity and harmony. It was the duty of the Government, knowing that a certain amount of industrial unrest existed, to give us an opportunity to discuss a measure designed to relieve the situation. I am disappointed that the Government have

not forecasted in the Governor's Speech some measure which would have proved an opportunity to thoroughly discuss the existing conditions. The general feeling is that the Arbitration Act has failed to meet requirements. The Arbitration Court has practically lost the confidence of the workers for more reasons than one. The Government and their predecessors should have learned from experience that they cannot force the workers into submission. It is of no use resorting to methods of that kind. The only way in which they can get the workers to agree to certain wages and conditions is by agreement at a round table conference.

Hon. J. Duffell: A wages board.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: That is not a wages board at all. At a round table conference grievances can be adjusted and disputes avoided. It is the duty of the Government to bring down legislation designed to produce more amicable relations between employers and workers.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Who was it struck the conciliation clauses out of the Arbitration Bill?

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I know by whom that was done. The same people ought also to have struck out the penal clauses.

Hon. E. H. Harris: The Labour party struck them out.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: As regards industrial unrest, I contend that Ministers are setting a very good example as hard taskmasters. Possibly there is a good deal of blame to be placed upon their shoulders. Instead of setting an example to outside employers of what an ideal employer is, the Government have failed to give the State employees a fair deal. I need hardly refer to the public service strike. A body of men do not go out on strike for the fun of it. They rebel only when they are forced to rebel. That is the result of my experience of 25 years in the Labour movement. I have never yet known a body of men to go out on strike except under compulsion. A strike is the last resource. The public service went out on strike because of the arbitrary manner in which they had been treated by the Government. Next I wish to refer to the conditions of employment of the staffs at the Wooroloo Sanatorium, the Old Men's Home, and the Hospital for the Insane. Those conditions are an absolute disgrace to any Government. I happen to be honorary secretary to the staffs of those three institutions, for the simple reason that the wages the employees receive do not allow them to pay a secretary. For the last six months, therefore, I have taken the matter in hand with a view to securing these employees a fair deal. It seems that possibly the Government have taken advantage of the fact that sympathy exists among the staffs for the inmates of the institutions. If any other body of workers had been subjected to the conditions obtaining at the Wooroloo Sanatorium, which I take just as an example, there would have been a strike long ago. I am inclined to

think that the Government are possibly trading on the knowledge that the attendants feel that if they went out on strike they would leave the unfortunate sick people unattended. But I want to warn the Government that the breaking point will come sooner or later. I have been in conference with the employees of the three institutions, and I am in a position to state that unless some redress is given them they are likely to cease work. I give that warning to the Government because no one desires that a strike should occur. But it is likely to occur if the unsympathetic attitude of the Government continues. In that connection let me refer to the attitude of the Minister for Works towards the employment of certain men in his department. In Fremantle there are a number of shipwrights, 40 or 50 in all. They are employed by the shipping companies and by private boat builders, and about half a dozen of them were formerly employed by the State Government. The shipwrights are a federated body, and some six months ago they arrived at an agreement with the employers that the rate of pay should be 2s. 6d. per hour, or £1 per day. That agreement was signed by all the private employers and by all the shipping companies throughout Australia, and also by the Federal Government. The only person who has stood out of it and refused to pay the agreed rate of wages is the Minister for Works in the Government of Western Australia. About six men are concerned, and it is a question whether they are to receive an increase of 2s. 6d. per day on their previous rate of 17s. 6d. Because of the refusal of the Government to pay that extra halfcrown per day to half a dozen men, the State is losing thousands of pounds. Mr. Miles had something to say about the management of the "Bambra" and the "Kwinana." There was certain work to be done during the time the "Kwinana" was held up; but owing to the attitude of the Minister for Works she was sent out again without that work having been done, and she is bound to be held up later for the want of these repairs. Further, the steam tender "Reliance" has been laid up for months with a broken rudder, and she cannot be used because the Minister for Works will not pay the shipwrights the agreed rate to make the repairs. A good deal of inconvenience, and of risk to life and limb, is involved to the men employed on the Works Department floating plant, which is used out in the river and in the mouth of the harbour. The "Reliance" used to take these men out to their work and back from it, but now they have to travel in open boats. I would like to see how the Minister for Works would get on in an open boat on a rough day.

Hon. J. Duffell: But that Minister has been a very good friend to the workers.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: The Fremantle slip belongs to the State Government, but no boat will go there, simply because the Min-

ister for Works refuses to pay that extra half-crown per day. At present the Commonwealth have about eight vessels which they want to put on the slip for repairs, but this they cannot do because of the obstinacy of our Minister. The drilling and blasting plant at the mouth of the river was wrecked some six or eight weeks ago and it is now submerged in the harbour and cannot be reconditioned except by shipwrights. The dredge, which was undergoing repairs, is now hung up. All these things have arisen simply from the refusal of the Minister for Works to pay shipwrights the rate that is being paid to them by everybody else. Therefore it seems to me that the Government are not setting a good example to outside employers. I am sorry that the Governor's Speech makes no mention of extension of the system of workers' homes. It will be remembered that just after the outbreak of war the building of workers' homes was stopped owing to insufficiency of funds. I think that excuse was all right at the time, but one naturally anticipated that when the war was over and money again became available the Government would at least endeavour to provide homes for the people.

Hon. A. H. Panton: There is about £60,000 available now.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: We were told the other day that there was money available for the Government if they wanted it, but that they would not take it. In any part of the metropolitan area one can find a very unhealthy state of affairs existing. There are many slums, and people are forced to live in them because houses are not available. There are many people living in flats and rooms and lodging houses, not from choice, but because no other accommodation is available to them.

Hon. J. Duffell: People are going into flats because they cannot afford domestic assistance.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: That does not apply to working people. It is the duty of the Government to give consideration to the extension of the principle of workers' homes. In addition the Government should bring down a fair rents Bill. We have heard a good deal from time to time about the dictation of the Trades Hall; we have often been told that a Labour member has to carry out the instructions of his masters. Now I want to know whether the present Government are carrying out the dictates of the propertied class, whose vested interests would not be served if a fair rents Bill were enacted. I could cite many instances of the exploitation of the people in this connection. Rents have been increased quite without justification. Houses that were built and paid for long before the war, and were bringing say 10s. or 12s. a week are to-day being let for as much as £1 per week. A fair rents Bill would prevent exploitation of this kind. I had hoped that the Government, recognising the considerable increase in the cost of

living, would have raised the exemption under income tax. Mr. Miles laughs. He spoke this afternoon of the necessity for every man and every woman, no matter what his or her earnings might be, contributing to the State something by way of income tax. But I claim that no married man should be called upon to contribute towards the revenue of the State by way of income tax unless he is receiving at least £250 per annum, or say £5 a week. Under the present system a married man receiving £157 per annum is compelled to pay taxation on the full £157, which in itself is not sufficient for him to support his family on. It is unfair that such a man should be asked to contribute income tax towards the revenue of the State. Now let me take the case of the domestic servant. I suppose there are not many domestic servants in this State now, as Mr. Duffell says that domestic servants cannot be obtained. A single woman receiving 15s. per week as a domestic servant—

Hon. J. Duffell: And the rest.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: If she is receiving 15s. a week, the State Taxation Department allows 25s. a week for her keep, and so she has to pay income tax.

Hon. J. Duffell: Can you cite a case?

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Any number of cases. The allowance for board brings the income up to £2 per week, and consequently the girl has to pay income tax. A Government so destitute of capacity in finance as to be compelled to adopt such methods of taxation deserves to be criticised, if not put out of office altogether. With regard to the contention of Mr. Miles that every person should pay income tax, I would remind the House that every person, even if getting only a couple of pounds a week, has to pay Customs taxation. No one can escape that taxation. The man receiving £3 a week has to pay Customs and other indirect taxation equally with the man receiving £10 or £20 per week. It is not fair to ask a man with an income of £157 a year and a family to maintain, to pay income tax. The claim that he should pay income tax is utterly illogical. I urge that the exemption from income tax should be at least £250.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Before the tea adjournment I was discussing the question of the income tax and the advisability of the exemption being increased. Hon. members did not seem to believe the statement I made to be true that domestic servants receiving 15s. a week were compelled to pay tax. If hon. members want confirmation of this, it is only necessary for them to go to the Taxation Department to verify the statement. In face of the fact that no married man can live on £150 per annum, it is the duty of the Government to raise the exemption to £250. I would have wished that the Government had included in the Speech some reference to the tax on the

unimproved values of land. I have been more than pleased since my advent to this House to hear the opinion freely expressed by hon. members who, I thought, would be opposed to a tax of this nature, expressing the opinion that the time had arrived when such a tax should be imposed. Seeing that that opinion has been so freely expressed by members supporting the present Administration, I am certain that if the Government introduced a measure to provide for a tax on the unimproved values of land, it would certainly pass this Chamber. The Government seem to be embarking on a policy of resuming estates for soldiers. Whilst I claim under certain circumstances that that policy is justified, I am of opinion that no Government is justified in embarking on a policy of resuming estates without first of all imposing a tax on the unimproved values of land. I congratulate the Government on having resumed the Peel estate under favourable conditions. Whilst that estate has been resumed, close by it there is another very large estate owned by Silas and George Pearse. This estate contains very good land, equal if not better than that on the Peel estate. What is going to happen? The Government will spend a huge sum of money in developing the Peel estate and if the estate is to be properly developed it will be necessary to construct a railway, and that railway line will pass very close to the property of the Pearse Bros. Does it not appear a fair proposition, therefore, that the Pearse Bros. whose property will be considerably improved, not by any exertion of their own, should be made to pay for those improvements in the shape of a tax? It is the duty of the Government to see that all persons holding up large tracts of country should be made to pay if they are not prepared to develop that land. I am sorry that the Government have not given members an opportunity to express an opinion on the advisability of introducing such a tax. I am not too much wedded to the income tax. We declare that the burden of taxation should be placed on the shoulders of those best able to bear it. Since that can be passed on, what appeals to me to be the most equitable tax that can be imposed is a tax on the unimproved value of land. I trust, when the next appeal is made to the electors, it will be included in the programme. I want to make some reference to the Charities Department. I have been more than surprised at an answer given to a question here to-day with reference to the Government reconsidering their attitude to withdraw sustenance so far as old age pensioners are concerned. The Minister said that they were not prepared to reconsider their attitude. What has happened? The Government have to take the responsibility of a Minister's action. The Government have decided that in future they will refuse to give sustenance to old age pensioners. I presume the reason is that the old age pensioners should be a charge on the Federal Government, and that the Federal Government should accept the responsibility.

But the sum of 15s. per week is inadequate to keep a person. Suppose the Government issued that kind of logic in connection with their own undertakings, what would happen? Even in connection with the Peel estate, they have enlisted the sympathies of the Ugly Men's Association and, in fact, the sympathies of all and sundry in the direction of getting people to settle on the land. Of course they are doing the right thing. On the other hand they say that an old age pensioner has to suffer because the Federal Government refuse to increase the pension allowance of 15s. per week. A case was recently brought under the notice of the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) and myself. An old age pensioner named Hunter, 85 years of age, is the individual in question. He has lived for 60 years in this State and only three months ago lost his wife. They were then receiving 30s. per week, and out of that they paid 6s. a week for rent and firewood. But when the two were living together they could just manage to scrape along. When the old lady died, Hunter secured sustenance from the Charities Department. That sustenance has now been cut off. He saw Mr. Angwin and myself, and representations were made to the Minister, but the Government have refused to give Hunter anything whatever. I would like hon. members to see this poor old man. He has one arm and he walked into my office feebly the other day and told me that he had not long to live, but that he did not want to die of starvation. It is inhuman on the part of the Government to adopt the attitude they have taken up towards this old man. To a very large extent the decision of the Government has been carried out on the recommendation of a person, appointed lately as business manager of Government institutions, by the name of Simpson. Simpson has been making himself very officious so far as Government institutions are concerned. I do not know where he came from, but I understand he has been a failure in one or two other departments and that it was necessary to find him a job somewhere, and he was appointed business manager of Government institutions. This man has set out to justify his existence and the appointment he received, first of all by visiting the Hospital for the Insane and cutting out the overcoats of the staff. These overcoats are part of the uniform of the staff and were granted by an Order in Council. Yet Simpson comes along and cancels the right of the staff to have these overcoats. Then he went to the Old Men's Home and took the uniforms from the members of the staff there. He also tried to make a similar retrenchment at the Woorloo Sanatorium. Now we find he recommends that sustenance for old age pensioners should be cut out. I feel there should be no interference so far as the superintendent of the department is concerned. The Charities Department has been carried on for a number of years and the recommendation of the superintendent to the Minister

should be sufficient. We find this man Simpson is a buffer between the superintendent and the Minister, and before a recommendation of the superintendent can be adopted, Simpson has to put his comments on the file. If a superintendent is not capable of making recommendations, it is the duty of the Government to abolish the office and let Simpson do the work. I have every confidence, however, in Mr. Watson as superintendent, and whilst there may be room for improvement, Mr. Watson has been carrying out the duties of the department faithfully, and the Minister should be prepared to accept his recommendations so far as destitute persons are concerned. I regret that no reference has been made in the Speech to electoral reform. Early next year an appeal will be made to the electors under the Electoral Act, which is entirely obsolete. Some reforms should be made in time for this election, so as to enable the will of the people to be heard to a greater extent than has been the case in the past. Last session compulsory enrolment was brought in, to conform with the Federal Act. To-day every adult person is compelled to register his name on the roll or be liable to a fine of £2. That is a step forward, but we should go further and have compulsory voting. It is not much use compelling people to put their names on the roll unless they are also compelled to vote. The Government should take this question of compulsory voting into consideration. It would do away with a lot of abuses which exist to-day. If every person was compelled to vote we should have the satisfaction, after an election to this House, of knowing that the will of the people had been expressed in full. I should have liked to see the Government bring in a measure to broaden the franchise for the Legislative Council. The debate on the amendment proves that there is a majority of members in this Chamber who think the time has arrived when the franchise should be broadened and made less restricted. The qualification for electors should be simplified and improved. The present enrolment card is out of date and obsolete. There should be no need for the electors to sign their names twice, but only on the face of the card. To fill up both sides of the card makes the whole business complicated for the electors, and many of them have come to me for advice on the subject. Reference was made to the election of 1918, and my name was used as being a party to roll-stuffing. It has been written that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." In my opinion the fool has rushed in on this occasion. It is just as well, when people make statements like this, that they should be sure of their facts. I am going to endeavour to place before hon. members the full facts of the position. I admit that in 1918 I was charged with having unlawfully signed a claim card without satisfying myself that the contents were true. There was a man living in East Fremantle—I had known him

for many years—whose name I will not mention. He came to my office. I thought he was a married man. He said he desired to be placed on the roll. I asked him the usual questions about the rent he was paying and he gave me satisfactory answers. He thereupon signed the card, which was sent on to the electoral registrar. An inspector of the Electoral Office was sent out to investigate the matter, and he visited the man's residence in East Fremantle. He happened to meet there a lady who said that she was paying the rent of the house in which the man was living. The department then issued a summons against this man for having signed a declaration which was untrue. His name was erased before the local court in Fremantle, but for some reason never explained to me the charge against him was withdrawn. A charge was then made out against me for having signed this card. When I made inquiries I found that this man was not really married to the woman, although he was living in the same house. Even the next-door neighbours thought they were married. If I had defended that case I would have had to make this explanation, but I was honourable enough not to do so; consequently I was fined £2. And yet people say I am responsible for roll-stuffing. That is a clear statement of the facts, and any honourable member here is liable to fall into the same error. There was no thought of roll-stuffing. But the incident was used by the Nationalist candidate and by the Nationalist Government to defeat me at that election. I think the same tactics were adopted so far as the North-East Province was concerned, tactics which did not rebound to the credit of those who adopted them. I wish to refer to some remarks passed by Mr. Ewing in connection with Russia. I believe that hon. gentleman has been reading the garbled reports contained in the cables published in the "West Australian," and has drawn his conclusions from them. I am afraid that too many hon. members do the same thing. I have here to-night a book entitled "Red Europe," written by a gentleman who has visited Russia and seen it as it is. I intend to give this book to the hon. member to read. The book has been compiled by fellow-worker Anstey. He is a fellow-worker in the true sense of the word, and is a member of the House of Representatives. If any other hon. member desires to read "Red Europe," I am prepared to supply him with a copy. We should all read both sides of this question, and should not frame our opinions upon the garbled reports contained in the newspapers. One hon. member also referred to the go-slow policy. That, too, is a bogey. It ill becomes members of the Legislative Council to accuse other people of indulging in the go-slow policy. I have only been here a few weeks, but it seems to me that this is the greatest go-slow place that I ever came across in my life. If the workers outside went as slowly as this Chamber goes, then God help the country. I desire also to refer

to Mr. Ewing's remarks about the fruit-growing industry, and the deal that the fruit growers are getting in the South-West. I understood that he was a good Imperialist, but yesterday he told us that the British Government were buying Western Australian fruit for about £1 a case, mixing it with a lot of inferior fruit, and selling it to Norway and Sweden for about £3 a case.

Hon. J. Nicholson: He did not say the British Government.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: It is John Bull, nevertheless. That is exploitation pure and simple. I suggest to Mr. Ewing and other hon. members that if we want to see our fruit-growers protected, the only way to do it is to see that the State buys the fruit from the grower, attends to the handling of it and its distribution and sale, just as happens in Victoria and South Australia. The only point in the Governor's Speech upon which I wish to congratulate the Government is that they have the foresight to introduce a Bill for the appointment of coroners. I will await this Bill with interest. It seems to me that early next year electors of Western Australia will have an opportunity of expressing their opinions and that in many electorates it will be necessary to appoint coroners to pronounce the verdict upon the politically dead bodies of the present supporters of this Government.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY (Central) [7.55]: I have no intention of prolonging the agony to any great extent, and will make my remarks as brief as possible. The fact that I intend to confine my remarks strictly to the paragraphs in the Governor's Speech will be sufficient guarantee that they must of necessity be brief. After a very close scrutiny of the Speech as printed, and close attention to the Speech as delivered, at the expense of being found guilty of repeating a phrase which has been uttered before, I may say that for a Speech that is wanting in anything, in any meat or material of any description, commend me to this one. Particularly is this the case when we come to take it as a reflex of the policy of the Government of patriotic men, or men of business acumen, who are placed in charge of a great State like ours, with its wonderful potentialities. When we take this Speech as a reflex of the opinion of the Government, which has been in power for four years and which has an accumulated deficit of four million pounds, then we must give the whole thing up as an impossible proposition. First of all they come along with problems of reconstruction, which they have been facing for 4½ years. When the people get an opportunity, possibly next year, of pronouncing judgment upon these problems of reconstruction, they will perhaps find someone else to unravel them. When we find next year that the Governor's Speech has been dictated, perhaps by the Collier Government, we shall probably find too that the Address-in-reply will not be

prolonged as it has been this session. Immediately that programme is brought along members will not say, "I will not speak to-night. I think I will let it stand over for a week or two." It is my opinion that the Labour Government will be in power, and we will find that hon. members will not be getting up and apologising for the Government, as so many of them have done during this debate, with the exception of Mr. Miles. I congratulate that hon. member on the remarks he made to-night. Hon. members will at least leave the question of apologising to the Minister in charge of the House. Of course the leader of the House will explain that they will have so many members picking holes in the legislation that they are bound to rush in. However, whatever the holes may be, I do not think they will be as bad as we have at present. We are all pleased to know that there is to be a bountiful harvest. I scarcely see what His Excellency knows about it, or even what the members of the Government know of it. Certainly they ought to know all about the harvests in the Eastern States, because they frequently manage to get over there, but so far as I can judge they do not worry much about visiting the agricultural districts in this State. Indeed, they pay but little attention to any portion of the State, with the exception of the South-West. In paragraph 6 of the Speech the Government take to themselves considerable credit for having settled 3,000 soldiers on the land. I should like to know how many of those 3,000 soldiers have been settled on new country. I have taken a good deal of interest in the question of repatriation, not merely since the soldiers returned, but during the progress of the war, and I venture to say that a very small proportion of our soldier settlers are located on new country. In my province almost every second day somebody or other is heard explaining that his farm is under offer to the Repatriation Department. Every day we find the soldiers unsuccessfully seeking for land which is not available except at an enormous figure. Mr. McLarty, of course, is not prepared to pay fancy prices for farms, while on the other hand the practical farmer will not, without special inducement, leave one holding to take on another. We frequently find good farmers supplanted by returned soldiers who know but little of the principles of farming. Fancy prices are being paid for established farms, and in consequence the price of alienated land is being increased all round. Notwithstanding all this, the soldiers are being settled mostly on established farms vacated by practical farmers. I moved an amendment to the Soldiers Land Settlement Bill last session. This Chamber viewed the amendment sympathetically, but when it got to another place the Attorney General rendered it impracticable. Had my amendment been carried and put into operation it would have provided an opportunity for the settling of

soldiers on pastoral areas. Mr. Miles referred to the way in which squatters are evading the Land Act.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: I said "carrying out the spirit of the Act."

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: The pastoralists themselves can see the writing on the wall. They know that there is no possibility of their holding on to their vast areas for all time. It is as well that the truth should be recognised and that, taking the bull by the horns, we should cancel the present leases. Of course I agree that the rights of vested interests should be protected and consideration given to the men who have invested their money in pastoral areas. When I say that men could make good livings on much smaller areas than obtain to-day, I am speaking, not of the Kimberleys, but of the country which I know. Along the Murchison, from Geraldton right north, the country is held in large areas, but the holders themselves recognise that they could achieve success on much smaller areas. A year or two ago Mr. Drew in this House moved an amendment restricting pastoral areas to 20,000 acres. I am not going to say that 20,000 acres is sufficient. Still, what applies to the agricultural areas should also apply to the pastoral areas, and if a board of experienced men say that 20,000 acres is sufficient, we should abide by their decision. In the Kimberleys it may be said that a million acres is necessary. I am not concerned about the area, but I say that the Government should appoint such a board, and the decision of the board as to the area required should be final. I have previously been taken to task for advocating this proposition. Mr. Miles will remember that on one occasion Mr. Jock Thompson, speaking to a body of returned soldiers at Claremont, said that an area of 6,000 acres would be sufficient.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: He said 2,000 acres.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: That, of course, was ridiculous. He was only damning the cause he sought to advocate. He did not know what he was talking about, or else he was deliberately trying to throw cold water on the proposition. But if a board of experts is appointed to advise us as to the extent of country an agriculturist should hold, the same principle should be applied to pastoral country. I know of men making good on 15,000 and 20,000 acres. That statement can be fully verified. We should have a system of land resumption, not only in pastoral country, but right along the line. I intend moving in this direction at a later date. The Government should resume the pastoral land required.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: There are millions of acres of unoccupied country.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: Yes, the country behind the Leopold Ranges. It is said to be good enough for returned soldiers, but I say that only the best of the land is good

enough for returned soldiers. I sincerely trust that the Minister, who is sympathetic enough towards returned soldiers, will take this proposition into serious consideration, if only because public opinion demands it. In my own province the whole of the district has been canvassed, and every public meeting has been unanimously in favour of the proposition. Moreover, the squatters themselves recognise the justice of the claim. Not only in connection with pastoral areas, but in respect also to unimproved land, something must be done if we are not to go to the dogs. From here to Geraldton, from here to Albany and from here to Bunbury, the same thing applies. When, the other evening, Mr. Moore quoted Mr. Connor, formerly of the Agricultural Department, Sir Edward Wittenoom, interjecting, said that when Mr. Connor left the service he did not take up land in that portion of the country referred to by Mr. Moore. A year or two ago I travelled with Mr. Connor when he was on a tour of inspection. He then told me that there was no finer country in Australia than that from Dongarra right through. Mr. Connor is a Victorian, from the western districts, which have been built up on the dairying industry, and he should know the value of land. I have not the history of Mr. Connor's dismissal, but I know he was keen on taking up land in that district. However, he could get it, because most of that country is held in big holdings. It certainly is the finest dairying country in Western Australia. There is no necessity to go to the South-West and slog into the big trees, because there is plenty of good country in the Geraldton district, but we require something in the nature of an unimproved land tax so that the big areas may be brought into use. This must be done if the district is to progress. I trust the Government will do something in this direction for the benefit of the returned soldiers. Mining matters have been dealt with exhaustively by Mr. Cunningham, but I wish to refer to the matter of the water supply for the men working on the Irwin coal seam. A few days ago I asked the leader of the House certain questions. In another place, Mr. Willcock elicited the information that the bore is now down 300ft. It is positively disgraceful that no provision has been made for a water supply. After long years of agitation the Government have started boring for coal, but if a water supply is not provided the men engaged in boring for coal, doubtless, at a high rate of pay, will have to be sent out presently for water. As a matter of fact, the Water Supply Department is conducting the two operations. This might be a rival coalfield to that at Collie, but I know Mr. Ewing is pleased to hear of the discovery. If my prognostications are correct, the men engaged on the boring for coal will in the next month or two have to go out and look for water.

Hon. J. Ewing: Quite true.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: The Government should consider this matter. After years of battling we have succeeded in getting the boring plant there, and if through any neglect on the part of the Government it is taken away, many years may elapse before we get it there again and the damage to the reputation of the district will be irreparable. I think this is a very promising coalfield, and I hope the leader of the House will see that a water supply is assured. Regarding the mining industry generally, sufficient has been said to arouse the Government to a sense of their responsibilities. Mr. Miles has cordially endorsed the remarks made in support of the Mines Regulation Bill and the necessity for amending the Workers' Compensation Act. It would take only a few moments to deal with the matters contained in the Governor's Speech, but it would take quite a long time to deal with those which are not mentioned in the Speech. There are the matters of health and education, two fundamental questions, and both of them ignored. Perhaps the Government have not much interest in these matters, though we know the Minister for Education specialises in them. Maybe he has not been able to exert sufficient influence to induce the Government to include references to them in the Speech. In the metropolitan area the health of the community is absolutely and entirely neglected. I am with Dr. Saw in regretting that health matters find no place in the Governor's Speech. Although the Public Health Act empowers the local authorities and the Government to take drastic action, they allow all sorts of tin-pot hovels to be placed on very small areas of land.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Not in Perth.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: The Government are insisting on quarter-acre blocks for soldiers' homes, but in every centre it is possible to find two houses of a very ordinary kind on the one block, and the kiddies playing in the gutters. I regret that Dr. Saw did not go exhaustively into this matter because, apart from his scientific training, he has opportunities to become acquainted with the conditions which exist. Many of the members who represent the metropolitan areas would be well advised to make an inspection for themselves. They might make an inspection with some of those ladies who take an interest in social reform. I have heard many speeches delivered in connection with social reform, but those who criticise most severely are generally the ones who have never evinced sufficient interest to make an inspection for themselves. This condition of affairs obtains in Perth and Fremantle to-day. I was rather surprised at the answer given to-day by the Minister to my question regarding relief for old age pensioners. Mr. Baglin has already referred to the matter. I suppose the Government consider that the old age pensioners do not matter very much.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Should be knocked on the head.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: Evidently that is the opinion of the Government, and what ap-

plies to the old age pensioners is gradually being applied to the returned soldiers. The lot of the old age pensioner to-day will be the lot of the returned soldier very shortly at the hands of the present National Governments in Australia and particularly in Western Australia, the most patriotic State of all. I asked the Government whether they are prepared to review their action in withdrawing relief from old age pensioners and the answer was that they are not. If the Government, instead of laying down a hard-and-fast rule, permitted the officer in charge to exercise his own discretion, it would be better, but they are not prepared to do even that. They practically say, "You old age pensioners are getting a pension and you ought to be satisfied. Whether you can subsist on it or not, we are not concerned." This is not a businesslike or a proper attitude to adopt. Some of the immigrants who come here will grow old, though I do not think they will be attracted here by reason of the old age pension. We have made a proud boast of our old age pensions and of our maternity bonus. The Labour party held themselves up as leaders of political thought in the world, but the rest of the world has not only overtaken us but has left us behind, and now we find that the attitude of the Government in regard to old age pensioners is, "You may go hang; your pension is good enough. You have outlived your usefulness," and as the hon. member interjected, "You should be knocked in the head."

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: What about the homes for those people?

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: I have heard something about the Old Men's Home, but I do not intend to touch upon that to-night. If I started on that subject, I might find myself where some of the old chaps themselves finish up, namely in the river. I cannot understand though, how the Government arrived at their decision or what prompted them to withdraw this relief. Perhaps the leader of the House will give us an explanation.

The Minister for Education: I do not know anything about it.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: I thought that was the case because my experience is that, though the Minister is a strong man and pretty obstinate at times, he is of kindly disposition and has a certain amount of human feeling. Whatever else he is, he would not do an unkindly act and, whatever the present Government have done, they have done without his sanction. Of course, he ought to know what the Government have done and I hope he will put in his spoke and get the mistake rectified. Mr. Miles, I noticed, looked very hard at this side of the House on various occasions when he was referring to the proposed railway from Meekatharra to the Northern Territory and to the possibilities of that portion of the State. Even before I had the acquaintance of the hon. member, the proposition of a railway to the North-West had appealed to me, and whatever little assistance I can give will

be forthcoming. In the North-West we have one of our finest assets, but I cannot reconcile the hon. member's antagonism to State steamships with his desire that the Government should build this railway. He ought to know what prompted the Labour party to institute the State steamship service on the North-West coasts. They endeavoured, not to give the people in the city—

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: To give them cheap meat.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: They have been accused of that, and I do not know that there is very much wrong about it. We had complaints from the small growers that the space on the boats was commandeered by the bigger growers—Connor, Doherty & Durack and Forrest & Emanuel and suchlike people—and small growers in the North had no opportunity to get their stock to market. Every member knows that this was correct, and that that was the reason why the Labour Government established the State steamship service. It was not a matter of socialistic enterprise; there were better opportunities down here to indulge in their pet fancies without going to the North-West.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: They let their space to the big man just the same as the private companies.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: That is so. The big man had his opportunity and the small man had his opportunity to get his stock to market and, since the establishment of that service, there has never been a complaint from the smaller growers.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: The boats are never running.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: Of course the war gave a wonderful opportunity to some of these people. Throughout the war the north-west coast was the best provided coast in the world. But the boats operating on the coast took advantage of the opportunity to charge high freights.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: Nothing of the sort. If it had not been for the Singapore boats we would have been starving.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: The hon. member does not look as if he had starved much up to the present. Both financially and physically he seems to have done fairly well. I am rather surprised at the hon. gentleman's attitude, because I attach a very great deal of importance to his utterances, especially those regarding the North-West. He has seen the Prime Minister with regard to the proposed railway for the North-West, and naturally he knows all about the project. But he complains that other members have not studied the North-West. His attack this afternoon was directed largely on this side of the House, where, as it happens, he has some of his strongest supporters. Still, those supporters cannot agree with his cranky idea about stocking the North-West with Kanakas. The White Australian policy must be observed. The address which the hon. gentleman delivered at the Trades Hall was much appreciated there, though severely criticised. I hope that behind the railway

scheme there is nothing further, such as the importation of black labour into the northern portion of this State. Although I am prepared to support the railway, and although I hope the survey will be made in the near future, I am satisfied that black labour is in the minds of many of its supporters, though not in the mind of the hon. member.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: That is the only alternative to the building of the railway.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: We have heard that old gag before. We heard it in Queensland. The first thing people tell us about an industry is that it cannot pay if higher wages or better conditions are granted. We are told that the North-West can only be developed by black labour. But if it cannot be developed without black labour, let it remain as it is indefinitely. We are going to stand by the White Australian policy. We are prepared to assist the hon. member and his powerful syndicate as far as we can, but not to the extent of black labour. I know that we are taking chances even in regard to the railway, but we are prepared to take those chances. We think the White Australian sentiment is sufficiently strong to fight certain interests behind that railway. When the railway does come through, I believe it will not only develop the pastoral and agricultural resources of the North, but its mineral resources as well. Smelters should be erected at the port of Geraldton. I think the hon. member will support me in that. Then there will be an opportunity for the development of the central portion of this State as well. A laboratory might be instituted in connection with the smelter, and then tests could be made of the mineral possibilities of the North-West, in which term I include the Murchison. I am anticipating listening this evening to the leader of the House, who, I hope, will, as he always does, go thoroughly into the many proposals put before him. I cannot, however, neglect this opportunity of being perhaps a little parochial by making a reference to the Geraldton water scheme. I would not do this but for the fact that for some considerable time past there has been a controversy on the subject between the member for Geraldton in the Legislative Assembly (Mr. Willecock) and the Minister for Works. I have no intention of bringing forward domestic squabbles, particularly as I never like to class myself with the parish pump politicians. Perhaps the leader of the House knows something about this matter, because he happened to be present at a little civic function that was tendered to a Ministerial party at Geraldton on one occasion. Undoubtedly a definite promise was given to the Geraldton people by the present Minister for Works of a water scheme for the town. I was present when the promise was made. I was present when the Minister for Works said definitely that all he required was the sanction of the Geraldton people and he would turn the first sod of the scheme practically the next day. The

amount of money required is £80,000, I believe. All that the Minister for Works asked for was an expression of the willingness of the people of Geraldton to undertake this liability, when the scheme would be gone on with immediately. A public meeting was called in Geraldton and unanimously decided to shoulder the financial responsibility. But the Minister for Works has not carried out his promise. That is the position. Irrespective of what the Minister for Works may say to his colleagues in Cabinet, he has done nothing since. He is chasing for water up there yet.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: Did not the Public Works Department find they were on the wrong scheme?

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: They are still on the same scheme, and there is any quantity of water available. As a fact, this proposition has been going on for a very long time. If one cannot accept the word of a Minister in this connection, when can one accept it? I know the promise was definitely given. It was given in my presence. The public meeting of Geraldton people was held on a Wednesday, and the Minister for Works was wired to on the next day. I saw his reply to Mr. Willecock. I therefore protest against the Geraldton people being gulled in this direction as they have been in others. The Minister for Works has either been weak or has allowed himself to be overruled by his Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. O'Brien, the engineer in charge of the proposition, should be a competent man; if he is not, he ought to be sacked. He reported on the Geraldton proposition and recommended it. His report was adopted by the Minister, I understand. That is all the information I can get. But then comes along Mr. Thompson, the big chap, with his report, which evidently overrode Mr. O'Brien's.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: And saved the people of Geraldton a few thousand pounds.

Hon. J. HICKEY: Possibly; but Geraldton will be a very important part of the North-West one of these days—perhaps the seat of government. That must be taken into consideration. It is quite possible that Mr. Thompson who has made mistakes in the past, is making a mistake in this instance. Evidently the Minister is satisfied to accept the opinion of a man who knows really nothing about water supply, although he may know all about engineering. The Minister appears to be satisfied to cancel Mr. O'Brien's opinion. Someone is responsible. I hope the leader of the House, when replying, will give me some information. No information can be obtained from the Minister for Works. In reply to a question asked by the member for Geraldton in the Legislative Assembly, the Minister for Works said that he had received no information. We want to know whose word we are to take. We cannot take the word of the Minister for Works. If the member for Geraldton in another place can get no satisfaction there, I must ask the leader of

this House for the information that is due to the people of Geraldton. If the hon. gentleman cannot give the information to-night, perhaps he will give it on some other evening. In anticipation of hearing the leader of the House speak this evening, I shall say no more, but simply support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [8.42]: I trust hon. members will give me absolution for the many sins of omission that I am bound to commit during my remarks on this evening. They will, I hope, realise that it will be impossible for me, in anything like reasonable time, to cover the whole of the ground which has been traversed by hon. members in this debate. I fully appreciate the fact that there are a great many things which seem of tremendous importance to certain members, and which may not for the moment strike me as being of equal importance; and if I omit references to matters of that kind which hon. members think I should have referred to, I can assure them that if by way of question, or in any other manner, such a matter is brought to my notice again, I will try and repair the omission. This debate on the Address-in-reply has been an unusually protracted one; and at all events so far as its closing speeches are concerned I think I may say that it has been characterised by unusual vigour, notwithstanding that nothing has been said to which I could take the least exception. However, we have had more spirit in the debate during the last half-dozen speeches than is usual; and perhaps that is all for the good. The speeches have been rich in classical and poetic quotation, in historical and biblical references, and in scientific allusions. I do not expect for a moment that I shall be able to satisfy every hon. member. We have in this House representatives of all shades of political opinion and of all grades of social thought. Mr. Ewing, towards the close of his address, said that there would be abundance of money available for investment in Western Australia if capitalists could be satisfied that they would be entirely free from Government competition and interference, and also satisfied that they would be freed from the embarrassments of industrial unrest. That is the point of view of the capitalist. But the same day Mr. Ewing made his speech, a telegram appeared in the "West Australian" setting forth the claims of the railway workers in Queensland. Those claims were summarised in these words—

The workers, in order to maintain good health, must have a sufficiency of fresh air, abundance of food, suitable clothing, good housing accommodation, sufficient recreation, and freedom from care and anxiety.

I admit at once it is desirable that the capitalist should feel he is free from Government competition and interference and

that he is free from the possibility of industrial unrest. I want also to admit it is highly desirable that the worker should have a sufficiency of fresh air, abundant food, suitable clothing, housing accommodation, sufficient recreation, and freedom from care and anxiety.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: What about a member of Parliament?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: While admitting all that, I am also bound to admit that I do not think the present Government will achieve these things. If the Government or Parliament could secure that each side should have exactly what it wants I am afraid there would be no more use for members of Parliament. I would like to congratulate the mover of the Address-in-reply not only on his election to the House, but also on the very interesting and informative speech he made when moving the adoption of the Address. I do not know that there were many matters he raised that require to be commented on by me at this stage. He was quite right in assuming that the proposed amendment of mining legislation is to deal with tributing, but I do not know that any good purpose would be served by discussing that question until the Bill is before the House. Another matter on which the hon. member desired information was the intention of the Government in regard to the remuneration of jurors. His argument is sound. The position is that the remuneration of jurors is fixed by the Jury Act, which was passed many years ago. Circumstances, however, have altered to such an extent as to justify its amendment, and the matter is at the present time receiving consideration. In the meantime judges have recommended special fees in cases making big calls on the time of jurors, and those fees have been paid. I do not intend to go through the remarks of members individually, but so far as I am able to do so I shall deal with their statements under the different headings. I come first to the question of finance. It will be generally admitted that we are still living in abnormal times, and that it would be quite impossible for any Government to frame its Estimates of revenue and expenditure with that degree of accuracy that may be expected in other circumstances. The year just concluded resulted in a smaller deficit than was anticipated. It is quite true there were numerous increases in both revenue and expenditure, but I think an analysis of these increases will show that they were of a character that the Government could not reasonably have been expected to foresee, and the fact that there are these increases is no evidence of reckless or careless finance. Some of the items of increase as compared with the previous year are worthy of a moment's consideration. In the first place interest and sinking fund obligations the Government of course did foresee. They increased by £89,000 as compared with the year be-

fore. I am dealing now in round figures. There was also an unforeseen expenditure in connection with the influenza epidemic. That amounted to £50,000. The increase in the salaries paid to members of the civil service amounted to £35,000; the increase to teachers to £24,000, the increased salaries and wages bill in the Railways, Tramways, and Electricity Departments to £338,000, the increases to police £26,000, and the increased cost of stores and materials to £186,000. In those items alone we have a total of three-quarters of a million, representing increases in expenditure that no Government could possibly have avoided. Sir Edward Wittenoom suggested it was derogatory to the State that other States like New South Wales and Queensland should be able to point every year to the Western Australian deficit. If either of those States of New South Wales or Queensland provided by way of sinking fund, for the liquidation of their outstanding liabilities in the way that Western Australia does, each would show a deficit correspondingly as large as ours. Of last year's deficit no less a sum than £319,692 was money actually paid out of revenue account in sinking fund for the redemption of loans, and in the same period the interest on our accumulated sinking funds amounted to almost an equal sum. So that if those other States, New South Wales, or Queensland, had done as much as we have done in the way of paying back old debts they would have shown as big a deficit as we. We can set off and are entitled to set off against our deficit not only the amount that we contribute in sinking fund, but a sum almost equally large each year from the investment of our accumulated sinking fund. It is worth while to consider just where our revenue comes from and where it goes. The ordinary revenue of the State is £2,505,000. Business undertakings return £3,183,000 and trading concerns £174,000, making a total of £5,863,000. In connection with expenditure, ordinary expenditure accounts for £1,883,000, business and trading concerns £2,586,000, and interest and sinking fund £2,062,000, a total of £6,531,000. The real trouble so far as Western Australian finance is concerned is that the revenue from our business undertakings and trading concerns, after paying working expenses, is not nearly enough to pay the interest and sinking fund on the money invested in those concerns. That is the real trouble in regard to our finances at the present time. Our ordinary revenue is ample for our ordinary expenditure, but the business undertakings and trading concerns do not return over and above working expenses nearly enough money to pay interest and sinking fund on the loans. The money invested in business undertakings, the chief one of which is the railway system, amounts to £25,000,000. The money invested in trading concerns is £1,800,000, a total of £26,800,000. The revenue for the last year

from these undertakings was £3,357,000, and the expenditure £2,586,000, leaving a balance of £771,000. The interest at 4½ per cent. amounted to £1,139,000, and the sinking fund to £268,000, so that as against the surplus of revenue over the expenses of £771,000 we have to find interest and sinking fund in respect of not all our total loan obligations, but in respect of loan money invested in these undertakings of £1,407,000. There we have a shortage of £635,000, which, in a word, is the deficit we have to face. Our business undertakings and trading concerns failed by an amount of £635,000 to pay interest and sinking fund on the money invested in them, and there we have the deficit for the year.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: Can you deal with the trading concerns separately?

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, I intend to do that. The railways are of course responsible for the bulk of the deficit, but it must be remembered that the loss on the railway system is not peculiar to Western Australia. The English railways last year, under Government control lost 50 millions sterling. The Canadian railways, also, under Government control, lost 10 millions sterling last year. I doubt if it could be possible to conceive a business in which it is more difficult to adjust the revenue to the expenditure in abnormal times than in railway undertakings. The freights fall off, the business falls off, and it is not possible to adjust the expenditure. The same overhead charges have to be carried, and particularly when increases have to be paid for commodities, and when it is necessary to increase the salaries and wages, we get it both ways. Not only Western Australia has found it impossible to balance its railway account in recent years, it has been the experience all over the world. If we take into account all increases the railway systems have been subjected to since the beginning of the war, and set against those increases our one comparatively small increase in fares and freights, I do not think it will be said that the users of the railways have not benefited very largely. They have not been called upon to pay the extra freights that might have been demanded. During the year revenue was adversely affected by strikes. The railways lost £40,000, the steamers lost £18,000, the Water Supply Department lost £18,000, a total of £76,000. There is another set of figures which I propose to quote to hon. members, and I think are very significant. For the six months ended December, 1918, the deficit was £406,000. That was in the first half of the year before last. But in the first half of last year the deficit was £603,000. In the second half of the year before last the deficit was £245,000, but in the second half of last year the deficit was only £64,000. The significance of that is that the closing half of last year was the best six months in the history of the State for several years past. The reason for that was that all the industries of the State gradu-

ally recovered, and there was greater activity everywhere, and adjustments were gradually being made in connection with the increased expenditure all round. It is reasonable to assume that the better conditions during the last six months of the financial year just closed will be reflected in the future, and that the Government will be able, in the course of two or three weeks' time, to present a Budget illustrating that improvement. It will be impossible, of course, without additional taxation or some extreme method of retrenchment, to sweep out a deficit of £650,000, but I do think, following upon the figures of last year, that the Government will be able to show a reasonable prospect of doing away with a substantial portion of that deficit, even without increasing taxation or without any of the drastic systems of retrenchment some hon. members have suggested, which proposals, if carried out, would, in my opinion, have the effect of making the deficit much larger. I am sorry Sir Edward Wittenoom is not here this evening, because there are some suggestions he made that I would like to discuss in his presence. He spoke a good deal about the sale of the timber mills to the French syndicate, and he appeared disinclined to accept my assurance that the Government had no opportunity of selling those mills to the syndicate. I do not think any hon. member is ignorant of the exchange existing between France and England, and between France and Australia. The French syndicate had put up a small deposit of about £2,000, and the next step before the matter was submitted to Parliament was that the syndicate had to put up another deposit of £20,000. When the time arrived to put up that deposit we were informed that they could not do it except by way of French bonds. Had the syndicate gone on with the deal—I forget exactly the figures they had to pay, I think it was £400,000—it would have meant that in French money, with the rates of exchange as they were then, they would have been compelled to pay 75 per cent. more than that £400,000. I well remember, when we were on our way to the North-West, that a French pearl buyer came on board at Broome. He said he was going back to France, that it was impossible for him to do business here. This was before France had excluded the importation of pearls. He said he had looked at pearls for which the sellers wanted £3,000. He could get £3,000 for them in France, but he would have had to raise on the present exchange £5,000 with which to pay for them. The exchange had rendered it impossible for him to do business in the same way that it was impossible for the French syndicate, which was anxious enough to buy the timber mills, to pay for them at the price which they had undertaken to pay. Sir Edward Wittenoom sets up the novel suggestion that we should square our finances by getting rid of some of the State enterprises. He was good enough to tell us that we were to keep the railways, and the North-West steamers,

and the Implement works. I should like to have asked him if he had been here, if he would also have included the Wyndham Freezing Works. I think the hon. member would have answered in the affirmative, and said that he would exclude them as well. I do not think he would have suggested we should sell them, because they are operating in the interests of the pastoralists in the North and in view of the fact that Vestey's works are closed down. I think it would be quite as difficult for the Government to sell the Wyndham Freezing Works as it would be to sell the State Implement Works. In the absence of the hon. member I assume that if he had been here he would have agreed to the retention of the Wyndham Freezing Works. He would cut down the deficit by getting rid of our industrial enterprises with the exception of the railways, the North-West steamers, the State Implement Works, and I will also include the Wyndham Freezing Works. He would cut down the deficit by selling every one of the State trading concerns or business enterprises which shows a profit, and retain everyone which shows a loss. I do not think, with the exception of the four trading concerns that I have quoted, there is one which does not show a profit.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: Do the others pay interest and depreciation?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not think with the exception of these four there is any that does not pay. I am also sure that, with the exception of these four, there is not one that loses anything appreciable or would make any considerable difference in the deficit. The losses on business undertakings and State trading concerns are losses made by the railways, a little by the North-West steamers, a considerable loss by the Implement works, and a loss on the Wyndham Freezing Works. These are the big losers amongst the State trading concerns and business undertakings. I am not discussing the question from the point of view of the principle of State trading concerns, but simply desire to answer Sir Edward Wittenoom's suggestions that he would square the finances by disposing of our State trading concerns, and to point out to him that these four are the four that are losing money. Obviously those things which one would sell would be those which would be making money, and those it would be difficult to sell would be those which are losing money. The timber enterprise is making a profit.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: On the whole of the capital: on interest and depreciation?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. The State hotels are showing a profit and the South Perth ferries are showing a profit.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: Including the "Perth"?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, including interest and depreciation on the "Perth" there is a profit of over £1,000 a year. All these things either show a profit or a small loss, with the exception of the four which Sir Edward Wittenoom desires that the Government should retain. I know that Mr. Sanderson, whom we hope to see

with us again shortly, would say that as a matter of principle we should sell those which did not pay, as we should not encourage State enterprises by running those things which do pay. I could understand that point of view, but cannot understand Sir Edward Wittenoom's argument that we should get rid of all these enterprises which make a profit, or are paying their way, and retain all those that are losing propositions in order to square our finances. I have explained the position in regard to our railways. It is one which will to some extent right itself. On the Implement Works there is a considerable loss. I have no doubt they serve a useful purpose, but it would be extremely difficult for the Government to sell them.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: What is the capital of the State Implement Works?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I cannot tell the hon. member off hand, but shall be glad to obtain the information for him. The Wyndham Freezing Works is a tremendously difficult proposition.

Hon. J. Ewing: An awful one.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I can best illustrate that in this way. The works were estimated at the outset to cost £200,000 and interest and depreciation, leaving out sinking fund for the present, amounting to about 10 per cent., gave an estimated overhead charge of £20,000 per annum. It was estimated that 30,000 head of cattle per annum would be killed and treated there. The total overhead charges, divided amongst the 30,000 head of cattle, gave an average charge of 13s. 4d. per beast. That was the anticipation. Now we come to the realisation. The capital cost of the works was £800,000. The interest and depreciation, again at 10 per cent., became £80,000 instead of £20,000. The number of cattle treated for the year is about 12,000 instead of 30,000, and the average charges, interest and depreciation per beast instead of being 13s. 4d. became £6 13s. 4d. per head. That is sufficient to indicate the difficulties of the situation. Members will recollect that during the debate in the House—I do not think it was a debate on the Appropriation Bill dealing with the works, but the Address-in-reply debate which preceded it—it was argued, particularly by members representing the North-West, that the great benefit that these works would be was that chilled meat could be brought down for consumption in the metropolitan market, that we should save the wastage of 120lbs. per beast on the voyage down, and that this amount would go a long way towards paying for the cost of the works. The works were constructed on that assumption, namely, that they would be used largely for bringing chilled meat down to the metropolitan market. To do that a fairly frequent clearance at the works was anticipated. It was thought that they would be cleared every few weeks. Consequently a limited storage capacity only was provided there. It seems to me, however, that the general opinion now

is that chilled meat from Wyndham cannot compete in the metropolitan market with the meat that is brought down on the hoof. It is expected that all Wyndham meat will have to be exported, frozen or tinned, so that we find ourselves landed with works constructed on the assumption that they are going to be cleared every few weeks and having a storage capacity for only 1,000 tons, whereas we have to carry on an entirely export business, to handle which other works in Australia are equipped with a storage capacity of not less than 4,000 tons. The Government are doing all they can to remedy this difficult situation. The remedy may involve an increase in the cost of the works, but if that is so it will mean employing them at their utmost capacity, which in turn will make it possible to break down or reduce the crushing overhead charges per head of beasts treated.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: It is a good argument to show that these State trading concerns should never have been started.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Another brilliant idea of Sir Edward Wittenoom's was to save £100,000 on the educational vote. How was he going to do this? He was going to do it by cutting out the continuation classes. The total cost of the continuation classes for last year—not in Perth, because they are not only in Perth, but in all large centres of population, where they are keenly appreciated by the people—by the cutting out of which Sir Edward Wittenoom was going to save £100,000, was £7,746. I admit that the continuation classes are not all they ought to be. I shall never be satisfied until our compulsory age is increased, and every child is compelled to continue his education longer than he or she does now. What we should do is to follow the example set in England. We should abolish night continuation classes, and establish in their stead compulsory day continuation classes, classes which every boy and girl after leaving school at the age of 14 would be compelled to attend for a certain number of hours in the week in their employer's time, because it is the employer who will get the benefit of this training, and it should also be at the employer's expense. That is what is being done in England. If they can do this in an old country like England surely in a progressive country like this we can do the same. That would cost a great deal more money than we are spending now. There are obstacles in the way of doing this quickly, and the cost is one of these. The State has been spending on secondary education, apart from the University, £11,000 per annum. On technical education we spent altogether the inadequate sum of £16,000. On continuation classes we have spent £7,000, as I have shown, and on domestic economy and manual training we have spent £12,000. If we group the whole lot together we have only half the amount which Sir Edward Wittenoom is going to save on the education vote. For his other £50,000 we should have to cut deeply into the

primary system of education, by which we are teaching our children from the age of six to fourteen. There is no other method by which we could save that £100,000. We could save £50,000 by doing away altogether with secondary education, with technical education, with continuation classes, with domestic economy classes and, with manual training. We could stop them altogether, but the balance of Sir Edward Wittenoom's £100,000 we would have to get by cutting into our primary education. The only way to do that would be by shutting down a large number of schools, and denying educational facilities to a great number of our children. The schools that would have to be shut down would naturally be those in the country. It would be said we must do the greatest good for the greatest number, and therefore we must keep those schools on where there is a large number of children to benefit from them. We would have to cut down a number of schools in the country where the cost amounts to over £20 per head for each child. As a matter of fact, a great many employers of labour now are more alive to the situation than is Sir Edward Wittenoom. Employers of labour are now appealing to the Government to extend facilities by which young men, particularly, can learn trades. Employers in the building trade have requested the Government to do something in the way of teaching trades, because they say unless we do that we shall find ourselves without any skilled tradesmen before long. Sir Edward Wittenoom thinks we should go back to the days of his childhood, for he thinks that what was good enough for the workmen in those days is good enough for them now. We are told we ought to shut up the University, because there are no rich men in the State to endow it. I think Sir Edward Wittenoom said that there were not 20 rich men in the State who could do this. We have had a lot of biblical references made during the debate, and I think there is one about "a city to be spared if there is only one just man." Although we have had very few endowments from wealthy men towards our University, I should be sorry to think that there are not in Western Australia a good many rich men who are prepared to tread what, to the rich man, is always the steep path, namely that of social service. We are not altogether without rich men in Western Australia. It is difficult to say how many we have, because so many rich men draw their incomes chiefly from companies; but of those rich men who trade, not through companies, but simply as individuals, 148 in Western Australia are paying income tax on incomes of over £3,000 a year, 60 have incomes of over £5,000 a year, and 20 have incomes of over £10,000 a year. I am not going to accept it as a fact that we should abandon the idea of running the University because we have not anybody who can afford to come to the assistance of the country which, after all, has served him very well indeed. The hon. member said that he would have hesitated to make his attack on the

Education vote if he had not read an article published in the "Sunday Times" of the previous week. I should have liked the hon. member to be here now whilst I read the following short extract from another newspaper article, reviewing Sir Edward Wittenoom's attack on the education vote. To avoid wearying hon. members I shall read only the concluding four lines, as follows:—

In some respects the oldest of our ex-Agent Generals, with all his practical knowledge and wide experience, is full half a century behind his time.

Singularly enough that is from the very paper which Sir Edward Wittenoom quoted in his speech. He quoted from a leading article in the "Sunday Times," and said that if it had not been for that article he would have hesitated to attack the education vote. Ironically enough, in the following week the same newspaper came out with this review of Sir Edward's attack. "The hon. member takes the view that education is a moderately good thing for the rich and an immoderately bad thing for the poor. It is an old-fashioned idea and one which it would be well for us if we could get rid of entirely." Now I wish to say a word about Dr. Saw's comments on the Perth Public Hospital. I cannot help thinking that those comments have been misunderstood in certain quarters. I am sure that Dr. Saw made those remarks with the intention of helping and improving the Perth Public Hospital. I cannot agree with him in his attack upon the committee. At all events, that is a matter between him and the committee, and both seem to be putting up a very good fight. But the position is this: for years past the Government have not had nearly enough money for hospital purposes. Not many years ago Dr. Saw was an honorary member of the Ministry, and I am sure it would have been a very good thing for Western Australia if he had been able to take ministerial control of the Public Health Department. However, he was called to harder and higher service, and we had to do without him. But during these years of stress and difficulty the Government have spent a good deal of money on hospital accommodation in Perth. In 1917-18 the sum spent on the Perth Public Hospital was £1,870, in the following year it amounted to £862, and last year the amount was £2,068. In all £5,000 has been spent in structural additions to the hospital during the last three years. Then there is the Infectious Diseases Hospital at West Subiaco. When first I took over the department I was staggered on going out to that hospital. It seemed a dreadful place. We have had very little money to do anything with it, but during the last three years we have spent nearly £10,000 on improvements to that hospital. Therefore, on the two hospitals alone we have spent in three years £15,000, in addition to their maintenance. It is well to remember that in many country districts, and particularly in mining districts, the people

themselves contribute very largely—in some instances to the extent of three-fourths—to the cost of running their hospitals, whereas in the metropolitan area the Government have to pay the lot. In spite of that, we have spent during the last three years nearly £15,000 in additions to the Perth Public Hospital and the Infectious Diseases Hospital. I should like to see a great deal more spent, but in view of the pressing necessity for increased hospital accommodation and medical facilities all over the State I think we have probably given the people of Perth as much as they are entitled to in proportion to others. If to-day the Government were prepared to ask for, and Parliament prepared to vote, an extra £100,000, it could all be spent in giving to the people additional medical and hospital facilities; but, failing something of that sort, we must go slow. At present we are negotiating with the Commonwealth Government, who desire that the State should take over the treatment of soldiers whom it is intended shall be discharged from the Base Hospital at Fremantle at the end of the year. We hope that by co-operating with the Commonwealth Government we shall save certain money and get the necessary additions made to the Perth Public Hospital, the new wards and the out-patients' department referred to by Dr. Saw. The advantage will be that it will save us raising the money directly, because the buildings will be Commonwealth property until the Commonwealth no longer needs them, when they will be handed over to the State and treated as transferred properties, and the sum deducted from the amount owing on transferred properties, on which the Commonwealth Government pay us only three per cent. Thus we shall have the buildings at a cost of three per cent. instead of the six per cent. which we would have to pay if we did the work ourselves. It cannot be said that the Government have been unmindful of their obligations in respect of hospitals and medical facilities. It must be admitted that if, as I know there must be, there are defects in the Perth Public Hospital, the metropolitan community is far better off than the communities in other parts of the country in the matter of medical attention and hospital conveniences; and great as may be the need for some of these things in the metropolitan area, there is still greater need for them in the outlying portions of the State. I think the House is indebted to Mr. Panton for the information he afforded in regard to the various industries to be covered by the Shops and Factories Bill. His suggestion that the Bill should be referred to a joint select committee of both Houses is one which, I understand, has been made also by the leader of the Opposition in another place, and one in which the Government entirely concur. It is a very important Bill, affecting all sections of the community, and one that should not be enacted without due inquiry. I do not

think it will be found a bad Bill, as one speaker has suggested; indeed it will be found a very good Bill, although no doubt it contains provisions to which both sides will object. Reference has been made to the cost of living and the Prices Regulation Commission. I do not intend to say anything in regard to the Bill now on the Notice Paper, which I hope to explain to the House in the course of the next few days, but I say it is entirely wrong to suggest that the Prices Regulation Commission has not served useful purposes. The annual report of the Commission, dated 25th August, was handed to me a few days ago. In view of the fact that amending legislation was coming before the House, I immediately took the report to the Premier and went carefully through it with him. On my recommendation he decided to have a sufficient number of copies printed for distribution amongst members before the Bill is presented. That being the case, I intend to make only two brief references to the report to-night. Mr. Knibbs in his June report—and the figures are practically the same in the July report, which appears in this morning's issue of the "West Australian"—points out that Western Australia shows the lowest rate of increase in prices of commodities from July 1914 to June 1920. The several rates of increase are as follows: New South Wales, 88.7; Victoria, 94.2; Queensland, 94.6; South Australia, 79.9; Tasmania, 78; Western Australia, 56.8. Not merely is our rate of increase the lowest on the list, but it is very considerably the lowest, covering the period from July 1914 to June 1920. That is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that a great many of the commodities comprised in that review are imported into Western Australia from Victoria, for instance, which shows an increase almost double our own. In this report quite a number of very interesting matters are dealt with, particularly the daily requirements of every household. It is demonstrated that although there have been increases in prices, those increases have been very small indeed, compared with what would have taken place had this Commission not been in existence; and not only that, but they are small compared with increases in corresponding lines in other States. Thus, the people of Western Australia have for many months past been eating Victorian jams at 3d. per tin less than the Victorians are paying. The reason is that the local tradesmen had entered into considerable contracts before the price of sugar went up. When the price of sugar was raised, that of jam also was raised in the East. But it was within the knowledge of the Prices Regulation Commissioners here that local traders had entered into big contracts at the lower price, and the Commissioners were able to provide that all the jam bought at the lower price should be sold to consumers in Western Australia at

the lower price, with the result that for months past, jam imported from Victoria has been selling in Western Australia at a lower price than it is sold in Victoria. So, too, in regard to butter. In each of these lines large sums of money have been saved to the Western Australian consumers, because of the operations of the Prices Regulation Commission. Fertiliser is another item in which there has been an increase of 8s. 6d. per ton, whereas the increase which the companies demanded and were determined to enforce was 10s. 8d. per ton. It was never contemplated that the Prices Regulation Commission would be able to prevent natural increases in the cost of living; all that was contemplated was that the Commission would be able to check unjustified increases, and I think it can be demonstrated that the Commission has done a great deal in that direction. One direction in which the Commission has not done much is in regard to softgoods, which it has not been able to deal with, not because of any defect in the legislation, but simply because a Commission of three men with so large a State to cover, cannot do everything. They have engaged themselves chiefly with the daily requirements of the people in the matter of food, and I think they have done excellent work. They have also done very good work in bringing into notice economic errors in the matter of distribution of commodities. Reference has been made to the question of the milk supply. The Commission submitted a report to me in the beginning of May, pointing out the enormous unnecessary cost of the distribution of milk. I forwarded the report to the Commissioner of Public Health and instructed him that whilst I was away in the North-West he should have exhaustive inquiries made throughout the Commonwealth and elsewhere on this question of the cost of distribution, and also on the question of the securing of an absolutely pure milk supply to the people. I am not going to read this report, because a great deal of it has already been published, but the inquiries made showed a most extraordinary condition of affairs so far as milk deliveries are concerned. I do not think there can be the slightest doubt that, if the city of Perth authorities, who I think are the proper people to do it, will take this matter up and establish a central distributing depot for the city, they will be able to ensure an absolutely pure supply to the people, they will be able to pay to the producer a bigger price than he is getting today, and they will be able to supply the consumer at a cheaper rate than is possible today.

Hon. T. Moore: By socialising it?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, it is a sound business method. There is nothing socialistic about it.

Hon. A. H. Pantton: It would be taken out of the hands of private enterprise.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Not at all. Private people would still continue to distribute the milk, but in not the same way as at present. They would have their fixed areas in which to deliver, but they would get their milk from a common supply. This scheme has been tried in other places. I have a long report of the practice followed in Wellington. The Commissioner of Public Health will be visiting Wellington in the course of a week or two, and intends to make further investigations. There, I understand, the scheme has proved very successful. The Minister controlling the department in Queensland recently visited Wellington and, on returning to Queensland, he advised the municipal authorities of Brisbane to put the scheme into operation.

Hon. A. H. Pantton: The municipality would take control.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: They do not take control of the dairies or of the distribution. They merely establish a depot to which the milk is taken, and from there it is served out to the distributors who distribute it. The same thing applies to bread. The Commission have found that, in many cases under the present controlled price of 5½d. per loaf, it is extremely difficult for bakers, except those in a big way of business, to make a reasonable profit. I have seen the balance sheets of some of the bakers, and the profits they are making are not large. I do not mind saying that some of the profits being made are inadequate, but when we take into consideration the expensive method of distribution, it cannot be contended that the consumer is paying too little. The cost of distribution in many cases exceeds the wages cost of production. That should not be the case. It is no uncommon thing for the carts of five bakers to be seen in one small street, and not one of them belonging to a baker in the neighbourhood, although there were bakers in the neighbourhood serving people five and 10 miles away. Attention is directed to these things because, with the tremendous increase in the cost of living, people realise the necessity for saving where they can. I do not intend to say anything more about the report because it will be placed in the hands of the members in the course of a few days, but I ask them to pay particular attention to these matters as this is a direction in which a reduction in the cost of commodities might be effected.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: Do you propose to regulate the distribution of milk and bread?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The suggestion has been made in regard to both those commodities and the matter is being considered. In order to secure a pure milk supply, there is ample justification for the municipality establishing a central depot. To deal with bread, however, is a somewhat different proposition, but something should be done to prevent the present over-lapping. I know a lot of members are net-

vous about trying anything new, but we have to face the fact—and it is a fact—that the old element of competition in trade has almost disappeared. Competition is the thing which protected both the consumer and the producer. Both were protected by the competition amongst traders. This competition has to a large extent disappeared, and something else must be substituted for it in order to protect the consumer and the producer.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: To prevent the overlapping?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that if the Prices Regulation Commission were abolished to-morrow, there would be a large increase in the price of many commodities which no household can do without. I do not intend to say much about the question of unimproved land values taxation. There is a great deal to be said in favour of it. Some members seem to think it is the one form of taxation that cannot be passed on. As a matter of fact, the primary producer, the man on the land growing wheat and wool, if subjected to an unimproved land tax, cannot pass that taxation on. That is a certainty. We are always told, however, that this is not the man whom it is desired to hit, but the city land owner, that he will pay the tax and that, therefore, we should put on a big, rosy land tax. Where would such a land tax hit hardest? In Hay-street, I suppose, where the values are high. Would not the property owner there pass it on? Of course he would. The amount of the tax would be added to his working costs, and would be included in the price of the goods he sold. Land taxation can be passed on, though not by the primary producer. It could be and would be passed on in the case of the owners of city properties.

Hon. T. Moore: Not on vacant city properties.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I agree that there is a good deal to be said in favour of a higher rate, and we do impose higher taxation on vacant city property. Another thing which members might consider is this: They suggest a land tax to pay the interest and sinking fund on the railways. It would need a pretty heavy land tax to do that. It would mean about ten times the existing tax. Having done that, we would bring down freights and fares considerably below what they are, because we would expect the railways to pay only actual working expenses. Then what would become of an institution like the Midland Railway Company. If it were permitted to charge the present freights, the people it served would be paying twice over. They would be paying the increased land tax and also the high freights. Under its Act the Midland Railway Company would be bound to adopt the freights and fares charged by the Government Railways.

Hon. J. Ewing: You would have to acquire the railway.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:

Even if such taxation was sound otherwise, which I do not admit is a fact, we could not honestly and decently put it into force without acquiring the Midland line. I think members might very well feel some little grievances against the Farmers' and Settlers' Association in regard to this matter of the land tax. At the conference held a little over 12 months ago, the association decided in favour of an unimproved land tax for the purpose of reducing railway freights and fares. The proposal came before this House; Mr. Stewart made reference to it during his speech on the Address-in-reply. I have looked up the "Hansard" report of the debate last year when the motion was carried, and I do not find that Mr. Stewart protested against it. I do not find that he voted against it; in fact he was silent. He neither spoke against it nor voted against it. The strongest arguments advanced by Mr. Dodd and others who supported the motion on that occasion were that the farmers were supposed to be in favour of it, and this House, by a small vote, and by a narrow majority, 11 votes to 8, approved of the motion. Since that time the farmers have met again and have reversed their decision. It is now said that the taxation of unimproved land values is a bad thing and, among their representatives in this House, Mr. Stewart comes along and says what a foolish thing it was for the House to pass this motion 12 months ago.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: He is as changeable as the Government.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I shall have much pleasure in bringing under the notice of my colleague, the Minister for Mines, the necessity for amending the Workers' Compensation Act. No doubt circumstances have altered since the Act was passed and, in fact, a great deal of our legislation will need to be altered to meet the altered circumstances. It is not fair that a workman who, under a court award, receives a wage of £6 per week, should, in consequence, be deprived from participation in the benefits provided by the Workers' Compensation Act. I shall also bring under the notice of the Minister Mr. Dodd's appeal in behalf of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. Mr. Dodd, whose speech interested all of us very much, was not quite accurate in saying that the new freights had put a burden of £50,000 per annum on the goldfields. In the past six and a half months the burden on the goldfields amounted to £16,000. These increased railway freights were very fairly proportioned. The biggest increase was 1s. per ton surcharge which applied chiefly to the metropolitan community and to short freights to ports. The 1s. a ton on a short freight is a big charge, but on a long freight it amounts to a very trifling percentage. Under the new rates, the metropolitan community have paid £54,000, the goldfields community £16,000, and the country £59,000. I think that was a very reasonable proposi-

tion. If we are going to increase freights and fares, someone has to pay the increases, and the someone, in the nature of things, is bound to be the producer.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: The man outback.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The source of wealth has to bear the burden, no matter how many hands the product passes through. I fully appreciate what was said in regard to the position of the mining industry. The position is very serious indeed. I doubt whether many members realise how few is the number of mines which are paying their way at present. Quite a number have shown a profit during the last year or so because of the premium on gold, but that premium is disappearing. It is not going to continue, and when it does disappear, a lot of the big mines, including the mines which have been the backbone of the industry, will be working at a loss. The position is that their reserves of rich ore are becoming depleted. Every hundred feet they go down, values become lower and costs become higher. Fuel is getting scarce. The further they have to go for it, the more they have to pay for it. The position is not one which can be easily met. It is causing the Government very grave anxiety, and the Minister and his officers are considering it very seriously. If the hon. member, who complained that the Government had not set forth in the Speech exactly how they intended to benefit the industry, has any suggestions which will help the Government or the industry in an extremely difficult position, I hope he will trot them along. It is a difficult problem when production costs exceed the value of the article produced, and that is the position in the gold mining industry.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: The Government should assist the miner by paying a premium on the tailings from the batteries.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The suggestion by Mr. Stewart that Government experts should report on mining propositions offered to the public is one that requires to be considered from both sides. It would be very risky for the Government to say, "Yes, this is a proposition which can go to the public," or "No, this is not a proposition which should go to the public." Mining is a speculative business. People who go in for it know they are in for a gamble. As one who was on the goldfields in 1895, I venture to say that, if expert opinion had been called in on what might be described as the best of the gold mines of Western Australia, they probably would not have been offered to the public at all. Very likely they would have been condemned. All these points have to be considered before we can decide whether the Government should put its stamp on a mining proposition, and say whether it should or should not go to the public. Reference has been made to the paragraph in the Speech relating to the North-West. I do not propose to

say much about that on this occasion. I shall have a great deal to say about it later on. I must express my regret that Sir Edward Wittenoom was not able to get further than Shark Bay. He told us something about Shark Bay. If, on either of his recent attempts to reach his constituents in the Far North, he had not been prevented by illness, which I am sure we all regret, he would have seen a good many things to interest him and to tell us about. The position of the North-West may be demonstrated by a few figures. In 1901 the population of the North-West, that is the district from just below Carnarvon northwards, was 7,786. In the census of 1911 it was 9,235. At the present time, according to the latest police figures, those for the 30th June, 1920, it is 8,469, showing an absolute decline in the population. Now, that is a condition of affairs that should, if possible, be remedied; and it can be remedied. Reference has been made to the Broome pearling industry, and to the action of the Government in increasing the guarantee to £180. Some people thought we were taking a risk. In advising that increase I said, from my own knowledge of what had happened in the past, that if the Government guarantee were put up to £180 it would be found that the buyers would at once put up their price. The buyers were offering £190. The annual holiday for the Mikado's birthday was just about due then. At that time the luggers come in for about a week or ten days, and the owners have to pay their crews. The small men then have to sell; and the buyers who had entirely withdrawn for some months, appeared on the scene just when the boats were coming in. If the small men had then been offered £190 for their shell, they would have had to take it. The position as it appeared to me was that if the Government offered a guarantee of £180, the price offered by the buyers would improve. As a fact, immediately upon the Government's guaranteeing £180, the buyers jumped to £210. The men who were bound to sell sold at £210, which I do not think was a fair price. We do not get out of the Broome pearling industry what we should get out of it.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: What about a compulsory pool?

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is the aim of the Government at the present time. I notice from a telegram appearing in the Press to-day that the Broome people are at work on the question. We want the Broome pearlers to combine and make some sort of a pool among themselves. If they did that the Government would be perfectly justified in standing behind the industry, even for a higher guarantee than the present one. There is no reason why any community that has command, to a large extent, of a needed commodity should not get a fair price for it. In the past there have been violent fluctuations in the price of pearlshell, and the dealer has made the money. The getter of the shell has fre-

quently had to accept a low price and the buyer has always had to pay a high price, the dealer making the money. The dealer should not be permitted to bleed the getter at one end and the user at the other, as he has done in the past. We have recently received the report of Mr. Hobler, the Commonwealth engineer, on the North-West. I would like to read one brief extract from his report referring to that portion of the country between Derby and Wyndham that is now largely unoccupied, and the first step towards the occupation of which must be the opening up of a considerable harbour, work which is at present engaging the attention of the Commonwealth Government. Mr. Hobler says—

Napier, Broome Bay, is a splendid land-locked harbour with a good, safe, deep and straight entrance to the open sea. The greatest depth of water in the harbour at low spring tides is 20 fathoms, running to four fathoms close to the shore. The area of navigable water inside this harbour is 260 square miles, comparing with about 17 square miles in Sydney harbour. The two headlands and the islands forming the entrance to the bay are all high land. Along the southern shores of the bay large areas of rich soil and well-grassed plains exist, extending for some distance inland. Rise and fall of spring tides is only 12 feet, probably the smallest rise and fall of tide in any of the harbours between Derby and Wyndham. This harbour is also the outlet for three large river systems—King Edward, Carson, Drysdale, and their tributaries. These three rivers together drain a total of approximately 12,500 square miles, 8,000,000 acres of country, about 3,958 square miles, 2,533,000 acres of which is at present held under lease. Of the remainder nearly all of it is reported to be excellent pastoral country. Now that is only characteristic of what might be said about large tracts of country in the North-West. Mr. Ewing referred to the comparative indebtedness of the various States of the Commonwealth. There again the comparison is very unjust to Western Australia, unless the circumstances are explained. Take Victoria, with an indebtedness of £56 per head. Now, Victoria is a small compact State with a large population long established. But, in addition to that, in Victoria a great many things that we carry here in our public indebtedness are excluded altogether. In Victoria those things are under boards—harbour boards, water boards, tramway boards, . . . Many things which appear in the State indebtedness of Western Australia are excluded from the State indebtedness of Victoria, because they are financed by separate boards. I am not arguing as to whether it is a better system or a worse system than ours, but when one is comparing the indebtedness of States one has to remember that in the other States a great number of activities which are operated by the Government

here, and the cost of which appears under our indebtedness, are excluded entirely. When one comes to States like South Australia and Queensland, one finds that their indebtedness per head is not so very much lower than that of Western Australia, especially when one takes into consideration the much longer time those States have been established and the enormous area that Western Australia has to deal with. In that connection one must take into consideration also the tremendous railway mileage this State has per head of the population—a greater railway mileage per head of population than any other State of the Commonwealth. I have made inquiries as to the fruit embargo to which Mr. Ewing referred. I find that the control price in England has recently been raised by 3s. 6d. a case, raised to 24s. 4d. We have already made representations to the British Government, through the Agent General, pointing out how unfairly in this matter our growers are treated. But the position is that all the apple growers who have sent apples to England are in exactly the same difficulty. I have no doubt the embargo will be lifted eventually, and I hope it will be lifted shortly. In the meantime Western Australian pears have been sold at up to 70s. per case in England. I believe the apple embargo came about in this way, that because of the urgent need for conserving every cubic foot of shipping space in order to convey to the people in the old country the things that they absolutely required, fruit was barred altogether. Then it was insisted that apples were a necessary of life, and accordingly apples were brought in as a controlled article, and they are still treated as a controlled article. Pears, on the other hand, are regarded as a luxury, and come in in the ordinary way and are sold in the ordinary way; and our pears have brought up to 70s. per case. Our grapes have brought up to £2 per case.

Hon. J. Ewing: But freights have recently been put up too.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I understand that the Imperial Government have commandeered the whole of the refrigerated space for next season. What the price is going to be I do not know. But in that regard our growers are in the same position as growers in the other parts of the world. There is no doubt that the Western Australian orchardist has struck a very unfortunate time. It is always a difficult period for an industry when it has overtaken the requirements of the local consumer and has not yet got its export trade on a thoroughly sound basis. Now, the Western Australian fruitgrower reached that stage just at the time when, because of the war, it was impossible to initiate an export trade. But the condition is one that I hope will shortly be overcome, and if there is anything the Government can do to overcome it they will do it; but they

have not much power in that direction. With regard to Yampi Sound, we have the assurance of the Minister for Mines that no arrangement has been made with the Queensland Government. Mr. Nicholson seemed in doubt that secondary industries were extending in Western Australia. Let me give one instance. In 1914 we were making ten per cent. of our butter requirements. To-day we are making nearly 30 per cent., and our butter production is expanding rapidly in the face of a great many difficulties. Moreover, quite a number of small industries have been established, and established largely with the assistance of the Government.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But they will not absorb much population.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No. We shall have to depend on big industries for that.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That was my point.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: In that connection I listened, and I am sure every member of the House listened, with keen appreciation to the remarks of Mr. Moore. His references to the woollen industry appealed to me particularly. I made exhaustive inquiries into the matter when in Melbourne some months ago, and the outstanding fact of the situation is that the Australian annual production of wool is worth about 24 millions sterling. That value is sent abroad, and something like 50 millions sterling is added to it in manufacture in other places. There we are not in quite the same position as with regard to pearl shell, but we are in this position that Australia produces so large a proportion of high grade merino wool that other countries must have it in some form or other, and they can just as well take it in the finished article as in the raw material. In the past one of the greatest difficulties in building up industries in Australia has been the high cost of wages. But that difficulty has largely disappeared. Even in Japan wages have gone up. However, although undoubtedly there are instances of the pernicious practice of go-slow in Australia, still on the whole the Australian worker, even allowing for his higher wages, will hold his own with the workers of any other part of the world. Taking wages on the one hand and quality of men on the other, there is no obstacle to the establishment in Australia of such an industry as the woollen industry, except of course the want of technical knowledge. That is an obstacle which may be overcome probably, as I have previously suggested, by extending our educational system to train young men in these industries.

Hon. J. Ewing: You are already doing it.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We are doing it in a small way when we ought to be doing it in a big way. I appreciate the references of Mr. Rose and Mr. Miles to the North and the North-West. What those two hon. members have said about the pion-

eers of that country cannot be too often repeated. The Ministerial party travelled through that country in easy luxury in a motor car, covering in a day distances that the pioneers would have taken a week to accomplish. We had hospitable stations opened to us almost daily. But even under these conditions one could in some measure appreciate the difficulties and troubles which the men who pioneered the country 20 or 30 years ago had to put up with. One hon. member questioned yesterday the principle underlying the dictum that "peace hath her victories no less renowned than war." I think it is a true saying, and I consider that those pioneers of the North are deserving a roll of honour as magnificent as was their endeavour; as enduring as will be the fruits of their travail. We cannot possibly say too much for the men and women who have pioneered the North; and although I realise fully the enormous difficulties associated with the development of that country, I can assure Mr. Miles and other members of this House that it is my intention to devote myself, as far as parliamentary and other business will permit, to the question of establishing a continuous policy for the North. For one cannot do anything in a week or a month or a year. One must lay down a continuous policy to be pursued and work on it steadily year by year, looking forward perhaps to find in five or ten years' time a very much increased population and very greatly increased wealth. For I am satisfied that the North is capable of this development. I should like to make just a reference to the statement of Mr. Miles that private ships were bringing cattle down from the North at 10s. per head less than the State charges. The position is that the State was charging £4 10s. per head for bringing cattle down. We found it impossible with our State steamers and even with the Singapore boats to bring down sufficient cattle and so we had to get another vessel. It was difficult to get it, but we did get it, and the freights charged by that ship were so much bigger than our own that we had to increase ours in order to average the freights. We could not charge one freight on this steamer that we hired and another on our own boats and so we had to make a fixed freight of £5 10s. The State steamers charged £4 15s. 6d., which was 5s. less than the freight charged by the private companies, but because of the price demanded by the only private ship we could secure, viz. £6 6s. per head, we had to impose a charge of £5 10s. per head. The hon. member still seems satisfied that if the Government had not established a service on the North-West coast that portion of the State would have done just as well. I cannot agree with him. My knowledge convinces me that but for the State steamers the North-West would have been in a bad way indeed. I was not disposed to discuss the question of the State steamers because we have in this House three gentlemen of standing in the community representing the North whose opinions are all different on the subject. There is Mr. Holmes who

declares that the State was right in purchasing the State steamers. Sir Edward Witt-ennoom declares that the Government were wrong, but now that we have steamers we should keep them going. Then Mr. Miles states that the Government were wrong in purchasing steamers and should lose no time in getting rid of them. Those three gentlemen can fight out the position amongst themselves and when they come to a common decision there may then be something for me to defend. I agree with what Mr. Miles has said, that there should be a careful classification of the pastoral leases. I take exception, however, to the rather extreme statement the hon. member made in regard to the doctors who have occupied Government positions in the North-West. It is unfortunately true that there have been appointed to positions in the North, medical men who were not suitable, but the hon. member was too sweeping altogether when he suggested that the only doctors who were sent to the North were drunken dervelts or were those who set themselves out to rob the people. I know there are men of high standing occupying those positions.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: You must admit we have had the other class too.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, but it is not an easy matter to induce professional men to go so far away from the opportunity of continuing their studies. It is a matter that must be faced, and I say unhesitatingly that the Premier is quite with me in the matter that if we cannot get good men to go up there without giving them more money, we must give them additional remuneration. We cannot expect people to settle in those distant parts without providing reasonable medical facilities. I endorse what has been said about the splendid work that has been done by the Inland Mission in that part of Western Australia. Mr. Baglin took the Government to task for not having established the system of bulk handling of wheat. I would point out, however, that we are the smallest State in point of numbers, and none of the other States, except New South Wales, has introduced bulk handling. New South Wales introduced it but in the first year they had no harvest. The Government submitted a Bill to Parliament a couple of years ago, but it was thrown out by this Chamber. That would have been a rather dangerous thing for me to state before the amendment which was moved to the Address-in-reply was defeated. However, I do not think that hon. members will find anything objectionable in the Bill to provide for bulk handling which will be introduced later on this session. The Government are not finding the money; they are only facilitating the introduction of the scheme. With regard to the remarks about the fishing industry, the Government have already assisted a couple of companies in this direction, one at Shark Bay and another at Bunbury. And if there are people anxious to embark on the fishing trade they should come along and tell us what they are prepared to do and what

they want. With regard to the fishing harbour at Fremantle, the position is that the department struck a fault or a bad patch in the quarry and the stone could not be used. It was necessary then to work through the fault before the undertaking which was in hand could be continued. The work is now proceeding but it is not the only work of importance that has had to be delayed during the past few years of stress and difficulty. The hon. member also took exception to the fact that we had settled only 3,000 soldiers on the land and that 2,500 still remained to be settled. I claim that we have done good work in settling 3,000 already, and if the remaining 2,500 be settled inside of twelve months it will be good work. So far as immigrants are concerned, there will not be any great number coming for some little time. One thousand are expected to arrive in the course of a few weeks, but I venture to say that notwithstanding the hon. member's remark about the overstocked labour market, if there were 10,000 here they could all get jobs and without cutting wages. The building trade is starving for men. Tradesmen of course would find it easier to get jobs than others. It is impossible to settle 3,000 people on the land without those people requiring labour. The arguments used by Mr. Baglin were the arguments of a small section of the party to which he belongs, which section has always been opposed to immigration. The hon. member also referred to the staffs of the Wooroloo Sanatorium, the Old Men's Home and the Hospital for the Insane. When those institutions were under my control employees wrote asking whether the Government would be prepared to receive any objection to them going to the Arbitration Court. I agreed to their request but I think I acted foolishly. I should have made some bones about it, but I told them that there was no objection to waive, that they had a right to go to the Arbitration Court. When they found that they had an absolute right to go to the court they did not go. They served a citation on the Government but never proceeded with it. It is their own fault if they have a grievance and if that grievance has not been adjusted. Increases have been paid and at the present time negotiations are proceeding. It is not the desire of the Government to treat employees other than generously. The matter of shipwrights at Fremantle I have referred to the Minister for Works, and I have no doubt the right thing will be done. The hon. member advocated that we should erect more workers' homes. There is necessity for more homes everywhere but it must be remembered that the Commonwealth Government have a heavy obligation in erecting war service homes for soldiers. There is a limit to the number of bricks that can be made and the number of labourers available is also limited, but at the same time the building of homes is going on as rapidly as possible. With regard to the question of the Fair Rents Bill, I think there

is only one State in the Commonwealth that has such legislation; that is New South Wales. The Government have taken steps with a view of finding out how the measure operates there. Sometimes these things prove to be two-edged swords. By introducing such legislation we may make the position worse by discouraging people from building. I do not propose to deal with the subject of taxation at the present time because it is a matter that the Government do not propose to finally consider until the Budget is introduced. Whatever method of taxation is imposed it is bound to be the wrong one in the view of some people. With regard to the old age pensions, I told Mr. Hickey that I knew nothing about the matters he referred to. It is not in my department, but my experience of that department was that definite lines were laid down, and on top of that every case was treated on its merits. I think as a definite line, it was laid down that we should not give assistance to pensioners, but I know exceptions are being made to-day. I would be surprised to learn that the officers of the department had refused relief to anyone who deserved it. Mr. Hickey wanted to know how many soldiers had been settled on new country. It is only a few days ago that the question was asked in the House and the information was supplied. If that information is not sufficient I can perhaps let the hon. member have more. The matter of the Geraldton water supply is one with which I am familiar, and I know that an unfortunate position has arisen. The Minister for Works had a report from Mr. O'Brien. He was satisfied with it and he was anxious to help the Geraldton people. He knew what delay would mean, and he said that if the people were prepared to pay certain rates the Government would go on with the work. The Geraldton people agreed to that but in the meantime the Engineer-in-Chief raised certain very serious objections to the suggested scheme, and I think in the interests of the Geraldton people the Government were compelled, when they had engineers at opposite poles, to stay their hand and find out what the position actually was. I shall ascertain now how matters stand, but I assure the hon. member there is no desire on the part of the Government to shirk any work which will be in the interests of the people of Geraldton. I again appeal for forgiveness for my many sins of omission, and if there are any matters I have not dealt with I shall be glad if hon. members will bring them under my notice by way of question or in any other form. I have made notes of the different suggestions which have been put forward and will convey them to my colleagues. I say in conclusion that most hon. members in this House recognise that the present Government are faced with extreme difficulties in many directions, and that no matter what measure of success they achieve they are devoting themselves with singleness

of purpose in the endeavour to advance the best interests of Western Australia. A tone of greater confidence exists. There is more prosperity in Western Australia than has been experienced for a long time, and I think that the Government were quite justified in including in the Governor's Speech the expression of opinion that enterprise, energy and goodwill amongst the people were the only things required to make us a much more prosperous and bigger State than we are at the present time.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

House adjourned at 10.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 1st September, 1920.

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

QUESTION—MIDLAND COMPANY'S LANDS, ASSESSMENT.

Mr. TROY asked the Colonial Treasurer: 1, What was the land tax assessment on Midland Company's lands for the years 1917, 1918, 1919? 2, What amount of taxation has been paid, and what amount, if any, is still owing the State?

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied: 1, Amount of assessments on land held on 30th June, 1917, £1,466 8s. 10d.; 30th June, 1918, £1,453 14s. 4d.; 30th June, 1919, £1,388 12s. 2d.; total, £4,308 15s. 4d. 2, Amount of tax paid in respect to land held on 30th June, 1917, £1,466 8s. 10d.; 30th June, 1918, £720 9s. 11d.; 30th June, 1919, £1,388 12s. 2d.; total, £3,575 10s. 11d. Amount of credit