

the Commonwealth rests in the most complete confidence upon the returned soldier. We read discussions as to whether the returned soldiers' association is going to enter the political arena. It is a matter for the soldiers to decide, and I do not care how they decide it. I feel assured that for the next half-century the destinies of Australia, not merely politically, but socially, commercially, industrially, will be in the hands of the men who have fought for and won their countries' freedom. They will make our laws, and they will make our songs; and because they are men whose minds have been broadened by travel and association with other peoples and other conditions; men whose characters have been strengthened by difficulties overcome and dangers faced, men whose sympathies have been deepened by sufferings endured, and who out of the triumph of right and justice have drawn a glowing and an enduring faith, the future of our country cannot be other than safe in their hands.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, the 2nd September.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 6.30 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 21st August, 1919.*

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

#### AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received from the Auditor General for presentation to the Assembly a copy of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended 30th June, 1918. I will lay the paper on the Table.

#### QUESTION—LANDS CLASSIFICATION.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Honorary Minister: When is it expected that the classification of the country lying between the Margaret and Blackwood rivers will be completed by the officers of his department?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: About December, 1919.

#### QUESTION—STATE SAWMILLS, MINIMUM WAGE.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that the minimum wage paid on the Government timber mills is 9s. 7d. a day, while private timber firms are paying 10s. 6d. a day? 2, In view of the fact that workers on 9s. 7d. cannot purchase sufficient clothing and food for their children, will Cabinet consider the advisability of extending the provisions of the Industries Assistance Board to timber workers as well as farmers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The minimum wage, according to the existing award, is 9s. 7d. per day, which is the minimum being paid by all sawmillers in this State, with the exception of the South-West Timber Hewers' Co-operative Society, Limited, which company at a general meeting held on the 31st July, 1919, voted themselves the minimum of 10s. 6d. per day. The timber workers have cited the employers before the Federal Arbitration Court, in spite of the fact that the sawmillers offered the workers a minimum of 10s. 6d. per day with proportionate increases, which offer was refused by the union. 2, The matter will be considered.

#### QUESTION—WHEAT BOARD, MR. MCGIBBON'S APPOINTMENT.

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Premier: 1, Who is responsible for the appointment of Mr. McGibbon to the Australian Wheat Board? 2, What are the duties appertaining to his position on the board? 3, What payments and expenses, if any, are made for his services in this position? 4, From what source are these payments made?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Mr. McGibbon was appointed by the Government of the day on the nomination of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association. 2, He has equal status on the board as Ministers, excepting on questions involving relations between the Governments of the Commonwealth and of the States, and on questions of finance. 3, £4 4s. per day, whilst away from home, plus fares. 4, Central Wheat Pool.

#### QUESTION—MINING OPERATIONS AT FREMANTLE.

Mr. ROCKE asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is he aware that mining operations are being conducted at Fremantle on a site about south-east of Arthur's Head? 2, Does

the area include any portion of one pegged out by Mr. Woolmington of South Fremantle, and for which an application was made under the Mining Act, 1904, to conduct mining operations, but which was refused by the warden on the 12th day of February last, the application being opposed by the Public Works Department and the Fremantle Harbour Trust? 3, Has authority been given to any person to conduct mining operations on the land referred to? 4, If so, to whom and by whom? 5, What are the conditions under which the operations are being conducted?

The HONORARY MINISTER (for the Minister for Mines) replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, No. 4, Answered by No. 8. 5, Answered by No. 3.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### Ninth Day—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from previous day.

Mr. CHESSON (Cue): Like the member for Coolgardie, I do not propose to dwell upon the lightning changes which have occurred among the Ministry during recess. That question was ably dealt with by the leader of the Opposition. According to the Governor's Speech, the State, during the financial year has gone to the bad by over £650,000, the accumulated deficit being approximately £3,500,000. I notice also that, by fresh taxation, the people during the year paid to the Treasury £180,000; so that, allowing for the increased burden the people have had to bear, the State has gone to the bad by over £800,000. Yet the only remedy suggested is "produce, produce, produce, and work harder than ever." In my opinion it is necessary to look around for fresh taxation that will not bear on the people already overburdened. Furthermore, it will be necessary to undertake some form of retrenchment. We have been told by the ex-Treasurer that the Public Service in many departments is at present over-manned. In those circumstances any private business concern would reduce its staff. If the service is over-manned there can be no excuse for it, for we have no progressive works policy going on. Indeed, the only works policy that I have seen is one of repairs.

The Minister for Works: No; it is more than that.

Mr. CHESSON: I have seen only patch-work going on lately. If there is no progressive works policy in hand there should be room for retrenchment among the heads. We have heard a good deal about the settlement of returned soldiers on the land. The Government should have started this work four years ago. We are told that some 650 applicants are waiting to go on the land at the present time, of whom over 200 hold certificates of fitness. I hope the optimism of the present Government will not lead them to over-value the estates being pur-

chased for returned soldiers, because after all, if this mistake is made, the returned soldier will have to bear the burden. During the war the Australian soldier had a chance of measuring his capacity with men of other nations, and he now knows that he has no superior. Also, he had a chance of comparing Australian conditions with those of other countries, with the result that he learnt that Australia stands above all others in point of resources, and that all that is required is development. Given that development we could go in for a vigorous immigration policy, but not until then. The member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) put up a plea for the repatriation of returned soldiers on pastoral lands. I am in accord with that. I am sure those men would make good on pastoral holdings. The Murchison, from Pindar right up to Meekatharra, is well watered, and it is only a question of erecting windmills. The land has excellent sheep-carrying capacity. I can instance a dozen men who, with holdings of from 25,000 to 50,000 acres, have made good. I do not suggest that all the pastoral country should be cut up into 25,000 acre lots, but I do contend that any fit man can make good on such a holding. The men on small holdings have resisted the drought better than have the holders of big areas, and, moreover, the small men invariably employ white labour. If it is intended to settle the northern portion of the State, it will be necessary to make the holdings much smaller than they are at present. There is land right through the Murchison to the North equal to any in Australia, and better water than is found in most parts of the country I have been in. It would also carry a considerable population. There are many holdings of a million acres alongside the railway. It does not much matter for a man in this particular industry if he is 50 or 100 miles from a line. If the soldiers are given an opportunity of getting portions of these large holdings they will make good. Those who extended the term for pastoral leases from 1928 to 1948 have to shoulder the responsibility of retarding the development of the northern parts of the State. It was a crime perpetrated against the principle of closer settlement.

Mr. Underwood: The Government can resume the land at any time.

Mr. CHESSON: It would be too costly a thing to do, and no Government would consider it. It was a big mistake to extend this tenure of the leases. I am strongly in favour of land values taxation without exemption. Values in the city have gone up from 60 to 80 per cent. as a result of the development of the country. I contend we should make an effort by a land values taxation to raise the interest and sinking fund which has to be paid upon our railways. At the present time the whole burden in connection with the upkeep of our railways is borne by the actual users. The further out the people go, the more

they are penalised. What encouragement is there for people to go out back, when there have been already two increases in railway freights? The men out back are being so penalised that they are coming into the City. It seems as if there was too much centralisation altogether. In my opinion, all railway construction should be paid for by the whole community. The people of Perth pay practically nothing for the upkeep of the railways. If freights were reduced the farmer, the pastoralist, and other people out back would be able to get their goods to market more cheaply than they can at the present time. It is rather late in the day to bring in a Bill to regulate prices. The Minister in another place, who is to sponsor this measure, is the Minister responsible for the defeat of the Bill in 1915.

Mr. Underwood: It is never too late to mend.

Mr. CHESSON: I quite agree. Costs have gone up to such an extent that I am afraid we will not now be able to do much to bring them down, even to the 1916 level. I trust that we shall deal not only with the retail trader but with the importer and the manufacturer. The retail man is not profiteering to the same extent as is the manufacturer or importer. It is difficult to deal with the importer, but we will have an opportunity of doing so when the measure comes before us. The best and only way of doing this is to regulate the profits that are made. I should like to say a word or two about profiteering. Kerosene has been mentioned by the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy). It is used in most of the households in Australia, but it is controlled by three companies at present, the Texas Oil Company, the Vacuum Oil Company, and the British Imperial Oil Company. These companies control 99 per cent. of the kerosene used in the Commonwealth, and 98 per cent. of the benzine. Prior to the war they were selling kerosene at 6s. 11d. a case, and in 1918 at 14s. 6d. a case. Benzine was sold at 13s. 4d. a case, and in 1918 at 23s. 8d. a case. These people have been robbing the citizens of Australia, in kerosene to the extent of 110 per cent. and in benzine to the extent of 77 per cent. In pre-war days on the Murchison we paid 7s. a tin for kerosene and now have to pay 15s. We used to pay 6½d. a tin for condensed milk and now it is a shilling, and for potatoes 1s. 6d. a stone and now 3s. 6d. There is no scarcity of potatoes, and we can get them so long as we are prepared to pay the price.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): You can get them cheaper up there than we can in the metropolitan area.

Mr. CHESSON: The price of boots has gone up at least 50 per cent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why do the people not grumble at the railways?

Mr. CHESSON: Clothing has gone up 100 per cent., and every commodity that we use in our daily life has gone up from 50 to 100 per cent. Mr. Knibbs has worked out the increase in the cost of living to be 34½ per cent. for the whole of the Commonwealth.

Those of us who live on the fields know how absurd those figures are. Every year the secretaries of the unions are supplied with forms to be filled in showing the number of men out of work, those who are sick, those who have suffered accident, and those who are away from other causes. It is impossible for any union secretary to give accurate information on the points referred to. He can only deal with the men who are receiving accident pay. He knows nothing about the men who are away sick. When a man is out of work he is marked "O.W." in the books. The same thing applies to men who go away. They merely inform the union secretary and are marked "O.W." The union secretary is paid nothing for filling in these forms, and he does not bother about them. That is the way the statistics, which are so often quoted here, are compiled. We know how unreliable the figures are. Reference has been made to the Arbitration Court and to the Arbitration Act which requires amending to such an extent. The quickest way to get to the Arbitration Court is to go on strike. That has been proved. I could give instances in which men have for eight months failed to get before the court, but within a fortnight after striking they have been able to do so. The system is an incentive for direct action. The president of the court is usually a Supreme Court judge. He is not, in my opinion, qualified to classify the men in the different industries. Let us take an industry in which moulders, brass workers, fitters and turners are employed. How can a Supreme Court judge classify such men; he has not the necessary experience to do so? Sitting on the bench is a representative of the employers and a representative of the employees, while the president is the deciding factor. A Supreme Court judge does not mix with the people and is not qualified to decide as to the classification required in these various industries. Only a few years ago Mr. Justice Burnside made an attempt to go into the question of the cost of living in Western Australia. He went to the markets just at the tail end and bought things at the prices which invariably ruled then. He also went to the butchers just before closing time and got the scrag end of things. Then on every possible occasion for three or four weeks he quoted the prices that he paid, and the housewives of Perth filled the papers with letters asking the judge where he had made his purchases. We cannot teach the Perth housewife much about economy. She knows where to make purchases to the best advantage. She has a limited amount of money and goes into the matter in a way that no arbitration court judge could possibly do. When the judge was asked to supply some information as to where he made his purchases he was like "Brer" rabbit, he remained silent. He failed so miserably in connection with that matter that he proved beyond doubt that a Supreme Court judge by his environment is not qualified to express views on domestic matters.

Hon. P. Collier: And if he is a single man he has never been trained in domestic affairs.

Mr. CHESSON: That is so. Vexatious delays occur in connection with an approach to the Arbitration Court, and it often happens that organisations have to wait six or 12 months. Is it any wonder then that men are compelled to take direct action? Take the coal miners' troubles in New South Wales during the progress of the war. The Prime Minister ordered Justice Higgins to give the men what they asked, namely 4d. per ton on the heaving price of coal. Justice Higgins declined to do the bidding of the Prime Minister, but Justice Edmunds of New South Wales gave the 4d. and the owners passed on 3s. to the consumer. Can it be wondered that the people were up in arms? They were severely penalised. Let me refer to Judge Heydon of New South Wales, who never lost an opportunity to disparage the worker. That judge was so one-eyed that no body of workers would cite a case before him. The Government eventually retired him on a pension of £1,500 a year. He had grown old in the service and had outlived his usefulness. In fact he was fossilised. Yet we find that he was given a pension of £1,500 a year whilst the worker, after a useful life, is given the magnificent pension by his country of 12s. 6d. a week. Can we wonder that the workers are dissatisfied with the social conditions as they exist, when we find things of this description happening?

Mr. Pickering: They got rid of Judge Heydon cheaply.

Mr. CHESSON: Probably they did. With regard to the Workers' Compensation Act, it is time it was amended and brought into line with the Queensland Act. It requires to be amended so that compensation shall start from the date of injury. At the present time a worker suffering from an injury is out 14 days before he is entitled to compensation. If a man is out of work it is only natural that he will make an effort to stay out a fortnight so as to get his compensation. He will probably get 30s. from a miners' union, and if he is a member of a friendly society he will get 21s. The insurance people would like to see an amendment of the Act in the direction I have suggested. A married man without a family cannot afford to go without payment for that period. There should also be an amendment to provide that £700 should be the amount of compensation in the case of a fatality or permanent disablement. At the present time the figure stands at £400. Still, a further amendment ought to be made to bring the Act into line with that of Queensland, where a man receives compensation for sickness. In the Old Country if a man suffers from miners' complaint he is entitled to compensation. A worker can be compelled by a company to take a lump sum. Why, therefore, should not the provision be made to ent both ways? The worker should be able to apply to the court to compel a company to give him a lump sum. A worker

who has been injured might not be fit to resume his old occupation, but if he had a lump sum, there might not be anything to prevent him from establishing a small business. The ventilation of mines is another matter in which I am interested. The coal mine regulations provide that not less than 100 feet of air shall flow freely and undiminished in every working space, and that there shall be 200 feet for a horse. In regard to gold mines it is provided that there shall be an adequate supply, and that is defined by a candle light being deflected from the vertical. Take a candle light and give it a little blow and it will be immediately deflected from the vertical. I ask whether that is sufficient for a body of men working underground? It is left to the Inspector of Mines to declare what amount of air shall be circulated in mines. Once the air goes into a level it should be taken through that level, up a winze and to the surface. At present we have an upcast and probably a downcast. The air passes through, say, the 900 feet level and then from that it goes through the 700, 600, and all the other levels until it reaches the surface. Those levels therefore have a quantity of impure air passing through them. The bad ventilation of mines to a great extent is responsible for such a large number of miners ending their days in the Woorloo sanatorium. It is a sad sight to see so many men in a helpless condition in that institution, due largely to bad ventilation in the mines. If the mines were ventilated properly, probably the number of young men who finished up their days at Woorloo would be one fiftieth of what it is now. The member for East Perth (Mr. Hardwick) referred to the wages of the Collie coal miners. For the benefit of the hon. member I would like to inform him that the coal miners work on a sliding scale. When the price of coal goes up the wages go up, and when it decreases the wages go down. The coal miners are said to be receiving over £1 a day, but my experience is that they work only about half time and they do not average anything like £4 a week over a period of six months. There are too many men working in the coal mines for the orders they have, and again, the Collie miner is engaged on piece work. The heaving price of coal is fixed according to the height of the seam. The miner only gets so much per ton for the amount of coal that he breaks. The harder he works of course, the more he makes. These men have to go into the bowels of the earth and very often when they come out one would not recognise his own brother amongst them. A man has to lie down to his work often in a cramped position, and in other ways in which many of us would not care to do. I am speaking from experience. A great number of accidents occur in the coal mines. We have only to refer to the Bulli disaster, where I saw 80 men brought out. There was also the Kembla disaster. We do not want anything like that to happen again.

Mr. Pickering: There has not been any disaster in this State.

Mr. CHESSON. There is gas at Collie. We were told there was no likelihood of a disaster at Kembra, but it happened. Not only gas but fire-damp accumulates in coal mines, and not in other mines. Therefore, no matter how well paid the coal miner is, he is entitled to it. He goes into the bowels of the earth and remains there for eight or ten hours, and it ill-becomes anyone to decry the coal miner. Where would the Empire have been during the war but for the coal miner? He was as essential as the soldier.

Mr. Pickering: That is not the point; it was the basis of the compromise.

Mr. CHESSON: The compromise was the work of the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Watt, who gave a rise to the New South Wales and Victorian coal miners and, naturally, Western Australian miners were equally entitled to it. I do not intend to touch on the question of calorific values, but the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlin) by interjection when the member for East Perth (Mr. Hardwick) was speaking last night, said that Collie coal was the cheapest coal in Australia at the present time.

Mr. Pickering: Is that a comparative value?

Mr. CHESSON: He was comparing it on the calorific value of Newcastle coal. The member for East Perth seemed somewhat concerned regarding the export of hides and the manufacture of leather. I take it there must be a tannery in his electorate. I think the Government geologists should not confine themselves to their offices writing up fine reports, which nobody reads, and using Latin phrases to describe rocks which, if called by their common names, every miner would understand. The geologists must go out into the country if they are to be of any benefit. I do not know of any fields which have been opened up as a result of them writing these fine reports. But we are led to believe they possess expert knowledge, and they should go out into the country instead of waiting for mines to be opened up, and then writing reports which are only mystifying to the miner. Any miner at a distance can send a sample to the Metallurgical Department, and obtain a free assay, but he is first asked to disclose the locality. It is not reasonable for a man to do that before he secures himself.

Mr. Pickering: That is supposed to be kept secret.

Mr. CHESSON: Yes, but I know an instance of a man sending a sample down for assay and an individual coming to the district and endeavouring to find out the person who forwarded the sample. There is a leakage somewhere.

Mr. Pickering: It should have been followed up.

Mr. CHESSON: The leakage occurs in the office. A man should be given an opportunity to secure himself before he is asked to disclose the locality.

Mr. Pickering: Quite right.

Mr. CHESSON: A man might be battling all his life and find one show perhaps of precious metal. To obtain a free assay, he

discloses the locality and an individual in Perth gets the information, puts it out, and what happens to the prospector? The land is not pegged out and he is not secured in any way. Take the base metals. The tungsten families such as scheelite, wolfram, molybdenite and "terrannam," which are used in the manufacture of the finer steels, are not commonly used in Australia. The prospector has to depend on the export trade for these rare metals. If the Metallurgical Department wish to assist the prospectors, it should be possible to inform them where the markets are and the ruling prices for different metals. What is the good of telling a man that a metal is tungsten. I have sent in a sample and been told it was "terrannam." I had no idea what it was used for, and had to make inquiries to find out. Then I had to discover where the market was. I learned it was in America, and that the price was £38 per ton. This discovery was made in the north of the State. It would have cost £12 a ton to bring the ore to Meekatharra and, allowing for all the freights and charges, it was not a payable proposition. The department should have information regarding the use of metals, the world's markets, and the ruling prices. During the war mining exemptions could be obtained almost on any pretext. One had only to go to a warden, put up his case for exemption, and it was granted. I think those days have gone by, but the Government should take a stand. I am quite opposed to anyone locking up country and not working it. Mr. de Bernales has a great portion of the mining country locked up. He is not complying with the mining conditions. If I take up a lease I have to comply with the conditions—one man to every six acres—and if I do not the lease is forfeited. Why should de Bernales or anyone else escape the same penalty? Mr. de Bernales buys up the machinery on a mining property which goes into liquidation, and it is necessary then to go to the Supreme Court and get it placed under the jurisdiction of the warden before proceedings can be taken. What prospector can afford to do that? The Minister should consider this matter in order that the industry might be assisted. The member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) dealt with the penalisation of mining, due to the heavy cost of mining requisites. I re-echo what he said, and appeal to the Government to assist to bring down the cost. Every field is penalised through the existing high costs. Explosives have deteriorated, and it is time the Government took a stand with regard to manufacturing them, as was done in South Africa. Mining was once the principal industry of this State. There is an enormous area of country which has been walked over but not mined, and, if the Government only encourage the companies and prospectors, there is a big future for mining. I give the Government credit for providing outfits to prospecting parties. Any man of repute has no difficulty in getting horses or camels and a dray and the necessary tools.

The Mines Department are only too ready to assist, and I wish to pay them this tribute. As regards repatriation, the State has been cut into districts. In my district five returned soldiers have been granted sustenance, and one or two of them have made good. The Government advance money on an assay of copper. It would be well, in connection with a new show beyond the reach of crushing facilities, if the Government advanced, say, up to 50 per cent. for stuff giving values of over 10dwt., to carry the parties over the developmental stage until the field progressed sufficiently to warrant the erection of a mill. Many men go out prospecting and find decent shows. But what happens? They carry on without assistance, and eventually a boddler comes along and takes a 12 months' or two years' option over the show, the original prospectors being starved out. They cannot help themselves in regard to giving the option. If the Government came to the assistance of prospectors, more men would go out prospecting. It is time Ministers gave this matter their serious consideration. The Government can carry the copper miner and the farmer, and I say they can also carry the prospector, and, moreover, do so without risk. The Government can be protected by official assays of the dumps, and pay the prospector sufficient to keep the tucker bag going. If the assays are sufficiently good, a Government battery can be erected. I wish to give the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Hudson) credit in connection with the establishment of a battery at Cue. We people of Cue fought a good while to get a battery there, but without success. Eventually we induced the member for Yilgarn to visit the field, and we put up a decent case. After going into the matter very thoroughly, the hon. member promised us a mill; and that mill will be completed in four weeks' time. On behalf of my constituents I have to thank the member for Yilgarn for his action in visiting the field, examining into the position, and providing crushing facilities.

Mr. Duff: You were lucky.

Mr. CHESSON: We put up a genuine case. In fact, the men put up their own case and justified the erection of a battery.

Mr. Harrison: The results of the battery have still to prove that the case is good.

Mr. CHESSON: From a long experience of the Murchison field, I am satisfied that there is no better minning field in Australia. Moreover, the Murchison has been developed by the small men. It was languishing for want of crushing facilities. While the battery has been in course of erection, Cue has sent large parcels of stone to Mt. Magnet at a cost of 15s. per ton, and these parcels have given satisfactory returns. The question of a water supply for the Big Bell mine was placed before the member for Yilgarn when Minister for Mines, and for the life of me I fail to see why he did not make an attempt to furnish a supply. The mine is equipped to put through 27,000 tons at a cost of 16s. per ton. It is a low grade pro-

position, and the process of mining at present costs 12s. 9d. per ton. The battery is now working eight or 10 hours per day, instead of the whole 24. If crushing went on all through the 24 hours, the cost would be reduced to 8s. or 9s. per ton. The mill was erected during last year. A gas producer plant was ordered for the mine during the war, and was left unshipped for 12 months at Singapore. In fact, the whole of the expenditure on the development of this mine has been incurred during the war. The show has been opened up for 150 feet, and has been sampled and proved a constant and reliable proposition. The battery can crush 10,000 tons per month, but at present, owing to want of water, is crushing only 700 or 800 tons per month. The member for Yilgarn obtained a report from Mr. O'Brien, of the Water Supply Department, who recommended boring for water. There was a great deal of delay over the matter, but recently the boring was undertaken, and sufficient water has been obtained. I understand the present Minister for Mines has agreed to guarantee an amount of money borrowed from the bank for the purpose of laying pipes. In that matter the Minister is running no risk, because the mine has proved itself beyond all doubt. A large number of men will be employed by the mine, and it should receive assistance. Indeed, its development will mean a fair township. In this case I think the late Minister for Mines made a mistake, because the mine will amply justify itself. I desire to make a brief reference to the question of secondary industries. I believe in primary and secondary industries going hand in hand. I am also a believer in protection as the sole means of building up industries.

Mr. Pickering: Did you ever know a time when protected industries did not want protection?

Mr. CHESSON: I was in New South Wales during the time of the revenue tariff, and I know that I could go into Victoria, which had a protective tariff, and obtain goods cheaper there than in New South Wales.

Mr. Pickering: I did not find that I could do so.

Mr. CHESSON: What chance have we in Australia of competing against the cheap Asiatic labour—10d. a day in Japan as against 12s. 6d. a day here? We must establish industries, and once they are established we have a chance. As regards expenditure in research, that will always have my approval. I may instance the chemical works started in Fremantle by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert).

Mr. Harrison: Don't you think the bonus system is better than protection?

Mr. CHESSON: Manganese is coming to those works now from Meekatharra, and other minerals are coming to them from Kalgoorlie, and they are being treated; and I have every confidence that a success will be made of the enterprise. I understand the hon. member is

getting 10s. in the pound assistance from the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is getting nothing.

Mr. CHESSON: That is the promise of the Government, and I fully believe that the promise will be carried out. I trust every encouragement will be given to the various industries of the State—not only the farming industry, but also the mining industry and the secondary industries.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York): I had not intended to speak on the Address-in-reply, but some remarks made on Tuesday evening by the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) call for a reply from me, and I shall take the opportunity of saying a few things that I had intended to defer until the Estimates come down. The member for East Perth (Mr. Hardwick) last night had the proud distinction placed on his shoulders of being the only member of this Chamber who had protected the profiteers. However, I think that may have been said of him in merely a jocular sense. I want the House to understand clearly that in what I have to say to-night I speak not in the interests of the superphosphate firms but solely in the interests of fair play. I want to give the superphosphate manufacturers fair play, just as I want to see the farmer fairly dealt with in regard to the supply of his super. When going through my electorate last April I followed closely on the heels of the member for Mt. Magnet. He had been touring through my district and addressing meetings there. I was told at various centres that the hon. member had stated that phosphatic rock had been brought to Western Australia from Christmas Island at a preferential rate of freight, and that the reduction represented by this preferential rate of freight was not reflected in the price charged to the farmer for his super. The hon. member denies in toto that he said anything of the sort. If he did not use those words, however, he very cleverly camouflaged the situation, for after his visit to those centres, and until I disabused the minds of the farmers, my constituents were firmly convinced that a reduction in sea freight had been allowed by the Government to the superphosphate manufacturers, and that these manufacturers were not really handing on the benefit to the farmers as they had agreed to do.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The freight was £2 10s. per ton, was it not?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I understand, £2.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Did not the superphosphate manufacturers send a letter to some farmer stating that the rate of freight was £4 16s.?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do not know. I do not see all the letters they send out. Apart from this aspect of the matter, I want to state the position so far as I am concerned. At a meeting which I held, and which was attended by 60 or 70 farmers, a spokesman was appointed to ask me whether the statements of the member for Mt. Magnet were correct. I replied that they were not correct,

but that I could not give the exact figures. I said I could give approximate figures, and I did so. If the member for Mt. Magnet did not give utterance to these remarks, it is a most peculiar thing that at no fewer than three centres was I asked the same questions on the subject, and not by one person but by dozens of people. It will be readily understood, therefore, that I was concerned to make inquiries regarding the exact position, to learn whether this alleged profiteering was going on. To do that I approached the Agricultural Department, and I also approached Mr. Catton Grasby. The member for Mt. Magnet ridiculed me for having gone to Mr. Grasby. I went to that gentleman because I felt sure that he would approach the manufacturers themselves. At the same time, I went to Mr. Sutton of the Agricultural Department to see whether I could not get a check statement which would prove the value of the information I was to receive from the other source. The member for Mt. Magnet the other evening, in answer to an interjection as to the test analyses of super. in South Australia as compared with that in Western Australia, said it did not matter. Would the House be amused to find that that hon. member has himself been to Mr. Grasby and got the test analyses? He told Mr. Grasby that he would get a friend of his, a chemist, to go through those analyses and test them. He had that information in his hand when he made that interjection the other night. If he refrained from giving it because he thought it would damage his argument, does it not savour of hypocrisy?

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are you sure that he had that information?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Reasonably sure, yes. The Government test analyses for the present season in South Australia and in Western Australia compared in conjunction with the actual unit value for phosphoric acid delivered in this State shows that although super. is £5 5s. in South Australia and £6 here, we here get slightly the better deal. These investigations are no new thing; because, when first super. went up to this big price we thought that we were being fleeced, and in consequence we made inquiries. Mr. Sutton went exhaustively into the subject. This is what the Agricultural Department states—

In reference to your memo. of the 30th ult. I have to advise you that, in the absence of Mr. Baxter, the Commissioner of the Wheat Belt has put up for me the following information:

I learned from Mr. Sutton that the Agricultural Department had been making tests as to the quality of super. at different railway stations without any warning to the firms, and that those tests bear out the statement he made to me that the unit value here is superior to that in South Australia. This communication from the department continues—

The rates of freight for phosphatic rock made into superphosphate for use in 1918-19 season was 60s. per ton. The current

commercial rate of freight is stated to be 60s. per ton, and this is the rate charged, but the Government has arranged a rebate of 20s. per ton on all shipments by State steamers. The freight is reduced to 40s. per ton under a guarantee that this reduction will be reflected in the selling price, so that farmers receive the benefit of the rebate. The farmers' interest in this connection is conserved in two ways, as follows: (a) Before the selling price is fixed for the 1920-21 season the Minister for Agriculture must be satisfied that the farmer gets the benefit of the reduction in freight; (b) Superphosphate has been declared a necessary commodity, and therefore the price charged can only be with the concurrence of the Federal Prices Commissioner. The Christmas Island phosphatic rock was largely, though not exclusively, used prior to the war. Its quality will vary slightly in accordance with natural and unavoidable fluctuations, but not to the extent claimed. The variation is probably three per cent. to four per cent. The increased selling price of superphosphate is not due to increased profits, but to increased charges for freight, sacks, and cost of materials, other than phosphatic rock, used in the manufacture of superphosphate.

The letter I had from Mr. Grasby was couched in similar terms, except that it went into a lot of detail which has no bearing upon the subject. There is also a note here to the effect that on the same subject Messrs. Cumming, Smith & Co.'s answer to Mr. Grasby was as follows—

The freight rates paid during war time upon material used for this season's requirements has been 60s., but as we carried over stocks, the average rate of freight per ton was 55s. Included in the 60s. cargoes was one carried by the State Steamship Service. Two further cargoes have been carried by the State Steamship Service, but freight rates upon these have yet to be determined, and this material will be used as part of our requirements for 1920-21 season.

I interjected here last night that phosphatic rock was obtainable in South Australia. I knew that low-grade phosphatic rock was used in the manufacture of super. to provide a super. at £3 5s., and I also knew that although South Australia gets some of its high-grade rock from Christmas Island, that rock is brought from Christmas Island only when the freight suits. The member for Mount Magnet said that they had to get this rock from Christmas Island, whereas as a matter of fact they get most of their best phosphatic rock from Ocean Island, and from Nauru Island and another small island in the Pacific. They manufacture low-grade super. from the deposits they have in South Australia. South Australia and Victoria are practically equi-distant from Ocean Island and Christmas Island. I give the member for Mt. Magnet credit for the investigations he has made in regard to

profiteering, but undoubtedly while in my electorate he was somewhat loose in his statements and he succeeded in leaving behind him the impression that super. was being manufactured here with a preferential freight thrown in, the benefit of which was not going to the farmer. I was somewhat deceived at seeing a statement in a South Australian newspaper that super. was manufactured in Victoria by the Victorian Farmers' Co-operative Company at £3 7s. per ton. I have since learned that what is being manufactured is not super. but basic phosphate, which is a very different thing. I was interested last night in the forceful speech delivered by the member for Kalgoorlie, and I sympathise with him in his indignation regarding Mr. Braddock, who is trying to start the sandalwood oil industry in this State. The hon. member declared that the Federal bureau here had been unable to do anything in the matter. When we had a select committee inquiring into the rabbit pest some fine rabbit skins tanned with red gum tannic acid were submitted to us. They were beautiful in colour. Yet I see in the Press that the bureau has been unable to solve the problem of local tannins and the elimination of the red colour in the red gum bark. It is extraordinary that we have such immense quantities of tannin in this State and yet cannot utilise it, but have to import tannin from South Africa, the product of seeds that in the first place were sent across there from Australia. I believe we should have the promised Forests Laboratory and Bureau. It would be of the greatest benefit to the State. We have the wandoo, which contains 20 per cent. of tannic acid. We also have the mangrove bark, which contains 40 per cent. of tannic acid, but whether that can be used successfully or not I do not know. When in the Eastern States I was struck by the sparse information which reached us from Western Australia. In the Sydney Press I read of the Kwolyin murder, the gaoling of Percy Brunton, a case of rape at East Perth, the Treasurer's Budget, and all about the increase in the deficit. I picked up a soldiers' paper in which we were referred to as a lot of Rip Van Winkles. This is how we are advertised in the Eastern States, and that is one reason why I should like to see a bureau started as early as possible. We had already sent to New South Wales a very fine exhibit of furniture made from our local timbers. The week following its arrival there this is what appeared in one of the Sydney papers —

The Western Australian correspondent of a Sydney paper related the other day that when the war put a stop to the importation of timber, the West Australians were compelled to turn to their own forests, and they were astonished at the great variety of beautiful timbers these contained, and the numerous purposes for which they were suitable. One wonders if these Rip Van Winkles ever read a newspaper, or explore their own country beyond



the city boundaries. The timber users of New South Wales are in the same boat. One day they will wake up and discover where they are. But the surest and quickest way of opening their eyes is to shut out all timber from other countries. Then the compulsory use of local woods—which other people consider the best in the world and are trying hard to grow—would end the wanton destruction of our forests and scrubs. If this is not done soon they will be importing the common Australian timber (now growing in California and elsewhere from Australian seed) and discovering marvellous virtues in them.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What are the Government doing about it?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I give the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) credit for endeavouring to do something in the matter.

Hon. P. Collier: His great work for the secondary industries went by the board when he came into contact with the farmers.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Last session when I asked a question shortly after my return from the Eastern States, the leader of the Opposition said, "Now we are getting the result of the trip." Hon. members will recollect that I asked what was being done in regard to the visit of the French Mission to Western Australia. I was very much struck by what occurred in Sydney. The members of the Commission were looking at the products of the country and at the timbers and other things for which they might have become customers. In going to the museum I was shown a lot of things, such as flooring, studs, and rafters, weather boards, joists and bearers, storey posts and girders, and three-ply veneers of various kinds, all cut into business sizes ready for use. When the members of the Mission came in shortly afterwards, accompanied by Mr. Holman and others, one of the first remarks they passed was, "This is the best thing we have seen since we arrived in Australia." Of course there were none of our timbers there.

Mr. Pickering: They saw them when in Western Australia.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I claim credit for causing some action to be taken in this direction. Our timbers have gone there to be made up into the finished article, which comes to almost the same thing. We do not advertise ourselves enough. I think we ought to make our local productions more widely known. When the member for Canning was the Minister for Industries, he informed us that a thousand tons of timber was being consumed in the timber mills of the South-West, and that there was a likelihood of this timber being put to some commercial use and profit, instead of being burned. I believe that some time ago some 30 or 60 tons of timber were sent to England, and lost.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I think some of it was sent long before he assumed office.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I believe it arrived safely but was lost somewhere between Somersetshire and London.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Possibly a Devonshire farmer made his fences out of it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I paid a visit to Messrs. Cuming, Smith & Co.'s works outside Melbourne, and saw the range of products made from a local eucalyptus of a very light colour. The names of some of these products, derived from the distillations of E. Regnans and E. Oblique, were—wood tar, tar oil for paint, crude tar oil, pyroligneous acid, containing acetic acid, methyl alcohol, acetone and other substances, the acetic acid being used in the manufacture of wood vinegar for the formation of acetalis, and the acetate of lime for making acetone, and for other purposes in the dye industry.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How many of these do they manufacture?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Many of these things have been proved in our own technical schools from our own jarrah.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Yes, but they have no commercial use.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That is so.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How many of these are turned out by Messrs. Cuming, Smith, & Co.? Probably none!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The more commercial items have been turned out in considerable quantities. Mr. Baker and Mr. Smith at the Sydney bureau were emphatic as to the great waste that is taking place in these matters. We know that gas producer engines are very freely used in Australia at the present time. The waste which has gone on in the direction that I have indicated is almost criminal. In the making of charcoal for these engines we should save these by-products.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Experts could make an acid out of your hair, but it would not be of commercial value.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: In New South Wales they were importing great quantities of tannic acid. They were importing from America bark which contained 14 per cent. of tannic acid. The black pine of New South Wales and Queensland gave up to 28 per cent. of tannin. Messrs. Baker and Smith of the Technological Museum of New South Wales discovered the tannic qualities of the black pine and learned that it was a good commercial material. There is a man in this State who has proved that red gum bark can be used with success, and that the objectionable colour in it can be removed. Why has this not been taken up by the Government?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Because it will take away from the profits of the importer.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I brought this man into contact with the Minister, and told him that what he had discovered should be worth untold money to him if he looked after it properly. It would, of course, be necessary for him to see that someone did not get hold of his patent and rob him.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Have you seen the black-boy treatment?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes, it is very interesting. I have not heard much about repatriation.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Everyone has had something to say about it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have heard very little said in favour of those who were trying to administer the scheme. I appreciate the services rendered by Mr. McLarty and other officers and know what they are up against. Perhaps I have been in contact with that gentleman as much as any other member of the House. I know that Mr. McLarty and Colonel Tilney are doing good work. Whenever I have been to them I have had the best possible attention that anyone could reasonably expect in the circumstances. They have done all they could to do right by those men who went to them. There was one man who has been trying to get on the land since last October. When I took him in hand, he had blundered somewhat and had allowed himself to be sent all over the country. I was enabled to have him settled within a fortnight after I took up the matter.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I have not heard one member condemn these officers.

Hon. P. Collier: Does the man in the street get the same treatment without the assistance of a member of Parliament?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Perhaps not. Whenever I have gone to their office with a genuine case they have endeavoured to do all they can. No doubt some men put up very impossible propositions.

Hon. P. Collier: We do not want to develop that policy whereby a member of Parliament can have things done which would not otherwise be done.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That would be wrong. When the I.A.B. was first instituted it was a new department. There were in it a great many inexperienced officers. Men were dragged in to do work to which they were not accustomed, and the consequence was that there was very soon a state of chaos. There has been a certain amount of this sort of thing going on under the Repatriation board. I do not think now there will be nearly the same trouble there has been because things are getting more into their stride. We shall now see the department dealing with cases more expeditiously than in the past.

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

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The whole question to my mind in regard to many of the difficulties under which we are labouring to-day can be summed up by the statement that very much of the evil is due to centralisation and the abnormal growth of the big cities of Australia. The industrial unrest and the prices of food about which so much has been said are bad enough in themselves, but the man in the street with whom one comes into contact, who does not care

whether the member for Northam or anyone else is leading the Ministry, is chiefly concerned with the fact that the wages he is getting are insufficient to enable him to carry on, that his good wife has to resort to all sorts of devices to make ends meet. Whilst the cost of living is very high, some striking figures are published in this evening's newspaper which I will not quote because they are already in print. They, however, point plainly to the fact that whilst we are labouring under considerable disabilities so far as the increased cost of living is concerned, when one comes to look at Queensland with its State butchers' shops we can contrast it with what has happened in this State. Queensland is held up to us as the shining example of what Government control of these concerns has brought about and the position has been contrasted with what is happening in our own State. The figures published in the newspaper are illuminating and show that Western Australia is not nearly so badly placed as are South Australia and Victoria so far as the population in the capital cities is concerned. But before I leave the question of industrial unrest I would like to quote the ideas of Lord Leverhulme, better known as Sir William Lever, of Sunlight soap fame, in regard to the relation between capital and labour. His ideas are advanced, with this difference, that when he speaks on the subject he speaks from experience. In an article in the "World's Work" he says—

Labour, management and capital are all essential to the production of wealth. They have common interests, and it is to the advantage of all to work together. Team work is the work that tells. Before the workers can enjoy bigger wages they must first of all earn them; they must strive to be more efficient and less wasteful. They must learn to look after the interests of the firm that employs them, for by so doing they will be taking care of their own interests. It is astonishing how many difficulties stand in the way of giving a worker an interest in the concern. At first Lord Leverhulme tried profit sharing, but it would not work. Then he tried what he calls "prosperity sharing," which has been in existence at Port Sunlight for about ten years. Under this system the workers do not hold shares in the business but are given a percentage of the company's profits in proportion to the workers' earnings, the usual award being 10 per cent. Last year £200 was distributed amongst the workers. If the business made a loss, then the workers would receive no dividends, and this is a strong incentive to make all concerned do their utmost to further the firm's interests.

I have heard very little in this State in regard to such propositions as are in existence at Port Sunlight, and in various other centres, but I am satisfied that before very long we shall hear more of this sort

of thing, and it is in that direction that there is going to be an amelioration of the conditions of the working classes. The time is opportune to draw attention to the serious position we in Australia are occupying, in so far as the extraordinary growth of the capital cities is concerned. The cities have dominated the whole policy of Australia, and it will require a titanic effort on the part of the more level-headed section of the community to take Australia back to the lines of sound development. I mentioned in one of my previous speeches that the rapid growth of the capital cities of Australia was one of the greatest curses Australia was labouring under. In no part of the world are so many people congregated in the cities as in Australia. Chicago was for a long time considered the wonder of the world in the rapidity of its growth, but when we take the population of which Chicago is the centre there is no comparison to be made with some of the Australian cities. Melbourne has been called the blood-sucker so far as the back country is concerned, and Perth seems to be going along in the same direction, that is, occupying an unenviable position in the matter of population. The Government Statistician published in 1916 figures which showed the percentage of people congregated in the six capital cities of the Commonwealth. Victoria heads the list with 47.11—nearly half the population of that State. That is not taking into account the cities of Geelong, Ballarat, and Bendigo. South Australia comes next with 46.10 in Adelaide. New South Wales is third on the list with 40.38. Western Australia is next with 37.89. I am told on good authority that to-day, taking Fremantle, Perth, and Midland Junction, we have over 44 per cent. of the population of the State within that small radius. There is something rotten in that state of affairs. We are trying to stand the pyramid on its apex. We are building up unwieldy cities, and it is time we took stock and endeavoured to do something to send the people out into the back country. Queensland figures next on the list with 22.76, and Tasmania is the lowest with 19.86. The six cities combined are responsible for a percentage of 39.43.

The Minister for Works: What about New Zealand?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have not the figures for New Zealand, but I think they are better than ours. Queensland is pretty low on the list. So far as the railway system of that State is concerned, I am quite satisfied that the policy of running out lines from various parts of the coast to supply the hinterland is a wise one. There are 20 other cities quoted in the figures I have before me. Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, is the highest with 20 per cent., and only three of the others are over 10 per cent. There is a distinct difference between the cities of Australia and those in Great Britain for instance. Take Manchester, Liverpool, and London. From those the world's markets are supplied, and so long as they can compete with the

outside world they have every opportunity of expanding. Here in Australia the manufacturers are chiefly concerned in capturing the local markets. I can plainly see that unless our primary industries are going to advance in the same ratio as the secondary industries, there is nothing but economic disaster before Australia. Canada has a population of eight millions, and four millions of that number are in the agricultural areas. We have a population of five millions, and the number in our agricultural areas is only 800,000. I repeat that we are trying to stand the pyramid on its apex. The population of the Commonwealth increased 19 per cent. between 1901 and 1911, and the increase of employees in the secondary industries in the same period was 57 per cent. These figures are unmistakable evidence of the one-sided development of Australia. This infernal drift to the cities is common not only to Australia, but to all the world. The dull monotonous life of the back country causes the young fellows to drift to the cities at the first opportunity. There is a story told of a farmer who on one occasion, after the evening meal, turned to his boy aged 12 and said, "You go and milk the cows and feed and water them, feed and water the horses, and do not forget to feed the pigs, and the poultry; and as your mother is going to bake to-morrow, chop a little wood." For my part I have to go down to the school-house and give an address on 'how to keep the boy on the farm.' That, I am afraid, is the attitude of some of our farmers. But those enterprising parents who wish to see their boys enjoying similar advantages to those enjoyed by their cousins in the city, often feel impelled to let their lads go into the city. While in many respects the Government control of the railways has good points, still it has a tendency to centralise the people in the urban areas. The man who goes mining or farming has to carry out certain improvements, whereas if he owns land in the city there is no compulsion on him to improve his property, and so he waits for values to rise, in the meantime doing all he can to keep up rents. As the Arbitration Court takes into consideration the rents paid, it is an important factor in determining what wages shall be paid. Customs protection also has its evil effects. Victoria raised a tariff which has acted detrimentally against this State. When Federation was first talked about, the Victorians supported the movement because they could see a wider market for their products. We in this State, with our new industries just started, were not in a position to compete against the other States and their well established industries, and in consequence when we hear to-day of the difficulties confronting the attempt to initiate the sandalwood oil industry we realise that there are all sorts of sinister influences at work to prevent the success of that and other enterprises. Having the Federal capital in Melbourne has created a Melbourne atmosphere. That city, led largely by Parliament and by powerful newspapers, has in

season and out of season argued for more Customs protection, and so Federation, hand in hand with Customs protection, has set up a vicious circle. Already there have been occasions when, in the Eastern States, an exodus from the land to the cities has taken place owing to the fact that the working of the land had become unprofitable, due to burdens imposed by heavy protection. In the nineties much of the country was being turned into sheep runs, and men were flocking to the cities. Frantic efforts have been made by Victoria to induce the people to get back to the land, but still the drift to the cities goes on. It is necessary that we should do something to popularise agriculture. Those up to date countries where such efforts have been made, are securing magnificent results. Unless we turn to this big problem and cease concerning ourselves about secondary industries unsuited to our conditions, and those oft-times parasitic industries, it will be very bad for the State. The Royal Commission on Agriculture recommended the appointment of a board of agriculture. A resolution has been passed by the Federated Farmers of Australia, by the farmers of Western Australia, by Victoria, and by New South Wales, and next month a similar resolution is to be passed in South Australia, advocating that an executive board of agriculture should be formed to carry out the ideas of the agricultural department, together with a definite policy to be dictated by that board. When in New South Wales I met the principal of the agricultural college at Hawkesbury. While he seemed opposed to the appointment of a board of agriculture, he definitely stated that to have such a board, if it were free from political control, would no doubt be better than the present position in regard to agriculture. Victoria tried this, and I believe that Mr. Dow, commenting on the system, said it had been a ghastly failure. It was a failure because the members of that board were appointed by political wire-pulling. They had not appointed the board as is done in America, where they have a board composed of the most talented men. Still, a board of this description would stop many queer things done in the Agricultural Department as the result of the whims and vagaries of Ministers, and it would have a definitely outlined policy for the development of agriculture and ensure continuity of purpose and permanency of design.

Mr. Underwood: It would depend on the personnel of the board.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Well we have in Australia men with the necessary talent.

Mr. Underwood: But they could not get appointed.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Probably they are men who would refuse to go around smooching for the appointment. Another thing that has made against the development of our primary industries is the system of education. Our education system is too much a copy of the education of highly commercialised countries of the old world. There has

not been a stable national aim in our educational system. We have been mere copyists.

Hon. P. Collier: That may be said of every country.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Why slavishly adhere to a highly commercialised system which might suit Germany or Britain, where they have great openings in commercial life? Here we should rather concentrate our attention on the development of our primary industries. To the leader of the Opposition last night I remarked on the poor land of the State. When we want to advertise our country we do not talk about our poor lands, but there is no blinking the fact that the larger portion of our lands is of second-class and third-class quality. I know of a sand plain where men have been farming since 1912, men who, with one year of drought and two years of rust, can show an average of 11 bushels of wheat, 18 cwt. of hay, and 10 bushels of oats to the acre. Those men are going in for sheep when they can get the necessary fencing. I appeal to the Honorary Minister to watch what is taking place in regard to fencing material. To a question of mine the other evening he replied that the fencing wire and wire netting accumulated behind the old fighting lines, and at the ports and railway towns in France and Belgium was an inferior quality and unsuited to our purpose. Last March, he said, they had cabled to England, only to find that the price of that material was prohibitive. But it is now August, and we know that the market has been falling. Consequently I think it is time we were asking for further particulars. Many of the settlers on these poorer lands could make them pay if they could stock them, but they are unable to procure fencing material. The Minister should keep himself au fait with the matter of war salvage which might be suitable for this purpose. I wish to see farmers' experiments extended in connection with the lighter lands as in New South Wales, where very good results have been obtained. In that State, edible shrubs, such as wilgar, myall, salt bush, karrijong, and mulga, distributed by the Forest Department Nursery, have been grown and, during times of drought, settlers have been able to maintain many sheep. There are many uses to which the light land could be applied. Many settlers on the poorer land have been able, by growing oats, to run sheep where previously they had no success with wheat. The Commissioner for the Wheat Belt is seized with the importance of this, and has introduced two early varieties of oats, Lachlan and Burt's Early, which are being used with good success in the eastern areas. I am anxious that these light lands should be tested and brought under cultivation. The Minister should consult with Mr. Sutton and see if the experiments begun in the Totadgin area cannot be extended. The best land in this State is rapidly becoming exhausted, and we must face the problem of making the best use of the lighter land.

I would like the Attorney General to say if something can be done to amend the law relating to hire-purchase agreements for machinery. A farmer at Dangin purchased a harvester in 1913 for which he was billed £118 6s. 10d. On the first promissory note for £38 5s. 4d. he paid only £14 10s. 6d., owing to a partial failure of his crop. The balance of £23 14s. 10d. was carried on to the next promissory note for 1914. A drought prevented payment in that year. The next promissory note of £38 5s. 4d. was paid on the 5th March, 1917, and the third on the 25th May, 1918. To-day there remains unpaid the balance of the first promissory note and the accumulated interest. Off the £118 6s. 10d. he has paid £91 2s. 8d., and the firm who supplied the harvester have now seized the machine and he has nothing at all to show for his money. The interest amounts to £30 17s. 10d. If he paid the firm £58 2s. would he be able to get the harvester back?

The Minister for Works: That is the law.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: If that is the law then, as Mr. Bumble says, the law is a "bass." If the man is prepared to pay the balance and the accumulated interest, he should be able to get the harvester back.

The Attorney General: If he is willing to pay that, no doubt the firm would be glad to let him have the harvester.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have several times referred to the charges for storage on the Fremantle wharf. During the last 11 months I learned that the Trust have charged £11,000. I have explained what a great disparity there is between the charges here and the charges in ports of the Eastern States. In view of the Wheat Commission's report that the high charges are unjust and should be reduced, is the cutting off of the £6,000 to be the end, or is anything to be recouped out of the £12,000 per annum previously paid for storage, which I claim has been an iniquitous charge? I appeal to the House to take the question of land settlement seriously and see if something cannot be done to reorganise our agricultural industry. There is a lack of organisation in connection with our national resources of which the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) ably spoke last evening, and the agricultural industry is the all-important industry of the State. We have to see that we utilise this fair land to the best possible advantage, so that we shall be able to shoulder our share of the war burden of 300 millions and, in the end, come safely through our troubles, taking our part in the upholding of this great Empire and securing prosperity in our normal avenues of development.

Mr. DURACK (Kimberley): I fully realise that towards the close of the debate on the Address-in-reply members become weary of the long drawn out speeches, but since I cannot be accused of unduly occupying the attention of the House, and my silence might be interpreted as indicating indifference on my part, I wish to refer to a few matters.

I have heard inside and outside this House references to a new era being ushered in after the war. We have been told about our vision being extended and our views widened. We have heard about tolerance and good will and co-operation for the welfare of our country that it might go ahead. But we seem to be going along in the same old way. There seems to be a more accentuated spirit of re-creation and personal abuse by one party to another. I listened with interest to the speech of the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), and whilst I agree with much that he said, and am prepared to accept his honesty of purpose, I think it is not altogether becoming of members of this House to cast reflections on private individuals and institutions that have helped to build up this State.

Mr. Underwood: Build up themselves, too.

Mr. DURACK: We know very well that business establishments and reputable firms, realising that honesty is the best policy, can only establish and maintain their business by the application of fair and honest methods. I was pleased to see in the Governor's Speech reference to the possibility of the settlement of the North, and to the necessity for ensuring adequate and reliable facilities. I wish to say with all the emphasis my words can convey that, whilst we are desirous of having every facility extended to the North, I hope that extension will not be in the direction of State enterprise, or by the Government buying any more ships. It has always appeared strange to me that the strongest advocates of State ownership generally are people who rarely have occasion to travel on the coast and people little engaged in the commercial and developmental activities of the State. I should think the people engaged in the commerce of the State, who had occasion to use the boats, would be the first to cry out about spoliation of private owners. I quite agree it is very nice in theory and no doubt many members can advance good theoretical reasons for State ownership, but for heaven's sake let us get away from those theoretical and visionary ideas which are only leading us into quagmires and get down to something practical. I remember one afternoon, prior to the inauguration of the State Steamship Service, hearing a Labour man on the Esplanade expatiating on the iniquitous treatment meted out to the north coast of Australia by the Adelaide Steamship Co. He said that company was working in combination with the beef barons of the North in holding up supplies, and that was the reason beef was such a high price. Beef was then selling at 3½d. per lb. wholesale in Perth, down to as low as 1½d. for second grade beef. How does that price compare with the price to-day when we have State-owned steamers? I remember distinctly another man following the speaker previously referred to. He endorsed the remarks of the former speaker but was more specific in his statements. He mentioned in exact numbers the fat cattle

held in and around the area of Hedland and Broome. I had just come down from the North. I knew the conditions which prevailed there, and how impossible it was for that statement to be correct. I could not help smiling at the simple gullibility of the people when, at the conclusion of his remarks, he was greeted with loud applause.

Mr. Underwood: How many bullocks are there in the vicinity of Derby to-day?

Mr. DURACK: A good many, I believe.

Mr. Underwood: A good many!

Mr. DURACK: We have a State steamship service; we cannot bring them down. Under the aegis of this new era under State ownership to be launched down here, the North was going to flourish and bloom; we were going to get a cheap supply of beef. The small producer in the North was to be protected from the cruel and enslaving grasp of the monopolist.

Mr. Underwood: And he was to a very great extent.

Mr. DURACK: How far has the consumer profited?

Mr. Underwood: How far has the small grower profited?

Mr. DURACK: I am giving the facts as they exist to-day. Beef is at the almost prohibitive price of from 10d. to 11d. a pound. One of the first small men to ship cattle to the metropolitan area by the State Steamship Service was a Mr. James Dillon, who brought down about 100 head in this way. When he got his returns from his agents these showed a loss, in consequence of a drop in the market and deaths on the way down. He appealed to the State Steamship Service for a rebate, but the officials refused to give him anything.

Mr. Underwood: How did Connor, Doherty, and Durack meet these small men when they appealed to them for a rebate?

Mr. DURACK: The consumer has benefited in no wise, neither has the small producer. The small producer found himself subject to the vagaries of the market as well as the vagaries of the State Steamship Service, and he went out of business. Within the last ten or twelve years there have been 14 or 15 of such men who have gone out of the business of cattle growing. This is how the State Steamship Service has assisted the small man. The freight that was being paid to the Adelaide Steamship Company—this monopoly as it was called—was £3 odd per head, including fodder and attendance, as compared with the present price charged by the Government of about £5 odd per head. The cargo freight at present is 66s. per ton. This is the cheap freight that the State Steamship Service has given us.

Mr. Underwood: What about the increase in the world's freightage?

Mr. DURACK: Let me cite the case of the Union Castle line, which is owned by a private company in South Africa. This line was carrying stock for the producer from England free of cost. There was only a nominal charge for fodder and attendance of, I think, about £4 odd. In Canada and

America we find also that the producer is assisted so far as the carriage of the material he requires for his holding is concerned, such as wire and so forth, which is carried free of charge. With regard to the "Kwinana," I could quote several instances of the treatment meted out to shippers by the State Steamship Service. We sent up some stud stock on which they charged £10s. 7s. to Wyndham, although the ship was practically empty. This is how the State is assisting the producers. We as a State cannot run a steamship service. The best brains and intellects of the world are associated with shipping. With the circumscribed conditions we have here and the means at our disposal, and taking into consideration the size of our population, I say that we cannot compete with privately-owned steamers. Some of our friends would say possibly, "Let us separate the State Steamship Service from political control." I say it is impossible to do that. There will always be a certain amount of political influence in these matters, and the State steamers will always be subject to that kind of thing. With the various changes that are going on how can we get any continuity of service? Where we have no continuity we cannot get an effective service. We have no competition under a State Steamship Service and without competition to stimulate industry there is no progress made. I should like the Government to put forward a definite policy in the matter. They are, we understand, prepared and willing to assist the producers and to help in the development of these northern areas, but I should like to see the Government abandon the idea of State-owned ships. If they will do that we shall then have open competition, which is so necessary in these matters. Our producers and private citizens would then have confidence in the pursuit of their business. Governments are only made up of individuals, and whilst human nature is human nature the sweets of office will always be alluring. Governments have ever a vigilant eye upon the main issue, especially when approaching election time. They will always have a weakness for giving way to demands in certain directions. It was my intention to speak with reference to the present management of the State Steamship Service. I find myself in accord with the member for Pilbara in his criticism of this management. I was going to speak more particularly as to the disgraceful condition in which the "Kwinana" went out from Fremantle, with 100 passengers or so for Broome and Wyndham in March last. No provision whatever was made for the accommodation of the people aboard her. There were some 16 women and children, who were obliged to find accommodation in a little cabin which was altogether inadequate for them. We in the North are pleased, of course, that we had an opportunity of going up there by the "Kwinana," for we only have the two boats, the "Kwinana," and the "Bambra." It was, however, the duty of the management to make some attempt to provide better accommoda-

tion than they did. When we arrived at Wyndham a great sigh of relief went up from the passengers. Had it not been for the influence of some of the heads of departments who travelled by her, there would have been something in the nature of a riot or disturbance on board. I do not believe the Government will ever be able to run the Wyndham meat works, either in their own interests or in those of the producer. It would appear that they must always do as other companies had to do during the war—owing to the high cost of material and other factors—write down the capital of these works and come to some arrangement with the producers of the East and West Kimberleys to take them over. It will be their duty to protect the interests of the consumers, and I have no doubt they will look out for that. In a great measure the condition of things existing in regard to these works is due to the producers themselves. Had we at the time insisted upon being more fully taken into the confidence of the Government, no doubt we would have been able to protect our own interests, and in doing that have been able to conserve the interests of the State. There has been some criticism as to the colossal blunders which have occurred at these works, but I do not blame either this or any other Government for those. These mistakes appear to me only as an exemplification of the total incapacity of State enterprises. Although we may find fault with much that has taken place there, we have to realise that the Government are confronted by a chain of circumstances, due in a great measure to the great distance that Wyndham is from the centres of labour and supply, and also due to the circumstances under which the previous Government took over the management of these works. All these conditions have meant that the control of the works must be outside the supervision of the Government. At present we have up there a great number of young men who are earning good wages. Their wages are from £10 to £20 a week, working overtime, and it costs them to live about 25s. a week. Amongst these are many industrious young men, and no doubt they will save their money and eventually become factors in the development of the country. In consequence of this we may perhaps get some return from these high wages. I have heard criticisms offered as to the machinery at these works. I do not profess to be an authority on machinery, but I have visited works in Queensland during the last four years, and works in other parts of Australia, and in Canada and America. I have been right through these works at Wyndham, and have followed the products as they went through the different phases of treatment. I believe these works are up to date and good in every way. They may perhaps in some details possess little defects, but no works can be said to be altogether perfect. I believe that we in that district will be able to turn out a product equal to anything else in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Mullany: In the world.

Mr. DURACK: It has been shown what a great loss this State and the producers of the State have suffered through not having had these works started earlier. Experience has shown that with the cattle now being put through there will be a saving of 100lbs. per beast as compared with the weight at which they have been sold down here. One can readily understand what that means, extended over the number of years during which we have been shipping cattle to the metropolitan area, at the rate of between 15,000 and 20,000 per annum. Although I agree with the member for Pilbara that the North offers a splendid opportunity for young returned soldiers, I must emphasise my opinion that these must be young men who are willing to work, and who know something about the conditions appertaining to the North. Men must be prepared to "scorn delights and live laborious days." When, however, it comes to putting returned men up there who are not used to the conditions, I cannot altogether support the scheme that the Government apparently intend to undertake. It must be realised that willing as men may be, many of the returned soldiers are not strong enough to go on the northern areas. Under some large organised scheme to be undertaken not by the State but by the Commonwealth—and no doubt it would be supported by the Empire—the proposition would be different. Much as Australians know of Australia, perhaps few of us realise that leaving Broome and going eastwards one can travel over thousands of miles of some of the finest pastoral land to be found in this continent. Eighty miles eastward of Broome one gets into the Fitzroy Basin, extending over about 200 miles, of very rich and fertile land. Another 180 or 200 miles on there is, the very rich Moola Bulla area, the Government cattle station. This is situated on a high tableland elevated as much as 2,000 feet. Continuing from Moola Bulla one gets into an auriferous belt extending over about 30 miles, to the Albert Edward Ranges. There the country opens out into beautiful rolling Mitchell downs, over which one can motor for hundreds of miles encountering scarcely a stone or any other obstacle, although there are no roads. Next there is the great Antrim plateau, extending into the Northern Territory. That partly divides the waters running north into Cambridge Gulf from the other waters running south into central Australia. Further on one gets to the head of the Victoria River; and from here to its mouth, a distance of about 500 miles, it is all magnificent country. Continuing still over magnificent land one reaches Lake Woods, a little north of Powell's Creek. Lake Woods is a large lake of about 60 or 70 miles in circumference. The water is fresh. I had a peculiar experience on that lake one evening. I arrived there just at sundown, and watered my horses and took water for myself. On the following morning I had to go over a mile and a half to get

water. The explanation was that the wind had brought the water along from the eastward during the previous day, and that an opposite wind during the night had taken the water back again.

Hon. P. Collier: The water must be shallow.

Mr. DURACK: In the centre it is from 12 to 14 feet deep. When filled it lasts for three years, though there are seasons when it does not fill. One can imagine how fertile the surrounding area is. Speaking as an Australian, I want to call the attention of hon. members to the fact that written over this large area in large and ominous letters are the words "Ineffective occupation." Can we continue to hold this vast area without making some attempt to develop it? Other nations besides Great Britain have found an excuse for occupying land in the fact that it was not made use of, not effectively occupied. If Australia were not part and parcel of the greatest empire on earth, this land I speak of would not be ours today.

Hon. P. Collier: Is all the country you have described good pastoral country?

Mr. DURACK: It is all magnificent pastoral country. Of course the whole of the area I have described is not in Western Australia; some of it is in the Northern Territory.

Hon. P. Collier: Would the hon. member state what in his opinion is the bar to effective occupation?

Mr. DURACK: The want of facilities for getting stock to market. Another difficulty is that over a certain portion of this country there is not much surface water. From the experience of similar areas, however, one would say that water should be obtainable at a depth of from 40 to 80 feet. The principal bar, however, is want of transport facilities.

Hon. P. Collier: It wants another Trans-Australian railway.

Mr. DURACK: Yes, connecting up from Broome. I realise that this State could not build the railway. It is a big scheme, which the Commonwealth Government ought to undertake, and I feel sure it would receive the support of the Imperial Government, for it would help to consolidate the Empire. The area which I have described, lying between 150 and 300 miles from the coast, has a much more congenial climate than that met with on the sea-board. The land is specially adapted for sheep. It would carry millions of sheep in addition to hundreds of thousands of cattle. In order to justify our right to this vast area of country and in order to maintain that White Australia policy which is so dear to the hearts of most Australians, we ought to initiate some scheme to develop the area. I think it might be done by making Moola Bulla the starting point. Moola Bulla station is on a high tableland with a very congenial climate, and it covers an area of about 1,600,000 acres. The suggestion has been made that the Commonwealth Gov-

ernment might take over that property from the State. It would show a very good return. It is worth now from 150 to 200 or even 300 per cent. more than the State Government gave for it. Moreover, surrounding areas might be acquired. A large proportion of the surrounding country is not leased at all. Under a big Commonwealth scheme, this country might be cut up into blocks sufficient for a family to live on; but this is subject to railway facilities being provided. Under such conditions I would say that about 50,000 acres would afford a living to a family.

The Attorney General: Are there many natives in that country?

Mr. DURACK: Yes, there are natives there; but they are not so plentiful as in the coastal areas.

Mr. Underwood: The natives are not at all dangerous.

Mr. DURACK: It would be necessary to establish village settlements, where schools could be held and where the people might meet socially. I mention Moola Bulla as the starting point because of its excellent climate, its particularly rich soil and its nearness to a mining centre. If that mining centre were given better facilities, it would, I am sure, return great benefits to this State.

Mr. Angelo: Do you propose to hand over some of our territory to the Federal Government?

Mr. DURACK: Yes. If we are going to maintain the White Australia policy and preserve our rights, we must get going in that area, and get going without too much delay. Otherwise we must hand over the development of the North to some form of alien labour—I do not say what kind—under restrictions. There might be a provision for the return of the labour upon completion of an indenture for a certain number of years. Overlanding recently from Wyndham to Hall's Creek, I spent some little time at the latter place and went over the old mining centres, where I was saddened to see so much mining machinery lying idle. I came across quite a few prospectors—more than I thought were there. They were all getting gold. The conditions under which they work, however, are very hard. They can get no vegetables, and they have a lot of trouble in keeping their horses. Most of their time, they told me, was lost in going after their horses. They work for a while on the mining fields, and then they go along to some station to take a few months employment during the busy times, which enables them to go back for another five or six months on the fields. The Government might assist those prospectors in some way. I believe a good deal more assistance is offered to prospectors in the Northern Territory under the Commonwealth. A few of the Hall's Creek prospectors have already crossed over into the Northern Territory, and others are talking of doing so. It would be a wise policy on the part of this State to endeavour to retain them. They do not



ask for much—just tools and food. The Government could protect themselves by granting such assistance only to legitimate prospectors recommended by the Resident Magistrate at Hall's Creek. Members will, no doubt, recollect the Hall's Creek gold rush of 1886. Hall's Creek is now a very small centre, although it has some good public buildings. The population number only 30 or 40. On the field there are large quantities of low-grade ore going from 10 to 20dwts; and I have no doubt that when machinery can be got there a little cheaper, the field will yet be a good thing for the State and show excellent results. Whilst dealing with the North, I would like to refer to Broome, the centre of the pearling industry. Broome was hit very hard during the period of the war, but now the people there are looking forward to better times. I was surprised to find the other day that the Government had gone behind the backs of the pearlers' association—which was established for the protection of the interests of the industry—and had granted a license to an Asiatic. I cannot understand that. Last year the pearlers' association were very earnest about this matter, and the then Colonial Secretary or the Honorary Minister in this House, who was acting for the Colonial Secretary (Mr. Underwood), wrote to me and stated that advice had come through that there was a movement against the granting of the license, and later I received a reply to the effect that there was no intention to grant a license to any Asiatic.

Mr. Underwood: There was none granted while I was there.

Hon. P. Collier: They caught the new Colonial Secretary young.

Mr. DURACK: It is the duty of the Government to refer a matter like this to some of the members who represent the northern parts of the State. We know that there is a lot of snide or illicit pearl buying, and the granting of a license to an Asiatic seems to me to put a premium on that kind of thing. It is natural to suppose that an Asiatic—and pearling is a good deal in the hands of the Asiatics—would have no great difficulty in disposing of pearls to his countrymen.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): But the association requested that the license be granted.

Mr. DURACK: No. The license was granted in direct opposition to the association. This is the telegram which I received from the pearlers' association—

We desire to point out that pearl dealers' licenses have been granted Asiatics in direct opposition to repeated requests from this association. In submitting our protest we shall be glad to know the reason that actuated the Government in granting these licenses in opposition to the wishes of the association, the representations made by our State members, and the department concerned.

The action of the Government should not have been taken without consulting the pearl dealers. Those engaged in the pearling industry, through the association, have expressed their thanks to the Government for the assistance given the industry. The Government helped it very considerably by the guarantee of payment to the extent of £145 a ton which was given by the Government. Fortunately the Government were not called upon to pay a penny. The buyers realising that the Government were prepared to step in always went a little above the guaranteed price, in consequence of which the Government had no responsibility, and the pearling association were thankful to the Government for that assistance. I understand it is the intention of the association to ask the Government for another advance in order to get away from the manipulation, that is taking place on the European market. If the Government come in again they will not be called upon to provide any money and the guarantee will be of great help to the industry. We realise or understand that the industry is an important one, and worth considerable sums of money to this State.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is that a form of State enterprise?

Mr. DURACK: No, this is encouragement to enterprise.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is very convenient when it suits.

Mr. DURACK: In the Governor's Speech attention is called to the high cost of living which is seriously affecting the minds of the people. I understand it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Price Fixing Bill. I do not think, however, very much will result from that. It seems to me that the inevitable law which is as old as human nature itself, the law of supply and demand, will come in.

Hon. P. Collier: That law has been repealed.

Mr. DURACK: It seems to me that whilst we may allay clamour in one direction, business would be so disorganised that the good achieved in one might be more than overbalanced by the harm done in another direction, and the agent most responsible would be quite outside our control altogether. What these high prices are due to it is difficult to say. Some economists, amongst them I believe the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) say that it is due to the "quantitative theory of money." Our output of gold is supposed to have increased five-fold within the last 20 years. Others have told us that our protective policy is the cause, while some have attributed it to increased taxation. Then again others say that labour legislation and strikes are responsible and again it has been attributed to trusts and monopolies. Still another reason given is that our luxurious style of living is responsible. Whatever it is, whether it be one or all of these causes, it seems to me that the increased cost of everything is not confined

to this part of the world. It is going on everywhere, in free trade as well as in protection countries and even in far-off Japan, which is supposed until very recently to have been outside the scope of trusts, unions and strikes. In Japan living is said to have gone up 120 per cent. in the last 20 years. If I were to be asked for any one cause more than another which was responsible for the high cost of living, I would say that it was to be found not so much in the demand for high wages at the present time—because that is justified in many cases—but that it was due to a wicked and cankerous growth which was creeping into the industrial organisations under the “go slow policy.” I will not say it is that cause alone, but I would say that that is to a great extent responsible for the existing condition of things and that unfortunately it is fostered by the belief that the unemployed are going to get more employment by such a method. If we do not put our shoulders to the wheel and we do not cast out this evil and wicked thing, we are going to be unmercifully strangled in the process. It seems to me that back to the land is the best price fixing policy we can urge. If the Government can bring in a price fixing measure that will do legitimate good, I will be prepared to support it, but I do not see how we are going to do that. Whilst there appears to be a good deal of concern, and in fact a certain amount of alarm upon what might be termed the overweening optimism of our present leader, it is idle to say that he has done nothing. I say that he has done much and a great deal has been achieved by him during the 15 years that he has occupied office in the way of increasing the production of wool, wheat, butter, bacon, etc.

Mr. O’Loghlen: You will get a good report to-morrow.

Mr. DURACK: I realise that we are essentially a primary producing country. Important as our secondary industries may be, they are not to be compared with primary production. The secondary industries will come in time. If we direct all our efforts into the channel of production, I feel sure that this State will come into its own and that the prosperity of her people will be assured.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. F. E. S. Willmott—Nelson): My remarks will be few, but I think I would not be doing justice to that part of the State I represent if I allowed the unwarranted attacks which have been made by members to pass without some comment. The member for Pilbara said that as there was no development going on in the South-West, and as there had not been for years and never would be, it was perfectly useless to send people down there. Why not send them all up to Kimberley where the water was unlimited, where the

grass grew to a great height and where everything in the garden was lovely? Then he went on to say immediately afterwards that the classification of the pastoral leases must be pushed on because so many of the pastoralists who lived in this beautiful country were overcharged, and in paying the double rate to come under the amending Act, a gross injustice was being done to them. The hon. member further stated, and it seems strange indeed to me how he works out his figures, that the cattle supply would not come from Kimberley in the future because it would not be required. Then I would ask, where is the cattle supply to come from if it is not to come from Kimberley? I suppose it will have to be raised in the despised South-West. There is no other place from which it can come. In my opinion we shall require cattle from Kimberley for many years to come. The member for Kimberley has stated, and quite correctly, that for many years past thousands of head of cattle have been brought down to supply our needs here. Why are we short to-day? If ordinary supplies of cattle had come down from Kimberley the price of meat would be considerably lower than it is. For years to come, in spite of the great country we have down here, we will have to receive our cattle from Kimberley. Our goldfields will have to be supplied from Kimberley. The cattle will not all be killed in the metropolitan area, they will travel to the goldfields and be depastured on what was once thought was desert country. The member for Greenough (Mr. Maley) made the most dismal speech I have heard for a long time. We heard the member for East Perth (Mr. Hardwick) yesterday recount the pedigree of a horse he called “Democracy.” My idea is that we have another horse running, named “Pessimism,” by “Faint Heart” out of “Misery.” The member for Greenough had not much good to say, even for his own district. He told us a lamentable tale of how he was struggling on, and then he threw out the challenge that in the whole of the South-West not six men of wealth could be found. To me that was almost too ridiculous. I have been in this country for 33 years, and I only wish I could show in my bank account the figures that could be shown, not by six or by 60, but by a multitude of wealthy men in the South-West. The member for Greenough then went on to say that the dairy herds should be improved. I agree. But there is only one way to improve them, and that is by the importation of high-class bulls. If we are going to import cows we shall have to pay a prohibitive price for them. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) referred to the non-settlement of returned soldiers in his electorate, and complained that no estates in his district had been purchased. Some of the people in his district who offered estates to the Government for this purpose did not display any great philanthropy. One large estate offered for the settlement of returned soldiers was turned down by the board who deals with

this matter, on account of the price. The owners of the estate thereupon turned round and sold it to private individuals for many thousands of pounds less than they had asked of the Government. If the hon. member wishes to see returned soldiers settled in his district he must get his constituents to put up suitable estates at reasonable prices. The member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Troy) touched on the superphosphate question, and the member for York (Mr. Griffiths) gave us an exhaustive dissertation on that subject. The member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) also had something to say about it. In justice to the Agricultural Department, I must refute some of the hon. member's statements. Seventy-six samples were taken during the year, 11 at the works, 35 at the houses of various distributing agents, and 30 at trucks in transit. In every case the analysis shows considerably over the guaranteed percentage. I am not speaking without my book. Every one of the samples was tested by the Government Analyst, and returned more than the required percentage. The registered standard is 18 per cent. phosphoric acid. An average of 12 samples from Messrs. Cumming Smith & Co. returned 20.2 per cent.; nine samples from the Mt. Lyell Co. returned 18.63 per cent. The lowest sample returned 13.26 per cent., and the highest 28.76 per cent. This, I think, shows that the farmers have not been robbed in respect of the quality of the superphosphate. I am pleased indeed to be able to make that statement, in justice to the people who are turning out this article, and in justice also to the department, which has taken every care to protect the farmers by having no fewer than six inspectors securing samples in various places and forwarding them to the Government Analyst. I do not propose to dwell on the bringing of phosphatic rock from Christmas Island, except to say that if the Government had not been seized with the importance of superphosphate to the farmers, and sent that ship to Christmas Island to bring phosphatic rock at a reasonable freight, the farmers would have been without superphosphate this year. If the State steamers had never justified themselves before, they certainly were of considerable benefit to the farmer on that occasion. I do not admit that the State steamers have not justified themselves. I have always been in favour of State steamers for the North-West. I have said that the people of the North-West have as much right to State steamers to transport themselves and their produce as we have to railways.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You do not care for State orchards.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I say they are perfectly unnecessary and, if run in the way that other wretched thing was run, and situated in so unsuitable a place, they would be an intolerable burden on the taxpayers. Regarding the freight from Christmas Island, it was pointed out that before the war the rate was in the neighbourhood of 14s. per ton. The Government brought

the cargo down for £2 per ton, and the freight that would have had to be paid to a private company would have been something like £6 per ton.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What freight does South Australia pay for getting the rock from Ocean Island?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I conclude they are paying a fair price.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How, then, can they sell superphosphates at their present price?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Because they are not supplying a superphosphate containing 18 per cent. of phosphoric acid. The member for Kalgoorlie surprised me by stating that he had walked from Denmark through Nornalup to Manjimup. He must have very great pluck and good stamina to have performed the journey. There are very few people who have been in that part of the country. But I should like to point out to the hon. member that in walking through that densely wooded district, where the undergrowth runs 30 feet high, he could not hope to see much of the country. He could not see much more than what was under his feet. Even on horseback one can see very little indeed. The hon. member said that, after leaving Nornalup, which he describes as the beauty spot in Western Australia, he travelled through to Manjimup along the surveyed line. Now our railways, as a rule, are built, not in the gullies, but along the tops of the tablelands. Therefore, one following the survey sees only the worst of the country. Take the line from Boyanup through Donnybrook to Bridgetown. After leaving Donnybrook, until getting to Balingup, nothing but jarrah forest is to be seen on either hand, and one not knowing the true character of the country would condemn the whole of it for agricultural purposes. The same thing happened when the hon. member walked along that survey. Had he gone to the north he would have seen excellent country; had he gone to the south before he reached those sandhills bordering on the ocean, he would have seen miles and miles of rich black plains, eight miles wide at many points, and extending through Nornalup down to the Blackwood river. Those plains are going to produce more butter than the rest of Western Australia. The hon. member frankly admitted that that was the cow country of the State.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is similar to a lot of the Denmark country.

The HONORARY MINISTER: No, because much of it will cost less than £1 per acre to clear. It will cost a little to sweeten with lime, but it can be sweetened quickly. I was foolish enough in my youth to try some of that country without lime; but I had adjacent to me a partly dried swamp, to which I set a light, and the ashes were spread over the country, with the result that it was sweetened under the action of lime, and everything that I grew there flourished. However, it was hopeless to send the produce to market, because it was 90 miles from Busselton, and there was no railway to Bridge-

town. Still I proved to my own satisfaction what that country could do. With the experimental plots now down there we shall have further ocular demonstrations of the richness of that district. The timber itself, as the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loghlen) knows, is a tremendous asset. There is enough timber to pay for a railway over and over again. One never leaves the karri right through from Quindalup, the end of the present survey of the old line from Manjimup, until reaching Nornalup. True, the nearer one gets to Nornalup the more patchy it becomes, but still it is there, and with such beautiful land and such timber we would be lacking in our duty if we allowed it to go forth to the public and to the Eastern States that we were ready to cede our country and say we had no land fit to settle soldiers on. Listening to member after member, I began to think it was a crime for anyone to live in Western Australia until the member for Kimberley (Mr. Duraek) struck a note of optimism. So many members had nothing good to say for the country they live in.

Mr. O'Loghlen: That is not so.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is so, and it is one of our greatest troubles.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Our State is very patchy; you must admit it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is patchy, but look at the size of it. People quote Victoria. Why, Victoria could be put into the south-west corner and lost. What about the Kimberleys, with their 13 million acres untouched? We have heard an interesting address from the member for Kimberley (Mr. Duraek) on that beautiful country, and he is not the first to whom I have listened on this subject. Mr. Paterson, Mr. Copley's partner, told me years ago that if we only had the money to build a line from Broome outwards, it would be good running and that country for hundreds of miles would carry sheep; but it would not pay at present because the wool could not be brought down at a reasonable price. It would pay handsomely, he said, to go deeply into debt to build that line, and now, after many years, I hear his opinion corroborated by the member for Kimberley. The member for Cue (Mr. Chesson) who is a very silent member, but who thinks a lot and speaks very sensibly, astonished me by saying that the work of repatriation should have been started four years ago, that we should then have begun clearing land. I do not think he could have considered what he was saying.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Canada did it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Canada might have, but what sort of position were we in four years ago? Where were the men to do the work?

Mr. O'Loghlen: In the same position as we are to-day. The men were here.

The HONORARY MINISTER: They were not. The hon. member knows that men had gone from the timber trade because

the trade had fallen through. They went away to the Front.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Those who did not go were here still, looking for work.

The HONORARY MINISTER: They were not available for this work.

Mr. O'Loghlen: You did not have the jobs.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If they were available, and I say they were not, what could we have done? Could we have gone on clearing the land at a reasonable price without explosives?

Mr. O'Loghlen: The work was not held up on account of want of labour.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It was necessary to have explosives, and different explosives from those on the market to-day. The explosives now are only three-quarters of the strength they were formerly, and considerably more expensive. This land, for which £38 an acre is quoted as a fair price for clearing, I am satisfied could be cleared for less than half that amount under modern methods, with good explosives and boring machines already on the market, and which may yet be improved.

Mr. O'Loghlen: You are going to turn your attention to the plain first, are you not? It would break the heart of a soldier to place him in that timber.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I would not put him on that land without first clearing sufficient to enable him to make a living. It is of no use one man going there and struggling along on his own, as has been done in the past. Science must be brought to bear, and the country treated in one way and one way only, that is, with the latest machinery and best explosives, by men who know how to handle the job in a big way.

Mr. O'Loghlen: I still think the member for Cue was right.

The HONORARY MINISTER: He was wrong, and so is the hon. member. We did well four years ago to keep the State going. Suppose we had had the money—which we had not—suppose we had gone on with this clearing, what price would we have had to pay to have it done?

Mr. O'Loghlen: It would be no cheaper to-day.

The HONORARY MINISTER: No, and can we get fencing to-day? Member after member has referred to the need for fencing material. During my recent visit to the Kununoppin area, deputation after deputation asked for fencing wire.

Mr. O'Loghlen: They want fencing for sheep.

The HONORARY MINISTER: And they want it down south as much as anywhere else. The member for York (Mr. Griffiths) spoke better than I have heard him speak in this House before. He compiled his facts in such a way that he might be proud of it. I am pleased he struck a note of optimism, the first member to do so during the course of the debate. The member for York expressed the hope that the matter of

procuring fencing material would not be lost sight of. It has not been lost sight of. I have kept in touch with England and the Eastern States, but we would be mad to give the Commonwealth a big order for fencing material unless they could quote us the price. To give them a signed cheque with power to fill it in for any amount would be madness. The people could not pay for it. The member for Kimberley is the direct opposite of the member for Subiaco (Mr. Brown). The member for Kimberley would say nothing good of State enterprise. The member for Subiaco gave me the surprise of my life by expounding the theory of nationalising most of our industries.

Mr. Hickmott: Everything but bakeries.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I would ask the member for Kimberley, if there had been no State steamers, what would have been the position of the people in the North-West during the past few years? The reply would probably be that, if the State had not stepped in, other steamship companies would have supplied the want.

Mr. Durack: Where would we be to-day but for the privately-owned steamers which carry supplies to the North-West?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I might ask where shall we be shortly if the "Minderoo" and "Charon" go elsewhere. The State steamers, plying on the North-West coast, have been of great benefit, and have saved the people much. I am sorry our steamers are hung up. I wish we had more of them, as their employment on the North-west coast would do much to reduce the cost of meat in the metropolitan area and southern districts. If it had not been for the steamers, I do not know where our wheat farmers would have been, because there would have been no superphosphate for them. In conclusion, I hope members will try to catch a little of our Premier's optimism; it is badly needed in Western Australia to-day.

Question put and passed; the Address, as amended, agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

## BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

### Restoration.

Message from the Council, requesting the Assembly to resume the consideration of the Bill for an Act to amend the State Children Act, 1907, at the stage which it had reached last session, now considered.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington): I move—

That the State Children Act Amendment Bill, which lapsed last session by reason of the prorogation of Parliament,

after it had been read a second time and before it had been considered in Committee, be restored to the Notice Paper at the stage it had then reached.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.29 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 26th August, 1919.

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

### QUESTION—EXPULSIONS FROM EASTERN GOLDFIELDS.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is it a fact that the police in the Eastern Goldfields have requested certain residents to leave the district? 2, If so, what is the reason, and by what statutory authority is this being done? 3, What action is the Government taking to maintain constituted authority, and to prevent the unauthorised and unlawful attempt to force citizens and other residents out of the district?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, No. Certain people were advised that, owing to the feeling created against foreigners by the murder of a returned soldier, it would be in their interests and the interests of public peace for them to change their locale for the time being at least, as this was considered the best method of avoiding friction and, possibly, a serious disturbance of the peace. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, The Government have strengthened the police force besides taking the action mentioned in reply to Question 1, which has proved most effective in upholding constituted authority.

### QUESTION—INSURANCE COMPANIES' DEPOSITS.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Premier: 1, What is the total amount deposited by the insurance companies with the Colonial Treasurer in accordance with "The