

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 27th September, 1916.

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: The Public Education Endowment Act, 1909—Report on the administration of the Education Endowment Trust to 31st December, 1915.

QUESTION—POLITICAL PRISONER, DEPORTATION.

Hon. J. E. DODD asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Have the Government any knowledge of a political prisoner from India being deported to this State? 2, Is such person a charge on the charitable institutions of the State? 3, If so, what steps do the Government intend to take in the matter?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Other than the *ex parte* statement of a person who claims to have been a political prisoner in India, the Government has no such knowledge. 2, The person referred to was for 2½ months an inmate of a State charitable institution. Monetary assistance to the extent of 15s. was also granted. In addition, one-sixth of the cost of the passage to Singapore is being defrayed by the State, the other five-sixths being contributed by friends. It is expected that the individual referred to will leave the State to-morrow. 3, This is now under consideration.

QUESTION—TRANS-AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY, PAPERS.

Hon. A. SANDERSON asked the Colonial Secretary: Will the Colonial Secretary place on the Table of the House all corres-

pondence between the Federal and State Governments during the last twelve months on the question of the Transcontinental railway?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Yes. The correspondence will be available to-morrow or, at latest, on Tuesday.

OBITUARY—HON. SIR J. W. HACKETT, K.C.M.G., LETTER IN REPLY.

The PRESIDENT: I have received an acknowledgment of the letter of condolence which was forwarded to Lady Hackett. The reply is as follows—

The Terraces Private Hospital, Sydney, September 15th, 1916. Dear Sir Henry, Very many thanks for your kind letter to me telling me of the resolution moved at the first meeting of Parliament for the session, sympathising with me and my family on the death of my dear husband, and I also thank you for your own personal sympathy expressed in the letter. I shall be indeed pleased to have a copy of the speeches made on that occasion. I must apologise for the delay in answering your kind letter, but it followed me around for some time and I have been very ill for some time since. I am still in hospital, as you will have seen by the heading of my letter. Once more many thanks. I am, yours sincerely, (Signed.) Deborah V. Hackett.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. H. Millington (for Hon. R. G. Ardagh) leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. J. Cunningham on the ground of urgent private business.

MOTION—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT ACT (1914) CONTINUANCE.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East): I move—

That the motion standing in my name be taken before the Address-in-reply is completed.

Question put.

The PRESIDENT: The question is passed by an absolute majority of the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.37]: I move—

That the Licensing Act Amendment, 1914, shall continue in operation for a further period of twelve calendar months from the 30th day of September, 1916; that is to say, until the 30th day of September, 1917.

My reason for taking this motion this afternoon is that unless the motion be passed during the current week the Act referred to, known as the Emergency Act, will lapse. It has been the practice in the past to introduce short Bills to continue the process of these Acts, but when this particular Act was reaffirmed during the session of 1915 the second section provided that the Act should terminate on the 30th September, 1916, with the proviso that if, prior to the said date, a resolution for its continuance should be passed by both Houses of Parliament, the said Act should continue in force accordingly. I think it will be admitted that it is necessary that this Act should remain in force, although we always hope that a necessity for putting it into operation will not arise. A similar motion standing in my name on the Notice Paper has for its purpose the continuance of another Act which, however, does not lapse until the 31st day of December. Therefore, we need not deal with that for the moment.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Sixth Day—Amendment.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [4.40] : In offering a few suggestions to the House I desire first of all to thank you, Sir, and hon. members and the officers of the House for the courtesy and kindness shown to me as a new member. It is indeed gratifying to those of us who are new members to feel that we are welcome here, and the kindness extended to us is greatly appreciated. Mr. Dodd mentioned that the House has paid a very heavy toll to death and that we have lost many valuable members. Three of

them have passed away during the last few months. Two of those were known to me, namely, the Hon. F. Connor, with whom I served in another place and whom I learned to love and respect most highly. I have no doubt that his absence is greatly felt in the House. I myself occupy a position held a few months ago by the late Sir Winthrop Hackett. In filling his place I have a very difficult task to perform. He was highly honoured by all, and his great knowledge and ability and the influence he undoubtedly possessed were invariably used for the benefit of the country of his adoption. His loss is keenly felt, and it is my melancholy duty to offer this tribute to his memory. Mr. Dodd said that in all probability the result of the election by which I was returned would have been different if I had not been an independent Liberal candidate. The hon. member is, perhaps, justified in holding that view if he did not follow the campaign. In the early stages of that campaign I felt it my duty to criticise the party to which I belong. I believed that greater organisation was required, and I believed also that the formation of the Country party was not necessary, but was brought about through the indifference of the Liberal party. But my hon. friend, Mr. Rose, with whom I went through the campaign, will be able to tell the House that I fought the campaign as a straight-out Liberal candidate. There was no question of independence, and it is merely a misunderstanding that has led Mr. Dodd to suppose that my independent attitude was the cause of my election. I was elected as a straight-out Liberal candidate, and I know nothing whatever of any question of independence. I would like to offer my congratulations to the Colonial Secretary on his having attained the high and honourable position which he now occupies. Like many other people outside the House I have watched his career with great interest. We are all perfectly satisfied that he was a first-class critic and, as Mr. Carson has said, if he is going to be as good a leader of the House as he was a critic the country will be the better for his occupying that position. It was gratifying to hear those members who have spoken mention the late leader, who has always been a good friend of mine. It seems

to me that he did great credit to himself in that position. I am also sure that the present Colonial Secretary will fill the position of leader with advantage to the country. I regret that the Hon. Dr. Saw has been called away, because he had a very promising career. He attained a high position in this country more rapidly than has any other member of the Chamber. He has gone to do better work. I wish him every success in that work and feel perfectly satisfied that he will do great good for those who are fighting for the Empire at the present time. I will only express the hope that those who are holding the fort here—the other members of the present Ministry—will hold the fort securely until Dr. Saw has an opportunity of returning—which I trust will be soon—and of giving, in the interests of this country, some of the great ability he possesses. I may say that I am much impressed with the calm and serene atmosphere of this Chamber. I have breathed the atmosphere of another Chamber; and it is pleasant to find that members of this House, as far as I can see, are absolutely determined to treat all matters on non-party lines, and to make this absolutely a non-party House. During my campaign I was strenuously fighting for the interests of the Liberal party, in the principles of which party I thoroughly believe; but I have not brought a party spirit into this House. I am sure that whilst I remain here I shall work amicably with those who hold opinions opposite to mine, and that there will be in this House only quiet deliberation. From the fact of our deliberations being quiet and unbiassed, benefit must result to the legislation of Western Australia. Mr. Kirwan last night spoke of the disastrous position in which our State finances are, and I follow him in that direction. But I should have liked Mr. Kirwan to analyse the position, and to tell the House during what period the finances of Western Australia have got into this bad plight. A few moments' analysis of the position will prove that the finances were not in a bad state in the year 1911. I am not saying that in any party spirit, but simply to show how the country has drifted, and how necessary it is that some of the good administration which obtained in Western Australia prior to 1911 should now be forthcoming so

that the finances of the State may be put in order and the country progress. At the end of the financial year there was in 1911 a credit balance; if not a considerable credit balance, at any rate a credit balance. Now, notwithstanding increased revenue and also increased taxation during the three years 1912, 1913, and, until the outbreak of war, 1914, we have gone backward and backward continuously. The position obtaining to-day is that, instead of a credit balance, we have a deficit of one and a half millions. That is a very serious state of affairs. It does not appeal to all the people, because some of that money has been expended in directions of which a few have the benefit—directions of which I do not approve; but we, as the taxpayers of Western Australia, have to foot the Bill; and I observe it is proposed to fund that million and a-half. This means, as the Premier has stated, the payment for many years of the large sum of £100,000. That is a serious handicap in the present financial position of the State. I was somewhat surprised at Mr. Kirwan's remark last night that any man, and especially the Premier of this State, had suggested that deficits were going to be a matter of yearly occurrence, and that they were all going to be funded. If that is going to be the case, God help Western Australia! The present Government have been put in power for the purpose of straightening out the finances, and not to have deficits; and I hope that when another place goes to the country the acceptance of office by the present Ministers will be endorsed by the people. The new Government have taken office in order that the people generally may be able to develop the resources of the State and do something that is worthy of the community. I think Mr. Kirwan's suggestion can hardly have been made in earnest, for it could not be thought that any man holding the position of Premier of Western Australia would anticipate any such thing as a yearly deficit. We have to think further, however, and look to the loan expenditure of this State. In 1911 our net public debt amounted to 21 millions odd; which meant that every man, woman, and child in Western Australia owed £73 odd to the State. Now, after a lapse of four and a-half or five years, the

net indebtedness has increased to something like thirty-four millions; which means that every man, woman, and child has a further debt of something over £33 on his or her shoulders, making a total debt of £106 per head. This indebtedness represents a most serious proposition, one requiring the close attention of members of this House. We must endeavour to ascertain, so far as we are able, the reason for this financial trouble, the reason why we have this increased indebtedness; to ascertain whether the manner in which loan money has been expended has been such as to advance the interests of Western Australia as a whole; whether loan moneys have been spent upon reproductive works or not. I think I shall be able to show that this last is not the case. During the period under review we have had an increase in population of something like 30,000 people, or an annual increase of 6,000. That is a very small increase for a young and vast country like Western Australia; and I am clearly of the opinion that if the loan money of the past four or five years had been expended in other directions, if it had been devoted to the development of primary production, to the advancement of our great industries, and to the development of the latent wealth within our boundaries, we would have been in a very different position from that we find ourselves in to-day. I shall endeavour to prove that such is the case. Mr. Kirwan, who made a lengthy and very able speech last night, referred to the question of taxation, saying how necessary it is for us to use the best means for meeting the situation that obtains in regard to payment of interest and sinking fund upon the money we have borrowed. He also referred to the necessity for the best administration of the affairs of the country. Mr. Kirwan said there were three possibilities: taxation, or retrenchment, or increased charges for services rendered. He also pointed out, and I quite agree with him, that to everyone these matters are most objectionable. None of us wants retrenchment; neither do I think it is necessary; and we certainly do not wish to penalise those engaged in our primary industries by putting up the cost of services rendered to them by the State—which would mean penalising those who are developing the resources of Western

Australia. We have, of course, to face increased taxation. The war will involve largely increased Federal taxation. Australia is borrowing heavily for the conduct of the war, and we shall have to pay for that. However, that is a question to be dealt with by the Federal Parliament. So far as we of Western Australia are concerned, we have to put our house in order, and to do this we must face taxation. It is also plain that so far the present Government have not introduced taxation which will prove of great utility. As regards the totalisator tax and the amusements tax, it is said that the latter will press heavily upon the working classes; but I think those who have money to spend at such a time as this should be compelled to pay, and those who are able to indulge in amusements will think very little indeed of paying an extra penny or two, or possibly threepence, for a ticket if it will help the finances of Western Australia. I wish to draw attention to the fact that the deficit has been growing year by year, and that State expenditure has increased year by year; and yet we find that nothing has been brought forward in this State to relieve the situation. It has been left to the present Government to introduce fresh taxation; and, as has been said in this House, and as is well known, Governments embarking on fresh taxation are likely to become most unpopular. I fail to understand why the question of taxation has not been taken in hand before. Why has that question been left to render the present Administration unpopular in the country? In spite of the risk of unpopularity, however, Ministers must not shirk their duty; they must go straight forward to do what is best in the interests of Western Australia, irrespective of whether or not they remain in power, because the situation has to be faced, and has to be faced immediately. I think I can indicate other ways by which the position can be improved. By wise economy, I contend, the country can be placed in a better position. One of the means towards that end is good administration. How much has been wasted in years gone by in the administration of the affairs of this State? Enormous sums. I am not reflecting upon any Government in particular; but we want the very best business men

to be found in Western Australia to-day to put our finances in order and to administer the affairs of the country as nearly as possible in the manner in which private people conduct their own affairs. Time will show whether such men are to be found in Western Australia. We want the country administered on business lines, lines which will ensure efficient service. I do not cavil at what is paid for efficient service, because if one wants a good man one must pay him well. Undoubtedly good administration has a very considerable bearing upon the improvement of the position of Western Australia. Another matter to which I desire to refer is the waste of loan money. It is utterly useless to throw money broadcast about the country just to please one section of the community. It is necessary for this State to expend borrowed money in a way which will ensure some return from that money; otherwise this State will very shortly find itself in a most serious, if not critical, situation. If the loan money of the past four or five years had been spent wisely in the development of primary industries, in building up and improving those industries, we should have derived great advantage from the expenditure. It is only for expenditure on such lines that we shall be justified in borrowing money, because our expenditure will then lead to increase of our population, and the increase of our population will in its turn mean the reduction of our indebtedness per head. Those are thoughts which occur to me, and I think they must appeal to every member of this House. We want wise and careful administration and proper expenditure of loan moneys, and then all will be well in Western Australia. I have spoken of primary industries, and of course everyone is talking of them, in this Chamber or in another place, or outside on the platform. Everywhere and at all times the people are being told that the one thing needful is to develop the primary industries of the State. Of course that is right; and that is the reason, I believe, which brought about the formation of what is now known as the Country party. The Country party are out to look after the primary industries of Western Australia.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: To look after some of the primary industries.

Hon. J. EWING: That is a very good interjection. The Country party are out to look after the primary industries so far as the man on the land is concerned. That is quite right, and in that we are all with them. Every man in this House will, I am sure, do his best to advance the interests of the settlers upon our lands. But do hon. members think so much of the gold mining industry, the coal mining industry, and the timber industry? At any rate, hon. members do not express themselves in regard to those industries in the same way as they do about agriculture. Whatever is done, we must be careful not to allow ourselves to be prejudiced; we must not look after the interests of any one section of the community more than after the interests of other sections. The great gold mining industry of Western Australia, one of our primary industries, and one of the most important, an industry which has made Western Australia, needs our attention. I am pleased to be able to say here that I, as one who took up his sojourn in this country 20 years ago, when there was very little doing in Western Australia, when there was practically no agriculture and no coal mining, and very little timber industry, have always sought to advance the interests of gold mining. The gold mining industry started the boom, and what has been the result? Western Australia owes a great deal—I was almost going to say, owes everything—to that great industry. If anyone thinks for a moment what the gold mining industry has done for Western Australia I am perfectly satisfied he must agree that the people of this State have every reason to be proud of that industry. I cannot recall the figures relative to gold production, but that is not necessary, because hon. members know, and probably much better than I do, what has been done, how much the industry has produced, and what employment it has given, and what trade it has created. Therefore, we are all prepared, as I am sure Mr. Kirwan will realise, to do all in our power to build up and maintain that industry. It is a fact to-day, however, that the industry is declining. Say what one will, one need only look at the figures to realise that the industry has been going down year by year and is going down month by month. The gold

mining returns keep going down. What is the reason? What can we as legislators do to overcome this difficulty, which is a serious one? It is a matter of history, of course, that gold mining is always more or less evanescent, that it comes and passes. Many other countries, and especially the Eastern States of Australia, have been in the first instance built up by wonderful gold mines. This applies to Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, just as it applies to Western Australia. Our State had the good fortune to possess the greatest gold mines, I think, that the world has ever known. But even our gold mines are declining. Their production is declining. What is to be done? I am aware that the new Minister for Mines is calling a conference of all interested in the mining industry. From that conference I have no doubt good will be forthcoming. Doubtless something will be suggested that will stem the adverse tide and help to restore our gold production to the old days of prosperity. The Minister for Mines is also going into the question of abandoned leases, and of more liberal assistance towards the development of those abandoned leases. I am quite sure that he will do much good in this direction, and I for one am very pleased indeed to see that he is using such energy. Talking about increased expenditure, I got rather away from my subject in talking of gold-mining. I may say this, that in looking through the *Statistical Abstract* this year, I find that we have an enormous number of State enterprises. The late Government, led by Mr. Scaddan, were returned in 1911 and again in 1914 with a policy to monopolise the means of production, distribution, and exchange. That is the policy of that particular party. They were returned by the electors and I do not blame them for putting into operation a portion of their policy. They were not inconsistent, at any rate. I am not going into figures, and I think it quite unnecessary to do so. I simply wish to say that we have sixteen trading concerns at the present time more or less losing money, and we do not know much about the capitalisation of these enterprises. We have no information as to the total capitalisation of the trading concerns. We have been told it in some instances, but I understand that

has not been gone into thoroughly, and I think members will see when the figures do come out that the capitalisation is enormous. It is much greater than any hon. member in this House can imagine. When we have the figures and can review the position we shall then see how necessary it is for decided action to be taken. Are we going to allow it to go on? Are we going to rectify the position? I think the people's money should not have been used in this direction at all. We have neither interest nor sinking fund paid on the capital expenditure, and we are entailing year by year, month by month, and week by week losses in connection with these particular enterprises. I do not look upon this question at all as to whether the enterprises are payable or not: that does not concern me; I am absolutely against the principle. I am opposed to State enterprises in every way because I think that they take away the initiative, individuality and energy of the people. I am thoroughly in favour of private enterprise. I believe that the man who has money to invest in Western Australia, if he chooses to invest that money, he is entitled to get reasonable interest upon his capital, and to carry on his operations without undue Government interference. I think it is absolutely improper that the people's money should be used in competition with the people themselves. Of course, I am not going to say that those who are going to expend money shall be allowed to work under improper conditions. Such is far from my mind. We have in Parliament the right to lay down the conditions and see that those engaged in any industry are properly protected, and if that is done I think the whole State is amply safeguarded. I want to emphasise the fact that I am entirely in opposition to these State enterprises. I believe in encouraging private enterprise every time, and if we do, it will be found that development will go ahead by leaps and bounds. The present Government are not going to advertise all these trading concerns for sale. They are going to act like good business men and take the first opportunity of getting rid of them and get back the capital we have expended; and we shall then be in a better position. I think there is going to be such

prosperity in Western Australia after the termination of the war that people will be pleased to invest their capital here; then, perhaps, will be the opportunity of getting rid of these enterprises. If the Government are successful in this and expend the money in the right direction, they will have no difficulty in improving the position of our finances. Referring to commissions for a moment or two, I well remember years ago in another place we had Commission after Commission. To a large extent these Commissions have failed. Perhaps members might infer from these remarks that I intend to oppose the Commissions the Government have appointed. I do not intend to do anything of the kind. So far as the Esperance Railway is concerned, I believe it is necessary to have a Commission to advise as to whether the railway line should be continued or not. Also I am in favour of the Agricultural Commission. I would like to ask the members of the present Ministry to be very careful what they are doing and not put on the shoulders of others the responsibilities they should bear themselves. It is a very easy thing for Ministers to sit in their chairs and administer if Commissions go all over Western Australia telling them what should be done. They have their responsible officers and they should be utilised. They are men who know what we should do in connection with the agricultural, mining, and other industries. Ministers should exercise their powers, make use of these officers, and come to conclusions and act promptly. What is the exact position in connection with the Esperance railway? I want to make myself very clear on this point for the reason that for many years past I have been a very determined opponent of the Esperance Railway. I opposed the Esperance Railway when I was standing for the South-West mining seat many years ago. I opposed it in the interests of the coal-mining industry—I said straight away that I did not want to see Newcastle coal brought over in competition to our Collie coal. I also opposed it in the interests of those settlers in the South-West who are producing root crops and fruit. The vast sums of money the various Governments have spent on the gold mining industry surely give us the right to expect that the trade which the expansion

of this industry has brought about should be secured to the producers of our own State, and not handed over to our Eastern competitors. I am not speaking of the present time. I want to make a clear line of demarcation. I am talking of years gone past. I then opposed the through railway and I oppose it to-day. Those hon. gentlemen who represent the goldfields in this House are perhaps not looking so much to the development of this particular district as they are to the interests of the goldfields people. Their mission is to get a railway line through from the coast to Kalgoorlie. Well, I oppose it. I would not be a party to spending money for such a railway.

Member: It is a very parochial spirit.

Hon. J. EWING: It may be parochial spirit, but I feel justified in taking this stand. To-day the position is somewhat changed, and I am not inclined to approve of the action of the Government in stopping the construction of this railway line which is to open up the mallee country and is not a through railway. If this mallee country is as good as people say it is, every thing should be done to develop it, but I cannot express an opinion. If I had seen it I might be able to form an opinion. I know that a lot of men who know the country say it is a most excellent area indeed. There is one thing that struck me, and that is the fact that we have such a man as Mr. Paterson, who is an experienced man and whose opinion counts, and he has promptly condemned it. He has refused to advance money to the settlers in that district out of the funds of the Agricultural Bank, although he has advanced to settlers in almost every other portion of the State. I am sure he would not hesitate to assist these settlers if he thought he could safely do so. Surely there is something worthy of inquiry. Surely there is something to justify the action of the Government in stopping this work. So far as salt is concerned, I am not one to place much reliance on a .05 percentage. In my own experience on the Midland Railway Company's lands all around the Carnamah lakes there are large deposits of salt, but we have crops produced on these areas equal to anything in Western Australia. I am not going

to say anything more about the salt. Having had some experience in agriculture in Western Australia, I know what it is necessary for the farmer to produce in order to get sufficient out of his crop to pay expenses and leave something for himself. To do this his harvest must yield from 8 to 10 bushels. We find that during the 1916 season there were good conditions prevailing so far as the Esperance district is concerned, yet this country produced only an average of 5.2 bushels. That is a very low production indeed, and they have a long way to go before they will get their yield up to 10 bushels. With wheat at 3s. 6d. per bushel and with an average yield of 5.2 bushels, the position is hopeless. That is the aspect of the question which appeals to me. I hope I am wrong, and that the inquiry by the Commission will prove me so. If this country is reported on unfavourably I feel sure hon. members of this Chamber will be very ready to hold out the right hand to those unfortunate men and see that they are placed in some other centres where they will have a chance of making a success. In that event I know of no better part of the State to put these settlers than the South-West. At the same time I hope that the report will be favourable, and that as a result this large territory will be developed. If the report be satisfactory, I will have the greatest possible pleasure in giving my support to this railway. I feel extremely sorry for these settlers, and my earnest hope is that the report will be favourable to the country and that it will be found that the poor yields have been due not so much to the poor quality of the land but to the fact that it has been farmed without being fallowed and without the use of fertilisers. I think, however, it was fallowed. If so, this country in 1916, under the then conditions, should have produced from 10 to 12 bushels. If the land is not capable of that production, then I am afraid it is not worth developing. Regarding the personnel of the Commission I wish to say that I personally know two of the commissioners very well, and I do not think it right that anyone in the legislative halls should cast an insinuation on the uprightness or honesty of any man.

Member: Or on his capacity.

Hon. J. EWING: I would not so much mind an insinuation as to a man's capacity. One may be perfectly justified in doubting a man's capacity, but one is not justified in saying that any man would take a position on a commission and not do his duty faithfully. To say those things seems to me not to be right. As regards Mr. Dempster, he is an old personal friend, and I know him to be a man of the highest integrity. Yet it has been suggested that because he is a pastoralist he does not want to see closer settlement in that territory. I know Mr. Dempster better than that and I am perfectly satisfied, whether he is at the present moment for or against the railway, he will carefully consider all the available evidence and go into the position thoroughly and he will give a straightforward and honest opinion. I hope that hon. members when speaking, whether it be here or elsewhere, will eschew that class of argument, for I believe the Government have appointed on this Commission men in whom they have every confidence. It may be that those men have interests in the district, but I still believe that they will do their duty. I am satisfied that Mr. Dempster and Mr. Padbury are capable, honourable, straightforward men and that their report will be according to their judgment. I feel satisfied that we may safely leave the matter of reporting on these lands in their hands. In connection with the Agricultural Commission, I would like to point out to the Colonial Secretary, if it is not too late, the fact that the Government have not included a fruit expert on this commission. I speak subject to correction, but I believe I am correct in saying that the Commission does not include such an expert. This Commission is to inquire in regard to all aspects of the agricultural industry, wheat growing, fruit growing, bacon curing, everything that can advance the agricultural industry.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: There should be 20 of them.

Hon. J. EWING: The hon. member suggests that there should be 20, but I think there should be at least one fruit expert. In the south-western portion of this State there has been a wonderful development in the fruit-growing industry. That industry is by no

means so profitable as some people make out. We have many capable and experienced men in the South-West who have given their lives to that particular industry. We have on the Commission men representing the wheat areas. We have Mr. Giles, who is included as a commercial man, and Mr. Venn. Mr. Venn is a very good man so far as agriculture generally is concerned—we could not get a better. But we have not any man who is representing the south-western fruit industry. If it is not too late, and I think it is not, I would ask the Colonial Secretary to make a note of this and make an effort to have appointed on the Commission one of the excellent men in the South-West to look after the interests of the fruit grower. I wish to see appointed one of the settlers themselves, one of those men who have been through the hard work and who know what is required. This Commission will have an enormous amount of work to do. It is not a question of months—I was going to say it was a matter of years—but it will be 12 months before they conclude their labours if they are going to do the work properly.

Member: It must be a big job.

Hon. J. EWING: It is a big job, but it is a job which is required in the interests of the country. Suppose the Minister for Lands required some information in order to determine him as to some particular line of action, say, the proposed settlement of soldiers on the land. Is the Minister to say that he cannot deal with that particular question to-day because it is being considered by the Commission? That is one of the dangers of commissions, this shelving, the putting off of things from day to day. I want to be quite sure that if this Commission is going to sit for 12 months we are not to suffer a stagnation in agricultural matters in the meantime. I ask the Minister whether it will be possible to arrange that we shall have interim reports dealing with particular sections of any industry requiring to be developed. Such interim reports would be of great advantage to the Government. If there are not to be interim reports, then I am afraid that the question of agricultural development, so far as benefits arising out of this Commission is concerned, will be hung up for years to

come. This is a very important matter and I trust the Minister will take some notice of what I have drawn attention to. It is an extremely difficult matter now to get a man on to the land. I have tried to get one man on the land for the past six weeks. He has plenty of money, but he found that he could not get there. I have no wish to interfere with the Government policy, but we must take care that settlers who have the money and the desire to go on the land shall also have the opportunity of doing so. The agricultural industry is admittedly the mainstay of our State; if the man on the land is doing well, it is well with all. As the Hon. Mr. Miles pointed out the other evening, the man out-back, whether it be north, south or east, who is developing that out-back territory is the man who builds up the cities and the provincial towns will expand as the years go by; but if the national wealth of the country is not developed what will happen to Western Australia? Upon the development of our primary industries, of which the agricultural industry is the most important, will follow the development of secondary industries, the manufacturing from the raw material of those commodities we require for our own use and sending the surplus overseas. Unless the primary industries are fully developed we are not likely to have that development of the secondary industries in our cities and provincial towns which we desire so much to see. The present Government have already done a great deal for the advancement of the agricultural industry and there has been a certain amount of exception taken to the Government policy in that regard. It has been said that too much has been done for the man on the land. It is pointed out that the Government have reduced the rate on the carriage of fertilisers, have taken off the terminal charges, and have undertaken to carry the farmers' goods over railways under construction at the same rate as is charged for traffic on opened lines. The Government have done more. They have decided to open up the Lake Clifton lime deposits, and in this regard I hope that the lime deposits at the Capel will not be overlooked, and also the lime deposits at Dongarra. I have seen the deposits at Dongarra and I am satisfied

that their development would be of great advantage to those engaged in the agricultural industry in that portion of Western Australia. The Government are also going to do something in connection with the development of the South-West. One small matter mentioned in this House is the decision of the Government to take steps for the destruction of the dingo pest. While I was on my election campaign, cases were brought to my notice where dozens of valuable sheep had been destroyed and men had been practically ruined by the depredations of this pest.

Hon. A. Sanderson: That is a national platform, the destruction of dingoes.

Hon. J. EWING: But I would remind the hon. member that it has been adopted only since this Government came into power. Nothing had been done in that way for years past. I am glad that it is being done now, that the Government are endeavouring to devise means by which to destroy the pest which has done such an enormous amount of harm in the South-West. I give them credit for that. I do not agree with the opinion that too much has been done by the Government for the agricultural industry. The statement was made at Kalgoorlie that the cost to the country of the concessions which have been made to settlers since the present Government took office is £160,000. I believe that to be a considerable over-estimate, and that the cost to the country is not more than £50,000 or £60,000. But I would point out that, however much it may cost the country, the development of the primary industries and assistance to primary producers is more than justified, and it is the only policy likely to make for true progress. The State cannot do too much to assist the agriculturist. I do not want the State to hand-feed the farmer, but I do think that we should give him every possible chance and that expenditure in that direction is wise and is calculated to bring prosperity to our State. I shall refer now to what is undoubtedly a most important product of Western Australia, wheat. Wheat is now being produced, not only for our own consumption, but for the over-seas trade. We have lying along all the railway lines huge stacks of wheat; the

Fremantle wharf is covered with wheat, and at Bunbury there are 250,000 bags awaiting export. This shows that the Collie-Narrogin railway, which was passed some years ago, has been a success not only as a factor in the development of the coal industry, but also in the development of the land in that portion of the State.

Hon. J. Cornell: There are greater quantities than that stacked on the wayside sidings in New South Wales.

Hon. J. EWING: That may be so; but it must be remembered that up till 12 months ago we had no wheat at all at Bunbury for export. If there be to-day 250,000 bags at that port, surely it will be admitted that we have made a good start and that the development of this trade is worthy of consideration. With regard to wheat, the production in 1907 amounted to $2\frac{3}{4}$ million bushels, whilst the last year's production amounted to $18\frac{1}{4}$ million bushels. This shows that there are increased areas of land under cultivation, and that the people who have been settled on the land have made good use of their time. If that is the case, surely good has come out of the policy of land settlement. That was to a large extent the policy of the Liberal Government, which they are to a great degree condemned for by the Country party. They are told that to put people in the country districts which are not provided with railways, and which are outside the line of established rainfall, was a bad policy. Mistakes are, of course, always made in the development of a new country, but that the policy I have referred to has been for the general good of the State the figures I have quoted are evidence. We hope that the Government will, however, take heed in future and not settle people in the dry areas. It is a very serious thing indeed that people should have been settled in areas remote from proper rainfall. People who are outside the established rainfall should be brought back into a better class of country if they cannot successfully grow wheat where they are. That is a pretty tall statement to make. We have ample room in the South-West for such people. We can take them into our arms and give them everything they require both in the way of climate and soil. In my opinion, those who cannot make a success in the districts in which they are now

settled should be brought into districts in which they can succeed. There is no doubt, however, that the wheat growing industry has gone ahead and has been a great advantage to the State. There has been no money refused for the development of the wheat areas of Western Australia. All that has been asked for for this portion of the State has been given, and given lavishly too. I take no exception to that at all, but I do say that the South-West portion of the State has been very sadly neglected during the last few years. Mr. Miles said the other day that he thought hon. members did not realise what a valuable asset they had in the South-West. With regard to the pastoral industry, I compliment that hon. member on what he said, and hope it is true that the Kimberley district should carry 20 million sheep within a reasonable time. Seeing that we have only five million sheep to-day in Western Australia, we have something to look forward to. He said also that water should be conserved in the North-West and that by means of irrigation we should have great production from that portion of the State. If that could be brought about, I feel satisfied that there is a great future before the North-West. I hope that a proper classification of the land up there will be taken in hand, and I agree with the hon. member when he says that there should be special men put on that work. I have had considerable experience in the way of classifying land in Western Australia, and I know it would be absolutely fatal to send a man up to do that work who has had no experience of pastoral pursuits. In the selection of men to do the work it should also be borne in mind that a man living in one portion of the North-West would not necessarily know much about other parts of that territory. I hope that this question will be thoroughly looked into, and that the interests of that portion of Western Australia will be promoted. As I said before the South-West has been very much neglected. We have within the boundaries of the South-west portion of the State almost everything necessary for the life of any nation. We have a wonderful land there, little of which has not yet been cleared and cultivated, but which is awaiting settlement. I refer to the lands of the

Upper and Lower Blackwood, the Warren, and much of the northern portion of the Province which I have the honour to represent. We have enormous areas there awaiting settlement. There is no other place in Western Australia where there is such a magnificent climate and such excellent opportunities for settlement, and with such a certain and assured rainfall. That is where we should send our people to settle. But the South-West requires the expenditure of a large sum of money. If that expenditure is accorded to it, it should be able to support at least a million people within a very reasonable time, and the result would be very greatly increased prosperity to Western Australia. The important phase of the South-West is its rivers. There we have the Blackwood River, the Collier River, the Brunswick, the Ferguson, and many other rivers, all ready to be harnessed up to proper irrigation schemes. All these rivers can be linked up with irrigation schemes similar to that which has been so successfully launched at Harvey. Just recently I was one of those who paid a visit to that centre when the scheme was opened by Mr. Collier. We had a pleasant day there. I am satisfied that the people are going to reap enormous benefits from the Harvey scheme. If benefit can be derived from a scheme in the Harvey district surely, with the wise expenditure of money so necessary in the South-West, all the rivers there could be harnessed up and irrigation schemes established ensuring a rotation of crops. We are at the present time in a serious position because of the want of rain. From Northampton downwards the position is a precarious one. With thorough and proper irrigation methods, we should be able to arrive at that happy position in which we can grow crops whether the rain comes or not. It requires but the proper and wise expenditure of money in the South-West to make it a garden of Eden. I am perfectly satisfied that such money would be well spent. If it is spent we shall have a large population coming into the South-West, these people will be the means of reducing the public debt, and the development of the district will be attended by additional prosperity for Western Australia. I would like to say a

few words with regard to the timber industry. Ever since I have been in Western Australia, and that is a matter of 20 years, I have been hearing about the necessity for the conservation of our forests. But it has been all talk and no attempt has been made to conserve our forests. In many cases our timber areas have been badly used. We now have a new Conservator of Forests. I have not met him, but I understand he is a man of considerable ability and experience. I am pleased to see that he is directing his attention towards reafforestation. If he does that, he will earn a name for himself and will do good to Western Australia. He may be somewhat out of his reckoning with regard to his new regulations. Great exception has been taken in some quarters to these. I am not in a position to say whether they are right or wrong, but exception has been taken not only by employers in the industry but by the sleeper-hewers themselves, particularly as to the serious conditions being imposed as to the stacking of the heads of the trees. A little more experience may perhaps show this officer some way out of the difficulty. As the timber industry goes ahead I hope that the small men engaged in it will receive consideration, and that the sleeper-hewer will be able to carry on his calling as he was able to do in the years gone by. In my opinion the policy of the Government was wrong in so far as the closing up of areas in order to start State sawmills is concerned. To my way of thinking the development of the industries of the State should be left to private enterprise. When the State gets hold of an industry there is going to be trouble and serious loss. I see that the Hon. J. J. Holmes is here, and when I mention coal no doubt he will smile, because he and I have on many occasions talked the matter over. I am not going to dwell upon the question because there is a Commission sitting.

Hon. J. Cornell: How long has it been sitting?

Hon. J. F. Cullen: We have lost track of the date when it started.

Hon. J. EWING: Perhaps one wants a good memory. The coal mining industry has had a chequered career. I have been connected with it since its inception in Western Australia and have seen it go ahead and

go back. It has been very difficult for those connected with it to establish it at all. We have had very serious opposition from the Railway Department, but that opposition is now getting less, and the department is becoming more reasonable. But those responsible here have not done for the coal-mining industry what has been done for coal mining in other parts of the world. I have met men who have come from America, and especially South America, where—I am speaking of the latter country—they have a fuel practically of the same quality as our own. In South America they do not send for coal from the United States in order to take the place of their own product, but they design their engines with big fire grates and adapt them to the fuel they have within their own boundaries. This has not been done in Western Australia. Why has it not been done? Because there has not been a desire to forward the establishment of this great industry. It is a matter of history as to what great value coal mining is to any country. We have only to look at the British Navy. Where would our navy have been but for our coal mines? The British Government have now taken over the whole of the coal mines in England and have control over the trade. That shows the value of the industry not only from the commercial point of view but also the point of view of the salvation of human life.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: Does it not show the benefit of State enterprises?

Hon. J. EWING: That is not a State enterprise. I do not believe in State enterprises. These are only conditions placed upon a country on account of certain abnormal happenings. In the Old Country the Government have taken over the railways from private companies in order to win the war, and their actions in this respect we all applaud, but as soon as the war is over England will once more allow private enterprises to have full swing under approved and improved conditions. I will not advocate anything in the shape of State enterprise in any industry, let alone in the coal-mining industry. Why has not this industry received the attention it deserves in Western Australia? We now have a serious embargo placed upon our coal mining in Collie during the summer months, and if

it is not removed in the near future it will mean a great deal of poverty to the people engaged in the industry. Since the war started and the hundred and one difficulties consequent upon it have been created, the conditions of the men working in Collie have been anything but good. There has been no trade to speak of, but I am thankful to say we have been able to get more of the trade of the City of Perth than heretofore, as well as of the surrounding districts. The coal-mining industry has benefited the people of Western Australia enormously. The Government are not paying more than they should pay for Collie coal, or more than the price which has been established by its comparative value with Newcastle coal. With regard to spark arresters, apparently we have not had time to go in for them yet. In South America where they have a similar fuel to ours, they have spark arresters fixed on a thousand engines, and these are absolutely effective. There is no question in that country of fires as a result of using their own coal. Here in Western Australia for the last 12 years we have been trying to do something but as yet have failed to do anything. We have been met with opposition to the right and to the left, from behind and from in front of us. It has been all opposition. This should not be so. It has apparently not been the desire to assist this great national industry. I fail to comprehend the reason for this. If coal mining in other parts of the world can receive the attention that is due to it, why cannot the same thing be done in Western Australia. It rests with the leader of the House and his Government to see to this matter. I remember a case in New Zealand, where they have lignite coal which is very inferior to Collie coal, when the engine-drivers said they could not keep up the steam of their engines or run to time with that coal. The Minister for Railways at the time said that any man who did not do so would lose his job. All the drivers did it within a week, and there has been no trouble since. We have no quarrel with the Railway Department, and if they desire it they can get the co-operation and assistance both of the men who are working in this industry and of those whose capital has been invested in it.

If that spirit is existing then we will be able to do something of real value. The tin mining industry, which in the early days, I remember, when the late Sir James Lee Steere, then Speaker of another place, represented that particular constituency, boomed as an alluvial tin-mining district. Although we have not so much alluvial working now, we have a considerable amount of sluicing going on, which is of considerable advantage to the State. Seeing the almost limitless wealth within the boundaries of this South-West Province, surely the Government will realise the necessity of expending in the right direction sufficient money in order to develop its wonderful resources. Many thousands of pounds have been spent in the wheat area. I take no exception to that. It was the right thing to do. But why deny these advantages to the great South-West Province when it has all the potentialities that go to make a country great. I wish to emphasise one point in connection with the settlement of soldiers. A very considerable amount of money is to be guaranteed by the Federal Government and loaned to the State Government at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest, any additional interest to be paid by the Federal authorities. The question is where are these men to be placed? I implore the Government not to put them on the dry areas, let us have a clear line of demarcation such as obtains in South Australia, within which safe farming can be carried on, and outside of which it would be dangerous to go. While we have this vast territory in the South-West awaiting development why put these soldiers on the dry areas? I want to refer for a moment to the harbours of the State.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. EWING: I am sure the hon. member's "hear, hear" is quite genuine. The leading harbour of the State is Fremantle, then comes Bunbury and Albany and Geraldton, and there are many other harbours along our coast, including Esperance, all requiring attention. Now, Mr. Lynn, in speaking the other night, was very pessimistic, although I do not think if you look at the hon. gentleman you would take him for a pessimist.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: You got me in a weak spot.

Hon. J. EWING: He was very pessimistic last night. He told us that when the war is over there is not going to be any shipping for many years to come, and that there will be no money for developmental purposes in Western Australia, therefore he said why should we be spending money in the direction of improving harbours outside of Fremantle. He told us that vessels were being designed in other parts of the world with a draught of 40 feet. Well neither Fremantle, Port Jackson, or any other port in Australia except Hobart can accommodate vessels of such draught. What is going to be the position? Are we going to spend millions in deepening our harbours to 40 feet or are we going to be content with our present vessels? This is a question which is engaging the minds of the best shipping authorities in the world, and it is questionable whether the expenditure in improving all these various harbours will not make the proposition impossible. This phase of the question has to be taken into serious consideration. If all this expenditure is going to be concentrated in Fremantle and all other harbours neglected, then I say it is a very false and wrong position to take up. I cannot understand the hon. member taking up such a position, because it must hinder the development of Western Australia for many years to come. If we wish to develop our territory we must improve our harbours, but if all the money is going to be spent in Fremantle the producers are going to be enormously handicapped by the freights they will have to pay. The position is absolutely ridiculous. The hon. member knows very well the development taking place in the South-West and the necessity for a safe and commodious harbour in Bunbury. Have we not 200,000 bags of wheat at Bunbury at the present time awaiting shipment? It would be a very foolish policy if we did not make provision for future development. Let us hope this war will be over very soon. We have got to prepare for what is coming. The increase in shipping will be enormous. The timber industry will revive, bunkering will expand, and all the wheat already there and the enormous quantities yet to come will tax to the utmost extent the berthing accommodation of the Bunbury Harbour.

Surely there is a necessity to continue the improvements now going on in that harbour. It is the most important harbour in Western Australia next to Fremantle and the fourth most important within the Commonwealth. The present extension of the Bunbury breakwater is a valuable work, and protects the present jetty and makes provision for the protection of any further extension in the future, besides providing accommodation on the mole itself. I hope the hon. member will reconsider his position. Such statements as he has made have caused the formation of the Country Party owing to the policy of centralisation, to which I am absolutely opposed. Anything done to improve the Bunbury Harbour makes for the development and advancement of our State. This is the time to make provision for prospective trade, and if we do not take the necessary steps now we will lose the great advantage that will otherwise accrue. I express the hope that the Colonial Secretary will take note of this question of the improvement of the Bunbury harbour, and I hope a safe and commodious harbour will be made in Bunbury capable of dealing expeditiously with the production of that magnificent territory of which it is the natural port. I understand that the Government intends to ask hon. members to adjourn for a few days in order to take part in the Federal referendum campaign. I want to express my great satisfaction and appreciation of the sentiments given utterance to by the Hon. Mr. Dodd yesterday. He told us that all his life he had been an anti-conscriptionist, but the seriousness of the position the Empire is now faced with induced him to change his mind and he sacrifices a lifelong principle in the interest of his country, placing the Empire before party. So far as hon. members in this House are concerned, anything that can be done to help the Prime Minister, Mr. Hughes, in the difficult position he is in I feel sure will be readily forthcoming. We have sympathy with him, and I am sure every member is prepared, as I am, to do his utmost in the interests of the great Empire at this critical juncture.

Hon. J. A. GREIG (South-East) [5.58]: As a new member of this Chamber I only wish to say a few words on this occasion. I

think I may be classed as a new member although it is between five and six months since I was elected unopposed. I would like to mention a little incident that took place a few days after my election. I was speaking to an Irish friend of mine and I referred to my election. He ejaculated: "But there was no election; there cannot be an election without a fight. You were not elected. You simply got into a party machine and got fired right into the House." Well, if that version is correct, all I can say is that I am very pleased indeed that I fell among such congenial surroundings, and although I have been returned by a political party in the interests of the primary producers chiefly—I wish members to note that the term primary producers does not refer to the agricultural industry only—we stand out as a party with the chief aim of looking after the interests of all the primary producers of Western Australia. Though returned as a direct representative of that party I will at all times endeavour to deal with all questions that come before this House on their merits, and apart from any party or personal bias. And if at any time I should feel it my duty to criticise the opinions or actions of any member I shall do so, feeling that what I am doing is to the best of my knowledge in the best interests of the State as a whole, and I hope that I shall never allow loyalty to my party to come before patriotism to my country or allow patriotism to my country to run away with my reason. On all occasions I shall endeavour, as far as lies in my power, to discuss measures and not men. I regret I am not an experienced public speaker, that I cannot clothe my thoughts in language which will make them appear before members in their most attractive form. Living as I have done in the back blocks, and away from the advantages people have in the way of debating societies and other things of that kind, I have been at a disadvantage, and if at any time my thoughts should come so fast and slip over my tongue so quickly that I cannot clothe them at all, I hope members will not be shocked, but will accept them as bare naked facts prominently placed before them by a practical, uncultured agrarian. With regard to the amendment to the Address-in-reply, I do not wish to take up the time of the House.

There are other members who have been here through previous sessions and who have studied the questions and dealt with them, who are more able than I am, but there is just one question I think I could touch upon for a few moments this evening, and that is in regard to the Agricultural Royal Commission. I think the ex-leader of the House said that the commission was unnecessary, and he did not agree with the personnel of that commission because they were unknown men. Probably what he meant was that they were unknown as political partisans. If there is one thing I am pleased about more than another in regard to that Agricultural Commission, is that it is composed of men who, as far as I know, are not political aspirants. With regard to the necessity for the commission, I think a royal commission on this question is absolutely necessary because agricultural industry at this period is waiting. Selectors are leaving their farms and want to know the reason why. We want the reason from a royal commission that has gone fully into the question and can give us reasons for forming their conclusions. Practical men, I presume, know a number of those reasons. We know that the agricultural employees are worse paid than any other wage earners in the community.

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

Hon. J. A. GREIG: The majority of them, and what is a worse fact is that among the new settlers the employer gets less remuneration for his year's work than the man he engages. I maintain, the agricultural industry has more than its fair share of the economic burdens to carry and for the services rendered and the capital expended in that industry, those engaged in it are worse paid than those engaged in any other industry in Western Australia. Reference has been made during the debate regarding the importance of various industries. We all know what gold mining has done for Western Australia, but I have here some figures which I came across the other day in an extract from Knibbs, in which he says that the wealth production of the whole of Australia was 180 millions. The agricultural and pastoral industries contributed 114 millions out of the 180 millions, leaving 66 millions to the secondary industries. So members will see the agricultural

and pastoral industries are the most valuable we have in Australia. Yet in the past our secondary industries, it seems to me, have been given a great deal of consideration by both the Liberal and Labour parties. It seems the past Governments have failed to grasp the fact that the future prosperity of Western Australia depends on a vigorous and progressive land settlement policy, a land settlement policy which will make possible a thriving and contented rural population, but we realise that this cannot be accomplished without an alteration of the fiscal policy of Australia. Like Mr. Dodd I feel it is a pity in the interests of Western Australia that the power of altering that policy is outside this Parliament.

Hon. A. Sanderson: You will never get it altered in this Chamber.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: The fact remains, whether we can get it altered in this Chamber or not, the farmer has to pay a high protection on almost all he buys and has to sell his product and his wheat in the foreign markets of the world and compete with the cheap labour of India, Russia and Argentina. I said just now the primary industries, mining and gold production, were declining and that settlers were leaving their farms. Why? Not because the latent wealth is not in the country. The gold is in the mines, the fertility is in the soil. If our Western Australian gold mines were in any other country in the world they would pay handsomely. If our farming land that would give the same yield per acre with an assured rainfall, as we have here, was in another country there would be profitable farming. But in Western Australia we have low-grade mining propositions unworked and men leaving their farms. This is not because wages are too high, but the cost of production and living is too high. We have established arbitration courts to improve the conditions of the labourers, but we began at the wrong end. We should reduce the cost of producing the necessities of life. And I think the royal commission can be of benefit to Western Australia in taking these questions into consideration. I think the time is rotten-ripe to inquire into the farming industry. When we consider that one-third of the population of Western Australia is living within 12 miles of the

town clock in Perth, in Western Australia or Australia, our object should be, not how to build large cities round the coastlines and pile up the wealth in the cities, but how to settle our unoccupied and waste lands, and I think the royal commission should be able to give us some valuable assistance in coming to that determination. We have land rich in natural resources, but we are strangling them through a high tariff, and although the royal commission is a State concern I hope the commission will take the effect of the tariff on the agricultural industry into consideration when arriving at their findings. I will just say in regard to industries that the last speaker referred to what gold mining had done in Western Australia, but in considering the importance of the industry, I should like to put this comparison: If a man takes up a gold lease and works it, say, for his lifetime he takes the gold out of the mine and leaves it poorer than he found it. If a man takes up a timber concession and works it for a lifetime and denudes the forest of the timber he leaves the lease poorer than he found it.

Hon. W. Kingmsmill: He should not.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: But if a man selects a farm and works a lifetime on it and dies he leaves the farm richer than he found it and the State richer in consequence.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan) [5.10]: I should like to add my congratulations to Mr. Colebatch on his accession to the high and responsible position of leader of this House. It is a position which is sometimes, as I know from two prior experiences, filled with surprises, sometimes pleasant and sometimes unpleasant. If I may use an Americanism, it keeps one guessing, and it is perhaps more so in the case of the leader of a House in a Liberal Government than in the case where he is the representative of gentlemen of opposite opinions. I should like, too, to congratulate, in his absence, the Hon. Dr. Saw on his access to office, and while we deplore his loss from amongst us, we envy the opportunity that gentleman has had of serving his country to the extent which undoubtedly we feel he will serve it. I listened with a great deal of interest, and a good deal of pleasure, to the programme outlined by the leader of the House, when moving the amendment to the Address-in-reply, a programme which I think will keep him

and his colleagues fairly busy, if they wish to carry it out in its entirety, and if I refer in the few remarks I have to make at this juncture to parts of the programme, not that I wish exactly to find fault with, but which I wish to criticise with the kindest and most good-natured wishes towards the Colonial Secretary and his colleagues, I hope he will take it for granted that I picked those things out because my time, and the time of any hon. member, is limited, and I wish to take whatever time I have to criticise rather than praise. For that reason my remarks, such as they will be, will be in the nature more of criticism than eulogium.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Before tea, I was explaining to the leader of the House that so far as I am concerned silence on many of the points contained in the very lucid explanation he gave of the intentions of the Government would mean approval, and that he could depend upon whatever criticism I had to make of their proposals being given in a kindly spirit. I hope I am wrong when I seem to discern in the actions of the Government during the time they have been in office a tendency towards administration by royal commission. A royal commission is in my opinion a very good servant but a very bad master—if indeed that body can be called a servant which, immediately after its creation, is practically irresponsible and irrevocable, and whose decisions, although they may be retarded, cannot be hastened by any other but the drastic process of recalling the commission. We have had instances of the lengthy duration of some of these commissions. There is a commission sitting now on a subject dear to the heart of my friend, Mr. Ewing, namely Collie coal. I have lost count of how long this commission has been sitting; its appointment being a matter of history so far back that it is difficult to remember the date. The finish of its labours is a matter, not of history, but of speculation, and so far as I can see on even so definite and finite a subject as the goodness or badness of Collie coal it is very hard indeed to limit the nature of a commission or say when the commissioners shall bring in their report. There have been commissions which never brought in any report at all. I remember one commission

which sat on the question of State steamships and which furnished no report. Seeing that the commission was dissolved long ago I presume no report is to be furnished. In regard to the first of these commissions to which I shall refer, namely, that appointed to deal with agriculture, I do not see any reason for its appointment. If ever there was a commission which might be expected to sit for years and years it is that commission. I have nothing to say in regard to the personnel of it, except that I am very pleased to see that it does not include any members of Parliament. As I have previously stated, in my opinion the member of Parliament who sits on a commission and accepts fees for so doing, puts himself in a very dangerous position under our Constitution. If we desire an object lesson in regard to the use or misuse of royal commissions we have only to go to the Federal Parliament. I think pretty nearly every member of that august body is on one commission or another, some of them, indeed, on two or three. To my mind, it is a misuse of royal commissions, and I particularly wish to see an avoidance of this error here. During the past five years we have paid in salaries to three commissioners appointed after careful thought by a member of the present Government no less a sum than £12,000. Those appointments, so far as I know, were admirably made. To the best of my belief the gentlemen who fill the positions of Commissioner of the South-West, Commissioner of the Wheat Belt, and Commissioner of the Fruit Industry are admirably suited to carry out their duties. If that is so, and if we have paid this very large sum for their services, where is the necessity for the appointment of this royal commission on the agricultural industry? I have heard, I know not how true it may be, that it was part of the agreement, which is sometimes alleged to have been made and at other times disclaimed, between the Liberal party and the Country party. If such an agreement was made I think the Country party claimed a somewhat useless expenditure of money for their services. I hope that the Government, if they cannot reconsider this matter, will at all events take steps to render the deliberations of this commission as finite and brief as possible; because I am quite certain that

with the talent the Government have at their command in those commissioners appointed by the Minister for Lands in the last Wilson Government, we should have at least as much information from those skilled observers as we could hope to obtain from any royal commission that might be appointed. I think the appointment of the royal commission is a mistake; a good-natured mistake, but still a mistake, especially in these times when the strictest economy is absolutely necessary. The consideration of the second commission brings me to a less agreeable subject, namely, the stoppage of the Esperance Northwards railway. I look upon this as a double blunder on the part of the Government, an error, first, in that it is a tactical error—and this is the least of its demerits—because it must go a long way in another place towards straining that newly formed bond between the Liberal party and the Country party—for I understand that one of the planks of the Country party or many of its members was the construction of this Esperance Northwards line. I leave out of consideration the wrench it must be to the member of the fourth party who, I understand, was not only strongly in favour of this line, but was at one time secretary of the association which had the construction of this line as its main object. However, this House need not be concerned to any great extent with this tactical error, or the relations between the two parties in another place which have practically nothing whatever to do with this Chamber, and I am glad of it. I look upon this action as a grave constitutional error, because the Government are disobeying the mandate of Parliament. This railway was to have been constructed at the wish of a majority of both Houses of the Legislature, and the Government now appoint a commission of three gentlemen to pass judgment upon it. However admirable those gentlemen may be, the Government have no right to ask the country to submit to the unconstitutional course of allowing three men to consider, to review and perhaps to reverse the decision of both Houses of Parliament. It is unprecedented. I do not think the evidence that has been brought forward is sufficient to justify the course taken, and while not criticising the personnel

of the commission I regret that the Government did not appoint somebody with an actual, local knowledge of the country. I do not say one of the settlers, because to appoint one of the settlers would have been to appoint a biased man. But I know a gentleman—I was speaking to him so recently as Friday—with years of experience of that country, who has absolutely no interest in it now, who is looked up to as a man of probity and integrity wherever he has been, who would have made an admirable commissioner and who I take it—although I did not ask him—would have been quite ready to act. He is a man who is as widely known as any gentleman about to occupy a seat on that commission. If the Government wish to know his name I will furnish them with it. He is a man with actual first-hand knowledge of the country; he has worked it and made a success of it, and both by character and ability he is eminently fitted to be a member of a commission such as this. I would ask the Government to consider the constitutional aspect of their action. In an experience of Parliamentary life extending to nearly 20 years I cannot remember any previous occasion on which such action has been taken. I know that a great many years ago one railway—Mr. Drew will remember it—was delayed for some years after the Bill had gone through Parliament. I refer to the Cue-Nannine line. If I remember rightly that line was held up for some three years, but eventually it was constructed. I know of no other instance where a line has been commanded by Parliament and its construction held over.

The Colonial Secretary: We should have had to stop it for want of rails.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Then it would have been very much better to have stopped it for that reason. There is a definite reason in that. If that was going to happen, I say the Government made another and a greater tactical blunder, and I entreat them to avoid repeating an error of that sort.

Hon. J. Cornell: No commission would be required if they stopped the line for that purpose.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Certainly not, and where the necessity exists for the strictest economy—and I presume these commissioners are not going to act in an honorary capa-

city—every precaution should be taken against the appointment of expensive bodies. I hope that the Government, if they can do so, will reconsider the position they have taken up, and stop the line for want of rails. Again, I think if the Government wished to stop the line there was one obvious and constitutional method of doing so. The line was authorised by an Act of Parliament, and if they wished to stop it all they had to do was to pass a repealing Act of Parliament to give the two Houses of the Legislature again an opportunity with the additional evidence—if indeed there is additional evidence, which I doubt—of reversing the decision which they had given.

The Colonial Secretary: The work will not be permanently stopped. There is only a temporary stoppage because there is no construction material available, and to allow of further inquiry.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: This is a new reason.

The Colonial Secretary: No; it is not a new reason.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: It must be due to my unfortunate lack of perception that I had not noticed that that reason had been given. The reason I took as being the current reason was that, Mr. Mann's report having been withheld from the consideration of Parliament, the line was to be stopped until the Royal Commission to be appointed had had an opportunity of investigating matters and of seeing whether Mr. Mann's report was justified or was not justified. Now we have the additional reason given that there is no construction material. It reminds me of the person who approached another with some wares to sell. The first person said to the other, "Will you buy these goods?" The second person said, "No; I will not buy the goods for five most excellent reasons." "What are the reasons?" "Well, in the first place I have no money." "Do not bother about the rest, for that reason is sufficient." If the Government had come forward with that other reason first of all, it would have saved a good deal of trouble and a good deal of discussion. The taxation proposals of the Government meet with my approval. An amusement tax is, I think, an eminently satisfactory tax, and one which

we have been looking for since some little time. The only trouble about the tax is that it is so easily passed on. Indeed, like some other taxes it may be made the medium of taking a little extra profit from the public. I fear that is so in this case. Taxes, for instance, in the nature of customs duty are subject to that disadvantage. When an extra duty of, say, 1½d. is placed upon an article, the traders in that article promptly make an extra charge of 2d. to the public. This, indeed, may prove to be the case with the amusement tax. But this disastrous war in which we are engaged must have some good effects; and amongst good effects which I think it is going to have is the effect of making Australia learn to be in the future what she has not been in the past—a self-contained country.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: There is no such country in the world.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I mean, self-contained as far as possible. Perhaps there may be no such thing in the world as a self-contained country, and I may be using a counsel of perfection in advising Australia to be self-contained. But certainly she can be very much more self-contained than she has been. That has been bitterly brought home to us during the two years the war has lasted. I was indeed pleased to hear the universal chorus of approbation of the policy of making the primary industries of this country the subject of careful thought and of careful fostering. If we want to make those primary industries the subject of careful fostering, we can do so, I think, by taxation. Some countries do it by a bonus system; but we can do it here by taxation. I do not know whether the scheme which I have to propose, and to which I invite the attention of the Government, is new. But, at all events, it is new so far as I am concerned. I do not know of its existence anywhere else. After giving the subject careful consideration, I do not see why it is a scheme that cannot be put into operation. We have in existence here, as in many countries, a graduated income tax. What I should like to see is, not only a graduated, but a graduated and differentiated income tax. We know from experience—and in the future it will be as it has been

in the past—that there are in this country some industries which are good and absolutely essential to the country, some industries which are good but not essential, and some which are absolutely detrimental to the country in which they exist. As we vary the income tax according to the amount of income which any person is receiving, so I think it should be possible and feasible to vary the rate of income tax according to the source from which the income is derived. It is not, I think, a fair proposition that a man who is engaged in an industry which is vital to the State, one of the primary industries, should pay upon the income which he receives from that industry the same rate as is paid by the man who is engaged in an industry which by many people is considered detrimental to the State. If this proposal is followed up and elaborated, I think it will do a great deal of good in the future by encouraging, if not in the way of bonus then in the way of differentiated taxation, those industries which are essential to our welfare. I commend this idea to the consideration of members of the Government, if they have not already thought of it. If it is a new idea, then I say it is new in a way which will reflect credit upon those who initiate it in any country. If time permitted, or if it were indeed necessary, I could elaborate upon this to some considerable extent; but I do not wish to weary the House. I think, however, the idea is well worth the consideration of any Government; and I, at all events, should be extremely glad to see it put into operation in this country. The war is a circumstance that is epoch-making. It is putting an end to many old institutions. It will be the means, after it is over, of starting many new institutions. It will, I think, alter our whole system of life. It will teach us many things that we ought to know; it will enable us to forget many things that we would be better without. And now particularly is the time to turn our attention towards matters whereby the welfare of the country in which we live may be preserved and promoted. I think this scheme of income tax differentiated according to the sources from which the incomes are received deserves our earnest consideration. I am glad, too—if I may temper my gladness with a little curiosity—that the Government are introduc-

ing a Bill to amend the existing sewerage legislation. I myself introduced a little measure on this subject in the closing hours of last session. That measure would have had for its effect the relief to a certain extent from what has almost become a tyranny in the metropolitan portion of this State. May I be pardoned if just for a minute I refer to local matters, because I have admirable precedent for that in the speeches of some members who have gone before me. The administration of sewerage legislation by the Sewerage Department has become almost a tyranny to the householders of Perth and, I believe, of Fremantle; and I hope that amongst the provisions which the promised Bill of the Government is to contain will be some in the nature of those contained in the very small Bill that I brought before the House last year. If my bringing that little Bill forward has had that effect, then I shall feel that I have done the Metropolitan Province a very good turn indeed. Now I wish to say a few words on a subject that is dear to my heart, and that is the subject of forestry. In this connection I have been honoured with assistance by the Minister for Mines, who is the Minister in charge of the Forestry Department, by his forwarding to me some extracts, bearing on the subject on which I have to speak, from a book which is now in the Press, written by Mr. D. E. Hutchins, the late Conservator of Forests of South Africa. Mr. Hutchins is, however, very much more than the late Conservator of Forests of South Africa; he is a man who has had the highest scientific training, a man who has seen practically all the forest departments of the globe, a man who has had forestry as the enthusiasm of his life. He came first to Western Australia—although that was not his first visit to Australia—with the galaxy of scientific talent that came here in 1914—the representatives of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Mr. Hutchins did not remain with the bulk of that party. I happened to know his movements because I was at the time honoured by being the Chairman of the Executive Committee for the reception and entertainment of those scientific people. I know that at that time Mr. Hutchins spent some months making a very thorough examination of our

forests. He had been to Queensland before he came here; and he went from here to South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania. He spent two years in examining the forests of Australia. In this book which he has written he has contrasted our forests with those to be found in other parts of the world; and I say that it will make the ears of many people in this country tingle if they read the book carefully and attentively and have revealed to them the manner in which the forests of Australia, and more particularly those of Western Australia, have been treated. A great deal has been done to the forests of Western Australia that is practical beyond recall; but there is much yet to do wherein we may profit by the scientific advice, the disinterested practical advice, of a man of high scientific and practical training. I would ask members of this House to bear in mind that we are at last discovering what, in my opinion, is sometimes unpleasant to us—that a thing can be at once scientific and practical. There is, or there has been, too much of a tendency to run matters anyhow by rule of thumb, and to decry anything which does not involve the consideration of matters by rule of thumb as being scientific and therefore faddy and therefore unprofitable. But the experience in this particular direction of the rest of the world goes to prove that such is the wrong mental attitude to take up towards subjects of this nature; and from what I have learned from Mr. Hutchins's book and the conversations I have had with that gentleman. I feel sure that if the Australian Governments will take his advice on this most important subject, they will do well and go a long way to remove the errors which have been made not only in this country but in the sister States as well. I have already said that this war is likely to be the end of many bad things and, I hope, the beginning of many good things. If we can only profit by the experience of other countries, by the experience which is brought to our doors by men like Mr. Hutchins, then I think we shall be doing very well for our country and doing well for humanity at large. We have, I think, in our forests a very much greater asset, a very much greater resource, and a very much wider avenue of employment for our population, than is gener-

ally believed. If this is so, surely it is good. For years past our forests have been absolutely neglected. I have belonged for some years to a small body of enthusiasts—small in numbers but strong in enthusiasm—known at the Western Australian Forestry League, which is affiliated with various other bodies of the same sort throughout Australia. As the league have done me the honour of making me their President, we have by persistent hammering at the late Government—or perhaps I should say with the aid of persistent hammering, the late Government were induced to appoint a highly trained Conservator of Forests. We got the Forestry Department shifted from the control of the Lands Department, with which it must always be at variance, and placed under the Minister for Mines. We now ask the present Government to carry on the good work. We ask the present Government to be guided, not by a spirit of apathy, but by a spirit of energy, to see that the forests are put to the best possible use. They can do that only by calling in those who have scientific experience of forestry in other countries. The gentleman, Mr. Lane Poole, who has lately been appointed Conservator of Forests, has been a forester all his life. He has had experience of the science in many countries. I am afraid people are perhaps apt to run away with the idea that any man who says he has been a forester and has had a forestry training, has been in the habit of dealing only with soft woods. Before Mr. Lane Poole came here he was engaged for some years in growing eucalyptus—our own gum trees which we value so little—in a country which values them highly—South Africa—and let us not forget that South Africa has taught Australia a severe but what should be an effective lesson, when we consider that they are exporting into this country bark for tanning, from the trees which were grown from the seeds sent over to them from Australia. Surely that is a lesson that should not be lost upon us. South Africa is a country that has not been fortunate in the matter of forests. People are apt to run away with the idea that, if a certain tree, animal, bird, or fish does not grow in a certain country, it can never be made to do so. That idea has been proved all over the

world to be a fallacy. The history of civilisation all over the world is a history of acclimatisation. Some of our acclimatised products are so old in the history of mankind that we do not know where they came from. We do not know the native land of the basis of our staple industry, wheat. We do not know the native land of many of our domestic animals, and as to the absence of vegetable or animal life in a country proving that that country is unfit for its occupation, we have only to take the instance of New Zealand, where within the last four or five hundred years there was nothing in the shape of animal life. It is doubtful whether man existed, and it appears certain that there were no fish in the fresh waters of New Zealand, and yet to-day as a result of the acclimatisation work of the Government we find that people come from all over the world for the deer stalking and trout fishing, and we know that the tourist traffic in New Zealand is worth from £100,000 to £200,000 a year. Surely this amply proves the fallacy that because certain products do not exist in a country they cannot be produced. I fear I have strayed from my subject somewhat. We have undervalued the forests in Western Australia for years past, we have undervalued them to such an extent that we are giving concessions to people at a rate less than half the average of the rest of Australia, and the average rate of Australia is, I suppose, less than half of the royalties paid on forest products throughout the world. Now perhaps the hon. gentlemen of this House will appreciate what I mean when I say we undervalue our forest products. The average rate of royalty paid—and this is not a random statement, but the result of careful research by Mr. Hutchins—the average rate of royalty paid throughout Australia is about three farthings per cubic foot of timber cut. The average rate paid throughout Australia is .72 of a penny, while the rate which is paid in Western Australia is .34. Yet we have one of the best timbers in the world for the use of which this royalty is paid. I say that our action in the past has been almost criminal. Furthermore, we have given away considerable areas for a totally inadequate royalty. Mr. Ewing stated that we had too many State forests or rather State sawmills. I venture

to say that to-day we have too few State forests. If we had adopted the plan in force in Queensland, that of putting up cutting right to auction, and which is successfully pursued in other parts of the world, I say that we should get such a bountiful revenue that we could devote a portion of it to the improvement of these forests and stop the reckless destruction of them. This I think is a favourable opportunity for the Government to initiate a reform of that sort. We have a new Conservator of Forests; we have a new Government; we have new opportunities; we have too a suitable time in the timber industry when any change of this sort will do less to hamper development because the timber industry is waning at a lower ebb than it has ever been. If it is true, and I cannot believe it, that the effect of imposing a proper and adequate royalty such as is paid in other parts of Australia would be such as to paralyse the industry, then I say the timber industry is in a very parlous condition. But I cannot believe it is a fact that the timber industry would be hampered by a royalty such as is paid in other parts of Australia, not to mention the royalty paid in other parts of the world, or that it would have the effect of snuffing the industry out of existence. At any rate I would entreat the Government now that they have the services of a scientifically trained and practical man with a knowledge of the timber trees of this country to guide them in their deliberations, I would entreat them not to set aside lightly the advice that this gentleman is able to give them. I understand that some of the regulations which have been propounded are obnoxious to some of those engaged in the industry. I would urge hon. members not to look to the regulations alone, but to look for the motives which are guiding the persons who are making the regulations and the motives of those who object to them. The hon. gentleman who is making the regulations has nothing to gain from them, and he is endeavouring to serve his country loyally and well. He has no pecuniary interest at stake, but he has a far larger interest. He is a young and ambitious man. He has possibly for the first time an opportunity to make a name in the scientific world, and he makes a name by the success

or the non-success of his efforts towards the conservation of the forests of Western Australia. I think everyone will admit this, and I do not think that it is in any sense disrespectful to those who are opposing the regulations. I asked the Government not to be led away by the false commercialism of to-day, but to remember that these great forests are put there not for the present use, not for the present profit of the Government, but for future generations, and that we commit a crime against those future generations by not properly preserving those resources which have been entrusted to our care. I would ask them to remember that aspect of the case and to deal as generously as possible with, and follow the advice that is given by, a capable man with the best of motives. Now, Sir, if I may be pardoned I would like to read one or two remarks which Mr. Hutchins has to make with regard to the forests of Australia.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: When will this book be available?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I understand in two or three weeks' time. It is a fairly large book but it is one that will repay anyone interested who reads it. With regard to the royalties which have been paid he said—

The figures 0.72d. per cubic foot which I have taken as the average Australian royalty equals 6d. per 100 feet super. If we take the average of sawn hardwood at 8s. per 100 feet super, the mean Australian royalty is only one-sixteenth the mill value; or, if we take the mill value at 6s., it is one-twelfth; and, similarly, if we take the average Western Australian royalty at 0.40d. or 0.35d. per cubic foot, this bears to the average value of the timber sawn a still greater ratio—about one-thirtieth.

That shows conclusively, I think, to what extent we are undervaluing our forests, which we always proclaim as the best in Australia as compared with the forests in other parts of Australia. Mr. Hutchins goes on to say—

It is extremely unfortunate that in Western Australia and Tasmania the Governments, without taking expert advice, have tied themselves up for so many years'

loss, owing to the very low rates granted to the timber companies. On the other hand it is better that the timber should be given away at nominal rates than be left to rot or burn in the forests, as was the case before the advent of the timber companies.

Hon. members will notice that I am perfectly fair—I am giving both sides of the question.

And where the timber companies have saved forest from reckless alienation without demarcation, they deserve well of the country. In a virgin forest where nothing has been done by the Government to open up the forest, and where there are vast stores of over-mature hollow trees, timber rates must necessarily be very low. The root of the loss lies in the curious fact that, where so much has been done in Australia to develop the country the forests have been left a neglected mine of wealth. Australian Governments—

This will please some of my friends at any rate.

have happily undertaken many duties for the public welfare that are left to so-called "private enterprise" in England; but Forestry, which is a special function of the State to attend to, has been left to take care of itself.

Mr. Hutchins summarises a description of the forests of the world, and details how they exist in Australia—

The forests of the world show three classes of forests: (1) the wild virgin forest; (2) the cultivated forest (practically all the European forests are in this class); (3) regular forest plantations. Australia has a rapidly dwindling area of (1), none of (2), and very small beginnings of (3). For the great bulk of Australian forests, now is the critical time. Will it become the valuable cultivated forest, or worthless scrub and bush? There is no medium course.

With regard to the cultivated forests, the evidence which is given is well worthy of our consideration. The cultivated forest is described as giving the most prolific crop the soil can produce. He says—

The cultivated forest is the ideal of modern scientific forestry—the whole of

the forests of Europe are in a more or less cultivated state. The most advanced European nations—France, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Belgium, Holland, Denmark—have their forests in a most advanced condition of cultivation. One has to travel to such distant countries as the mountains of Turkey to see European forests in quite the wild state. When I was first introduced to the cultivated forest in France 40 years ago—

And there we see the extent of the man's experience.

the whole thing was a revelation.

The cultivated forest in France which was referred to is not a softwood forest, but a hardwood forest, a forest of oak. The great and primary difference between a hardwood forest and a softwood forest is this, that it is easy to repair mistakes in the case of softwoods, but it is a matter of perhaps two generations to repair mistakes in the matter of hardwoods. How much more important is it, therefore, that we should tackle the problem of hardwood forests from the scientific aspect as quickly as possible? He goes on—

The forest looked perfectly natural. But I had not been long with the French forest officers and had the working machinery explained to me before I realised that I was in the presence of a complicated piece of mechanism, the result of a hundred years' patient labour, careful experiment, and scientific thought. This forest, too, was the most valuable crop the ground could carry.

That makes the age of the forest 140 years.

As one travels through France and Germany one sees patches of forest and patches of cereals and other crops interspersed. It is just a shade of difference in the soil that turns the balance as to which is the most paying crop, forest or cereals.

That, I think will be a new thought to most hon. members of this House. He goes on—

Now, in Australia, there is this curious position: the ideals of modern forestry methods are wanting. There is no conception of "the cultivated" forest. It is as unknown and undreamt of as was radium twenty years ago. In Australasia, and

particularly in New Zealand, this absence of the ideals of modern forestry is very remarkable. The apathy and neglect of forestry in Queensland, New South Wales, and Tasmania are not seen in New Zealand. The forest in New Zealand has been worked energetically, and nearly one-third of a million sterling spent on its forest plantations. There was probably not the least necessity for spending that one-third of a million on forest "plantations."

The gentleman is not working merely for the sake of the expenditure of the money, but he is working for the sake of the expenditure of the money in the best direction and for the best method by which these results can be obtained. He continues—

Frequently, in discussing various matters I am met by questions such as the captain of a wooden ship, in Nelson's time, might address to the commander of a dreadnought to-day. The popular idea is that working a forest destroys it, and that to have a new forest you must go to work with a plantation, like planting an orchard or a cabbage garden; whereas the cultivated forest of modern science is a continuous business, the timber always being cut and the cutting so arranged that the forest is continually being improved. As a rule, Nature's laws which ensure the reproduction and regeneration of the forest are utilised by modern forestry science. In certain cases, where seed and labour are exceptionally cheap, artificial planting and sowing are resorted to, to save time. This is a contingency that is of very little interest for Australia where neither seed nor labour is cheap, and where natural reproduction, especially after a little study, can be effected by the forester so economically and expeditiously. Neither is it realised that the cultivated forest may give more employment and may carry a denser population than many Australian farms. The average employment afforded in the forests of Bavaria is at the rate of one man per 130 acres.

A member of the present Government puts down the ideal state of the agricultural industry, as regards the density of the labour employed, as one man per 300 acres. Here we have a highly cultivated forest employing one man per 130 acres. He goes on—

Taking the short Australian working hours, this would be about one man per 100 acres in Australia. It takes 100 acres of good farming land to support a family. It does in this country.

It will at once be asked, "How is this forest labour to be paid for"? The answer is, "Out of the £10,000 a day going out of Australia for imported timber." The bulk of this imported timber comes now from cultivated forests—and it will soon be all from cultivated forest. The timber can be grown as well in Australia as in the Baltic countries or in America. It is simply a question whether the cultivated forest and the population it supports should be here or elsewhere. And this has to be remembered: that good cultivated eucalyptus forest (with which I am very familiar in South Africa) will yield more than the best Bavarian forest with its long, cold, dead winter season.

I do not think I need read very much more extracts from this book. I hope I have convinced hon. members of this fact, at all events, and also convinced the Government, that this is a subject which, under our circumstances, requires to be approached with very great caution and to be given the close and sympathetic attention of those whom we have chosen—I think rightly—to administer this particular branch of our national assets. To return to the more sordid aspect of the question, it would naturally be asked where is to be found the extra money for the administration of an efficient Forestry Department? The answer is by charging in future adequate royalties for the use of our most magnificent products.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Timber men say they cannot pay them.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Quite so.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: We had that put before us by Millar's Karri and Jarrah Co.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: In this country, where we have, admittedly, some of the most valuable timbers of the world, and where persons who obtain possession of it are paying less than one-half of what they pay elsewhere in Australia for forests which are not as good as ours, is it feasible or reasonably possible that the raising of the royalty to the rate existing in the rest of Australia is going to paralyse the industry?

Hon. E. M. Clarke: They are paying for Crown land the same as the royalty they are paying on timber, 6d. an acre.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: If that is so, it would pay any one to buy land because they are getting this timber for less than half the royalties that they pay all over the rest of Australia, and it is admittedly better timber. There is the source of the revenue to run an efficient instead of an inefficient and neglected Forestry Department, such as we have had for years past. Of course, this Government did not appoint the present Conservator of Forests. I think I am only doing justice to them when I take it for granted that they absolutely approve of his appointment. I ask them not to place themselves in the position of a man who, having a tool ready to his hand, spoils the efficiency of that tool by carefully blunting the edge before proceeding to use it.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: What is he doing now?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: He is making himself acquainted with the local conditions of the State forests, having already a very good working knowledge as a result of his experience with the cultivated forests in South Africa with the same class of trees with which he is dealing in Western Australia. I say this, that if the Government sin in this respect they sin with their eyes open. I did contemplate saying something upon what is regarded as an interesting subject to me, namely, the fish supply. I do not think I will, however, except to take this opportunity of thanking the late Colonial Secretary for the opportunity he afforded me last summer of making myself perhaps better acquainted with the State's fish industry as carried on by the late Government, than possibly any other member of the House. So far as I can see, and I think the hon. gentleman will agree with me, there is no reason in the world why that proposition should not pay. But remember this, that in the consideration of these State industries, it is not a question of whether an industry should or should not pay, but a question of whether the Government should engage in them. I do not think the Government should engage in them. I think the late Colonial Secretary will remember that I enunciated that point in the letter I wrote thanking him for his courtesy in giving me the op-

portunity I have spoken of. There are certain omissions from the outlined programme that the leader of the House gave which I may be perhaps pardoned for referring to. First let me again commit the sin of localising my remarks. I will do so because I feel certain that with the influence of Mr. Miles on the one hand blowing North-West and that of Mr. Ewing on the other blowing South-West there will soon be no electors left for me in the Metropolitan Province. The centre of the State will be deserted. It is a pleasing thing, however, to find members coming here giving voice to a belief which is apparently so well founded, in the districts they are representing. The remarks I propose to localise are these. I somewhat regret that the Government have not outlined their proposed policy with regard to the means of transport in this fair city of Perth, more particularly relating to the transport by trams. Not that I wish to raise the very much debated question of the route of the trams, because those who are working for the one route or the other seem to be guided only by the one consideration, and that is the consideration of whether their customers are to be carried past their own doors or past the doors of some other traders. The public convenience is apparently lost sight of by these gentlemen who are making so much noise about this particular subject. I honestly believe that we have now, and have had for the last few years, absolutely the worst tramway service in the world.

Hon. J. Cornell: I second that.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I know it is the worst in Australia. It has no compeer with regard to its badness. I know too, and I am prepared to admit, that there are contributory causes to this which to some extent account for the state of affairs. We know that there has been a want of rolling stock, first caused by the fact that if they had the rolling stock they could not run it because the current required was not available, and that this current was not available until the power house was finished—and when that will be finished, heaven, and Merz and McLellan alone know. The want of power and the want of rolling stock, however, do not account for the filthy trams, or for the trams just running within a minute

of one another and then leaving an interval of ten minutes before another. They do not account for the roadway which is so badly neglected that it becomes a direct danger to the public. And these are the trams that we are paying the Commissioner of Railways £500 a year extra to look after. The present state of the trams is a disgrace to Perth. It is a bitter admission for me to make because I voted for the nationalisation of those trams. There has never been a vote which I regretted more. I was forced into it because we knew that once the nationalisation proposal was turned down the municipal authorities of Perth were waiting to take the trams over at something like £40,000 or £50,000 less. I could not for the life of me see, not knowing then the extent of bad management of which Governments are capable, how a municipality could manage the trams satisfactorily. I am forced to believe, however, that I was wrong, for a more unsatisfactory state of affairs and a more muddled management than that which has been displayed during the last few years in regard to these trams is unthinkable. I do not know what the intentions of the Government are, but the sooner they put them in the hands of some responsible person or into the hands of some responsible body of persons the better.

Hon. J. Cornell: Someone who knows something about them.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I do not even ask that. It seems too much to ask in these times.

Hon. J. Cornell: We expect that.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Let the Government put the trams into the hands of some body of persons to whom the public comfort is, to say the least, an important desideratum, but one which has not been thought of in the past. I regret to have to say these things, but I must speak of things as, unfortunately, I find them. There is another question I want to refer to and it is the attitude of the members of the present Government towards liquor law reform. The Premier, in reply to deputations from both sides of the fence, said he did not propose to make this a party matter, or a Government matter, and he even inferred that Cabinet was not united on it. It would be interesting to know what the personal attitude of the leader of this House is

on the question if it would not inconvenience him to tell us. I congratulate the Premier, and I hope the leader of the House, upon the attitude taken regarding the suggested reference of this matter to a referendum of the people. Parliament is fully able and properly equipped to deal with any alteration of the liquor laws if such alteration is deemed necessary. Personally, I do not think any alteration is necessary, but to resort to a referendum on a subject which has become a matter of absolutely minor importance, the question as to whether the hotels shall close three hours earlier than at present, to invoke the aid of a referendum of the people of this State is, in my opinion, ridiculous in the extreme. I hope that this House will not be a party towards so abrogating the powers of Parliament—which, I regret to say, are being whittled away bit by bit until little remains—by passing a measure such as this. A referendum on a great subject is a way out of a difficulty taken by weak and vacillating men who decline to assume responsibility. To use the referendum, an expensive weapon, in order to effect an object so small is, in my opinion, absurd in the extreme. Indications are not wanting that the same disgraceful lobbying, the same chasing of members—what I may describe as political blackmail—will be indulged in this time as was done on a previous occasion. I cannot understand how members can be so affrighted with false fire as to take notice of such fulminations. I was threatened several times that dire vengeance would overtake me at the forthcoming elections. I did not alter my attitude and what was the result?

Hon. J. Cornell: You are still here.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Yes, and I came back without opposition. Yet the very people who will not take the constitutional method of opposing those who do not see eye to eye with them come and cry to Parliament for a referendum. It is an absurd and ridiculous position and I hope that the House will not be led away into agreeing to any Bill of the sort if it is submitted. I have said practically all I desire to say, except to express the hope that the present frightful circumstances under which Australia—and Australia to a less degree than the rest of the Empire—is labouring, will soon come to an end. Shortly we shall have a

referendum on the big question of national service, and I think it is the duty of every person who has the welfare of his country at heart to support conscription and assist to carry it by a large majority. I must apologise for having dealt with a subject which I suppose is considered a hobby of mine, and I will ask hon. members to think over what I have said and perhaps to alter their opinion in favour of the remarks I had to make in regard to forestry.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [S.35]: Let me scatter the incense of congratulation first to you, Mr. President. We rejoice to see you brought back here, may I not say, like pious Aeneas of old, on the shoulders of your stalwart and filial colleagues from the Western Province. Then to my old friend the leader of the House, and long may he be spared to devote his eminent abilities to the service of this country, and to my meteoric friend and colleague, Dr. Saw. I can scarcely believe that the fractures that he will have to deal with on the field of battle will be more severe and more difficult to handle than the fractures in the financial world he would have had to tackle if he had remained here. Then, may I congratulate the former leader of the House—

Hon. J. F. Cullen: On the condition of the State industries.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: No, I will deal with the State industries later. I congratulate the hon. member on being free from the cares of office. No one knows better than he how heavily they have pressed on him since the war broke out. Then I congratulate the new members, Mr. Miles and Mr. Greig, who have addressed us. I may have one or two comments to make on what they have said, but first let me—if I may be permitted to do so—welcome them, and secondly, congratulate them on what they have told us. It is very refreshing to get new views on political subjects. Perhaps my warmest congratulations are due to the country on having got rid of probably the most profligate Government it has ever had. I have scattered my little incense of congratulations and we can go on now, although it is difficult to find out what we are discussing. My friend, Mr. Kingsmill, apologised for straying somewhat from the subject? But is

there a subject? We had eleven columns of the Governor's speech. I have just counted them in *Hansard*. That, in itself, would be sufficient for me to vote against any Government which introduced a Governor's speech occupying a space of eleven columns. We have an amendment to these eleven columns and it reads, "We beg to assure Your Excellency that we will give the most careful consideration to measures that will best promote the welfare and prosperity of Western Australia." That is one of the gelatinous compounds that will not interfere with the weakest political digestion. You, Mr. President, on the Address-in-reply graciously allow us to deal with matters covering wide areas, but we cannot stray from the subject when we have the Address-in-reply with an amendment like the one I have just read. So I am not going to offer any apology to anyone for what I am going to say this evening. I certainly have something to say and I will preface my remarks by admitting that in the difficult position in which we find ourselves, I would be the last person to assume that I am the only one who can see the right and that others cannot. I will certainly deal generously with the views taken by hon. members in a crisis like the present. It seems to me that whatever we do we shall probably be wrong in the end. I put forward my views because I believe they may throw some light on the subject, but at the same time I will be the first person to admit that there are other pebbles on the beach. Now I come to the present Government. I have seen a few Governments in my day in Western Australia, and I regret to say that I have not the confidence I should like to have in the present Administration. I have studied the utterances of Ministers very closely indeed since they have taken office, and the reason I am not giving them that confidence I would wish to give them is that I can find no reference in any of their speeches to what, I at any rate, consider the key of the situation in this country at the present juncture. The Premier himself, who is also the Treasurer, states that the finances are in a condition of chaos. I would like to emphasise that. It is not my remark, it is the Premier's remark. He has had seven weeks as Treasurer to look into

the affairs of the State, and he has had twenty years of experience in this country, and he tells us that the finances are in a state of chaos. So far as I am able to understand and follow the finances of the country, I entirely agree with him. But what is the principal cause of this chaos? Some people tell us it was the Labour Government. I have already expressed my opinion of the Labour Government and I do not want to emphasise that because it is rather painful. Some people put it down to the unfortunate land settlement policy of the previous Government, and others put it down to the malign influence of the Country party, and certainly they have a good deal to answer for, because in the first week of the Government coming into power to straighten up the finances, what did they do but hand over as an open bribe to the Country party the terminal railway charges and fertiliser rates. I say the malign and sinister influence of the Country party is very great and is likely apparently to be greater. Those are three of the explanations that have been given of the financial chaos of this country, and the reason I cannot give that complete confidence to the present Government is, that although I have followed their actions closely—I have been away for a couple of weeks in the East on a political mission about which I will tell hon. members—I can find no reference whatever to what I consider to be the reason for this financial chaos in Western Australia. I do not wish to be carried away and not be guarded and careful in my language, and I have taken the precaution, which I do not always do, of writing down, and I put it thus, that it is the dual system of the Government—Federal and State—that is primarily responsible for the chaos in this country, and until a safe system is established the chaos will increase. Now I say the double income tax and the double land tax, the protective tariff which does not protect and throws the heaviest burden on the poorest section of the community, this is making Western Australia a very expensive country to live in; but it is a great deal more expensive to die in, and if you look up those probate duties it is proposed to put in force, I think you will agree with me that we can possibly manage to live here at an expense, but still we may be able

to stand it, but as far as dying here it will rapidly become impossible. That is my impression about the financial position of this country. I want to point out what the burden at the present moment is. Whatever the present moment brings with it in financial taxation it is only the beginning of what it is going to be. We hardly feel yet the Federal taxation which is going to be brought about by this war, and as far as the State taxation is concerned, of course, we must wait until we see the financial proposals of the Government. But just as I held up to scorn those declarations that the extinction of dingoes was an intelligent political programme, so I regard these proposals of a tax on the cinematograph and race meetings are going to bring order out of the chaos which the Premier himself, who is also the Treasurer, tells us the finances are in. Not one reference whatever have I seen—and I wish to emphasise the point as much as I can—to the Federal situation, and I say you cannot begin to understand and begin to deal with the financial position of Western Australia unless you have a complete grasp and appreciation of what the Federal compact and Federal taxation is and what it is going to be in the future, and that is why I say, to my regret, that I am unable to give my complete confidence to the present Government, which otherwise I would have wished to have given. The day when Western Australia—it is an old story but right up to date—it is a serial, and we have not got to the last chapter—the day Western Australia entered the Federal compact, I give you my opinion, and it has been proved by the last fifteen years—the people of this country were warned when they went into it—the day Western Australia went into the Federal compact, she was doomed. I am dealing for the moment with the financial aspect of the question. I say that the special concessions given to Western Australia—I have got them down here—I refer to the special concessions given to Western Australia plus the free expenditure of loan money undertaken by all the Governments in this State—certainly since 1901, when we went into the compact, plus the abnormal prosperity in the Eastern States since 1903, causing extra money to come over here—all these factors assisted to put off the day of disaster. But when we

got the war and the drought and we got the Labour Government in office and the improper extravagance, I say that simply hastened on the evil day. You can call it unification if you like; you can call it simplification, if you like, but when I came back from my mission in the Eastern States, where I looked into the matter and brought my knowledge up to date—I spent a week in Melbourne and a couple of days in Adelaide trying to get in close touch with some of the leaders of the political parties and the newspapers—and I can only thank them for their personal kindness to me and the opportunity they gave me of explaining my views, and the opportunity I had of listening to their criticisms of my views. Although it has taken some time to crystallise my views, I have come back in favour of unification. I do say you cannot go on in this country under the conditions you are working at the present time. I do not blame the Government, they are so wrapped up in local administration, and it takes some little time to get to the other side of the island continent, to get there and study the question from the Federal point of view. I warn the Government again and the leader of the House, if he thinks fit to convey my opinion to his colleagues, that they cannot begin to deal with the finances of Western Australia until they have tackled this Federal problem.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: The hon. member was in favour of unification before he went over to the Eastern States.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: That is a very interesting observation. I am unable to deal with it as I should like. I was not a unificationist before I went over to the East. My views had not crystallised as much as they have done since my visit. I freely admit that I have been working for many years on this problem of the Government of Australia, and I have told those people who were willing to listen to an expression of opinion, I have told them from time to time how I think the problem will work out. I asked the assistance of hon. members, and the general public, in the scheme which I have placed before them with some hesitation, to show me if there is any inaccuracy in the work I was doing. I was not a unificationist before I went over,

for I wished to keep an open mind until I had an opportunity of consulting the leaders in the other States. I would like to continue that line of argument, but I am not going to, as I wish to compress my remarks within reasonable limits, but do not let the hon. member imagine that I am not ready to reply in the fullest possible manner to any objection that may be raised to the scheme I propose. I have not got a cut and dried scheme. I am not elaborating any scheme, I am simply endeavouring to assist hon. members and my constituents to understand the position of affairs, so far as I can. I cannot give the Government that complete confidence which I would have liked to have given, because they are neglecting, after having been warned, with their eyes open, one of the most important factors in the problem which they are seeking to solve. I remember the leader of the House twitting me with what I think he called my "constitutional inability to take responsibility." It was something like that—constitutional inability to undertake responsibility. Well, I think it is a pretty big responsibility upon one of the representatives of the Metropolitan-Suburban province to take upon himself in a public place and company to announce himself in favour of unification. I think it is a very grave responsibility, and I fully appreciate the responsibility I am taking on my shoulders. The leader of the House was pointing out my constitutional desire to throw responsibility on someone else. I take the full responsibility on my own shoulders at the present juncture, and I ask no one else to be responsible for what I have said up to the present moment. Later on, of course, this question will assume larger proportions.

Member: You will make good to-night.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I want to make good to-night. I want to ask the hon. leader of the House, and every member to mark the irony of it. Politics make us acquainted with strange bedfellows. This "constitutional inability to take responsibility," what do we find to-day? The Government appointing a Royal Commission on agriculture. Now, I have been interested for 20 years; no, let me be accurate, 19½ years—in agriculture in this country. I know something about the land

of Western Australia, and to tell me at this time that we want an Agricultural Commission to deal with Western Australian agriculture seems to me to be perfectly grotesque. You want a lot of cash, that is what you want. With regard to the personnel of this Agricultural Commission, I do not care who they are, their work will not be worth anything so far as any benefit to the country is concerned. We do not want a Commission on Agriculture; we want cash. What we want is not to stimulate the people to grow things at a loss. This is the hon. member who twitted me with not taking responsibility. There is to be a conference on mining. My first days in Western Australia were spent as a dryblower, and it seems to me that, if things go as they are going, I shall end my days as a dryblower in Western Australia. We do not want any conference whatever on mining. All that is required is to find the gold. A conference on mining is likely to be about as valuable as a commission on agriculture. Then there is to be a commission on the Esperance railway. I was opposed to the Esperance railway, and the leader of the House was opposed to it also, and he and I were entirely right in our attitude. There are hon. members who ought to blush for having voted for the Esperance railway and then got up and criticised some small paltry fish-shop as financial extravagance likely to bring ruin on the country. At the moment when we were in the middle of this horrible war, when the country was trembling with anticipations of disaster, old and experienced Parliamentary hands quibbled over fish-shops and voted for Esperance railways. But I want to speak of the commission. What do we require a commission on the Esperance railway for? The Government say they have not any money. Everybody knows that. Let the Government be poor and honest, but to have a commission on the Esperance railway is much more ridiculous than to have a Commission on agriculture or on mining. Talk about a reproductive public work! I am never weary of repeating what I heard in the New Zealand Parliament as a definition of a "reproductive public work." "A reproductive public work," said a New Zealand member, "is a work one has a majority for." If, after Par-

liament has passed a Bill for a railway, the Government think they can stop it by appointing a royal commission, it is a bad look-out for constitutional Government. If both Houses of Parliament have passed a Bill, the Government have nothing to do but to carry out the orders of Parliament. They are to have this commission apparently, not only because they are poor, but because they are politically dishonest as well. Then there is to be a railway advisory board. Why? Of what use can a railway advisory board be at this juncture? And there is to be a commission appointed to deal with the redistribution of seats. Why a commission? The only thing to be decided is the question of the principles upon which that redistribution shall be based, and that is a question of policy. Once the principles of the redistribution have been decided upon, the head of the Electoral Department could sit down and plan the thing and it could be passed almost unread. I offer the most uncompromising hostility to any proposal which is going to take a lot of pocket boroughs from the goldfields and give a lot of pocket boroughs to the particular part of the country whence the Government come. As against my colleague and myself, representing 16,000 voters all around the metropolitan area, those gentlemen who are fortunate enough to come from the East Province have four votes for every vote which we have.

The Colonial Secretary: You are entirely wrong. There are over 6,000 electors in the East Province.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It is very difficult to keep one's information up to date.

The Colonial Secretary: That is no reason for stating inaccuracies.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am speaking from the latest figures I have in my book. Furthermore, if it comes to a question of 6,000 in the East Province, I have not seen the latest figures for our province. However, I do not wish to quibble. As president of the Proportional Representation Society, I recently introduced to the late Attorney General a deputation, the most representative that ever went to a Minister. When Mr. Cornell and Mr. Maughan are brought to agree on a question of representation it is a pretty powerful argument in favour of

it. We had the employers, the employees, the Liberal leagues, the Labour leagues, and the women, and we asked the Attorney General to give us proportional representation.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What did he say?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It does not matter what he said. We knew that it was for the Government of the day to decide when this redistribution of seats comes up. To have a commission on the redistribution of seats is as absurd as having these commissions on agriculture and mining. It will be nothing but a waste of time and money. I quite admit the difficulties of deciding what the principles of the redistribution are to be. Personally I am in favour of proportional representation if it is desired to have minorities represented. I wish to make a few comments on what I consider the most interesting speech we have had in the course of this debate, namely that from Mr. Miles. Of course, he has not been here long enough to be sophisticated by the political miasma of Parliament and party, and therefore there was a freshness about him which to me was quite delightful, and not only delightful but illuminative and instructive. The north of this State and of Australia is probably the most important purely Australian subject that can be dealt with, and therefore to one who can come down here and speak with first-hand knowledge of the conditions of the North, I shall always give my congratulations and my thanks. Certainly the hon. member, with his comments, supplied a most important contribution to the debate. He told us about the backbone of the country. I have been collecting the backbones of this country for some years. Whenever I hear that an industry is the backbone of the country I add it to my list as a kind of political zoological curiosity. Here we find as the latest that the pioneer of the North is the backbone of the country. We have had the coal miner as the backbone of the country this afternoon from another hon. member. Of course the farmer and the struggling settler have for long been the backbone of the country. I have said that myself. Now we have the northern backbone of the country. Of course, there are very odd things in this place, zoologically speaking, but, after all,

what should be the backbone of this or any other country? Surely it should be the Government. I am afraid, however, that some form of spinal disease is very far advanced in this country; for there seems to have been very little backbone in any Western Australian Government I have lived under during the last 20 years. I hope my friend will not take my remarks amiss. I quite appreciate what he has said. I am enormously impressed—and looking at the position of foreign affairs one cannot but be impressed—with the importance of the North and North-West of this country. Do not let those brave pioneers up there imagine that the whole responsibility is on them. Let them remember that there are some people down here in the South who appreciate to the full the work those people up there are doing, and who realise that the North of this country is the Achilles' heel of Australia. It is the most tender and most vital point, and when we are going to deal with foreign affairs, as we will have to do in the near future, the Northern Territory of this country will be found to be the most anxious chapter in the history of the Commonwealth. Therefore, I welcome the hon. member, and I hope he will give us the full benefit of his experience. I regret very much that I myself, up to the present, have never been able to get farther north than Roebourne. At all events, even getting up to Roebourne enables one to realise in part what that northern country is, and the endurance and pluck that have been shown in opening it up. What struck me in the hon. member's speech was this question of centralisation. We know that the criticism against unification is that it means centralisation. When one gets up to Derby or Wyndham, or even to Roebourne and Broome, for all practical purposes, one is as far from Perth as from Melbourne, Canberra, or any other part of Australia. One is separated from the rest of Australia by days, almost by weeks. Therefore I ask the hon. member to consider whether Western Australia cannot be dealt with on the lines of unification, whether he would have this enormous territory broken up and in the hands of large councils, the only stipulation being that the sovereign rights that Western Australia exercises should not be exercised by those councils which I would

like to see in this country. He talks about 20 millions of sheep, and it sounds like a carefully calculated statement. Does the hon. member realise what 20 millions of sheep mean to the country he represents, and to Western Australia with the wool market as it is at present and with the appliances we have? Rightly has Australia been called the land of the golden fleece. If we brought those numbers down to two millions it would be a magnificent addition to Western Australia. I will not say much about State socialism because it makes me tired. This is a non-party House, and I was not quite sure, having been absent in the country, which party the hon. member represented, or if he had a programme. We know what the Country party are doing. We do not ask them what their opinions are. We go outside and we see them written down. To talk about State insurance is really very puzzling to me. With some justice did Mr. Dodd twit Mr. Hamersley sitting on the right of the leader of the House and chaff and criticise him by turning up *Hansard*, and finding that he was in favour of State ships to take wheat to the London markets. I hope the hon. member will not shock the feelings of any party to which he may belong by suggesting State insurance. State steamers, of course, we had to pass because I understand his colleague is a strong supporter of them. I am not going to labour that question because it pains me to listen to hon. members' tirade against State enterprises, such as fish-shops and brickworks, when the whole country is a State enterprise. By the way, I would like to mention that bricks have gone up in price. I got a notice that they had been increased by 2s. a thousand.

Hon. J. Cullen: State bricks?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: No, private bricks. It makes one think when bricks have gone up by 2s. a thousand; it is an important matter. The Country party are saturated with State socialism. We know who the Labour party are, but here is a member of the grand old Liberal party advocating State insurance and State steamers.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: I represent all parties.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I think the hon. member will have to give that up. Having

some regard to the future political welfare of the hon. member, I suggest, if I may not implore him, to give up that idea and at once. I would like to say something on the financial position, but I must draw my remarks to a close. I would like the leader of the House to let me ask the Government where do they imagine they are going to get money from and how they are going to get it? There is loan money and there is revenue account. So far as loan money is concerned, where are we going to get it? We can only get it from the Federal Government. We can buy Federal bonds in London, issued at $5\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., at £99 15s. by the time they get to Western Australia. Is that not 6 per cent. for the money? I deeply regret that I cannot give the Government that complete confidence I would like to give them. I have moved for a return in regard to the Federal railway. What could be a more impossible position than to bring the broad gauge railway up to Kalgoorlie and then have to change to the narrow gauge down to the coast? The agreement which was entered into with the Federal Government to construct the broad gauge railway from Kalgoorlie to the coast has been broken, I do not say by this Government, but I say by the State. The Federal Government were informed that the State could not complete the wide gauge railway to the coast, and do hon. members think that the Federal Government are going to stand tomfoolery of that kind?

The Colonial Secretary: The other States are in the same position.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: They are not.

The Colonial Secretary: What is South Australia doing in regard to the break of gauge?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am speaking as far as the railway is concerned. I am well aware, and everyone else is aware, that the question of Australian railways and the break of gauge in the Eastern States is a most puzzling one. That is admitted, but the difference is that in this particular case we pledged our word to construct the broad gauge line to the coast, and I have asked for the papers to find out whether the Federal Government have asked us to do anything. Is it likely

that they are going to stop at Kalgoorlie and allow the change to the narrow gauge?

The Colonial Secretary: What is the difference between Kalgoorlie and Port Augusta?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am speaking of the subjects I know and understand. I know very little except in a general way on the question over East, so far as the break of gauge is concerned, and the longer we delay it here the more difficult will it become. If we build the railway to the terminus, Western Australia will have to pay 15 and 20 per cent. on every rail she brings into the country. I moved for a return and got it from the Railway Department, showing that since Federation started £300,000 was paid by the Railway Department of Western Australia to the Federal Government as customs duty on rails and other things brought in. Do hon. members mean to tell me that the country can stand this tomfoolery that is going on, of the country constructing a national railway with the additional 15 or 20 per cent. ad valorem duty on rails, to complete the line from Kalgoorlie to the coast? Until the referendum on the question of conscription is out of the way we shall be well advised to drop, as far as possible, all these other matters, and no one will be more willing to do so than myself. If I have never taken responsibilities on my shoulders before in the political arena, I have taken them on my shoulders to-night by telling the House, and through the House my constituents, and any one else who likes to listen to me, that, as far as I can see and work out the problem I am in favour of unification, and until we scrap the Federal machine which works so badly, until we make a change, we shall never get that prosperity in Western Australia which we all so much desire to see.

On motion by Hon. H. Millington debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.30 p.m.