

selves in an exceedingly difficult position. As to price fixing, I am not going to address myself to that subject now, because I understand that a Bill for this purpose is coming before the House. With respect to the finances we shall also have an opportunity of saying a few words later. However, to my mind, and I cannot help impressing it once more upon members of this House, the great thing is to find a solution of the labour and industrial difficulty. If only we can do that, then our State will go ahead. If we cannot do it, Western Australia must go back. Our taxation is bound to be extremely severe. We have to find money not only to meet the cost of administration, but also money for loans to help our soldiers. Money is needed in all directions; and, if there is no production, where is the money to come from? Indeed, if there is no production, where is the food to come from that is required to maintain our population? I have pleasure in supporting the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson debate adjourned.

*House adjourned 5.30 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 5th August, 1919.*

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

### QUESTION—FIREWOOD WORKERS' DISPUTE—RELIEF.

Mr. GREEN (without notice) asked the Premier: Has his attention been called to a report in to-day's "West Australian" to the

effect that he has not sent instructions to the officer who is charged with the distribution of relief to the unemployed on the Eastern Goldfields, and have the instructions been sent since the report was published?

The PREMIER replied: Relief is being distributed. The report in question refers to some conditions relative to the matter, and those conditions have been mailed to the fields to-day.

### QUESTION—BASE METALS INDUSTRY.

Mr. MALEY (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Will he make a statement to the House regarding the position of the base metal industry arising out of the recent conference attended by him in Melbourne? 2, Are not the Government of opinion that the embargo placed by the Federal Authorities on the export of ore or concentrates is strangling the industry in Western Australia, by reason of the absence of treatment facilities here? 3, What steps do the Government propose to take to urge the removal of the embargo?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: I regret that I am unable at this stage to state exactly what occurred at the conference in question, the matter being confidential pending representations being made by the various State Governments. I am, however, in a position to say that the deliberations of the conference disclosed the fact that the entire copper mining industry of Australia was practically closed down owing to the sudden collapse of the market upon the declaration of peace. In connection with other base metals the problem, so far as Western Australia is concerned, is evidently one of finding efficient means of treatment locally. At present we have to send most of our metals to the Eastern States for treatment, which means that we have to pay the freight from Western Australian ports very frequently after rehandling here, to New South Wales for refinement, and then we have to pay the ordinary freight charges from the port of Sydney to the markets of the world. The problem is a pretty big one, but I want to assure the producers of base metals in this State that we are going to try to solve it as quickly as we can. I have obtained some information from the Eastern States regarding the matter, and I learn that the establishment of local works for treatment will require a fair amount of capital and careful handling, otherwise there will be mistakes. However, that is the only solution of the problem that I can see for the base metal producers of Western Australia. I assure the hon. member that the matter is receiving the careful attention of the Government.

Mr. Maley: What about the embargo?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: As regards the restriction imposed upon base metals produced in Western Australia, it has been decided as a matter of national policy that these metals shall be refined in Aus-

tralia. Undoubtedly that constitutes a serious handicap to the Western Australian producer.

Mr. Maley: It means a monopoly to the Eastern States.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not quite that. There are reasons for that restriction which I consider good and sufficient. However, the whole point is that the Commonwealth Government should make some compensation to the producers who are compelled to pay double freight and double handling charges in order to comply with the National policy. Those remote producers should not be called upon to bear the extra cost themselves. I have been assured that the matter will be considered. As regards the removal of the restriction, I am unable to make any statement.

#### QUESTIONS (2)—AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

Report as to site.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Has the report of the committee appointed to inquire into the matter of a site for an agricultural college been handed in yet? 2, If so, will he inform the House what they have decided? 3, Has consideration been given to the findings of the Royal Commission on Agricultural Industries, and will he indicate if the Government intend to follow out the Commission's recommendations?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, No. 2, See 1. 3, The attention of the Committee will be drawn to the report of the Royal Commission on Agricultural Industries.

Limitation of inquiries.

Mr. PICKERING (for Mr. Johnston) asked the Premier: 1, Is a committee inquiring into the selection of a site for an agricultural college? 2, Is it true that the committee is confining its inquiries and inspections to sites in the East Province, within 20 miles of Spencer's Brook? 3, Why are the Great Southern and Midland districts excluded from consideration by this twenty-mile limitation? 4, Is it proposed to purchase a site for an agricultural college by private contract, or will Parliament be consulted in the matter before the State is committed to a purchase?

The PREMIER replied: 1, A committee has been appointed to advise on measures for the establishment of a State college of agriculture. 2, The committee is not in any way restricted by the Government in the selection of a suitable site. 3, Answered by No. 2. 4, The whole matter will be considered by the Government when the report of the committee has been furnished.

#### QUESTIONS (2)—WIRE AND NETTING.

War salvage.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Is he aware that returned men state enormous quantities of barbed wire,

wire and netting are stacked behind what were the fighting fronts in Europe, as well as at stations and wharves? 2, Have inquiries been made as to whether this would be suitable for agricultural fencing purposes at a reasonable price? 3, If it is, will steps be taken to endeavour to secure some of it, so badly needed in this country?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, It is understood that most of the material referred to is in poor condition. 2 and 3, The Agent General was cabled in March last, asking what prospect there was of securing galvanised fencing wire and wire netting. His reply indicated that prices were too high for economical use.

Netting for settlers.

Mr. PICKERING (for Mr. Johnston) asked the Premier: 1, What steps have been taken by the Government to supply rabbit-proof netting to settlers under the provisions of "The Vermin Act, 1918"? 2, When will such netting be so available?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Inquiries have been made in the Eastern States and in London in the matter of obtaining supplies of rabbit-proof netting. 2, In view of the replies received, it is not considered to be in the best interests of the farmer to purchase at the present prices.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY FACILITIES, EMU HILL.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Have the Government any prospect of getting steel rails from Newcastle or from Britain in the near future? 2, Is he aware that the settlers of the Emu Hill district are suffering a heavy handicap by having to pay extra freight over approximately 100 miles on produce and goods to and from Perth? 3, Are steps likely to be taken to remove this disability? 4, Will the Government consider the possibility of introducing a flat rate for those affected until they can be linked up with either Bruce Rock or Merredin?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, It will be some considerable time before rails can be expected from England or Newcastle. A contract was let to the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, Newcastle, in April, 1916, for 60 miles of 45lb. rails, and up to date about 29 miles have been delivered. 2, Yes. 3, The matter is under consideration. 4, In view of the general financial position, the fact that the present rates are very low, and other places are also affected, no reduction can be contemplated.

#### QUESTION—QUARANTINE, FREMANTLE.

Mr. WILLCOCK (for Mr. Roche) asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Was a report received at the Fremantle Police Station to the effect that on the 8th June several men

belonging to the crew of the plague-infected steamship "Cooee" were put ashore on the Victoria Quay, where they mingled freely with the citizens of this State? 2, If so, was any action taken against the person or persons responsible for so serious a breach of the quarantine laws? 3, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. About 10 p.m., on the 7th June, the s.s. "Cooee" broke away from her moorings at the No. 2 Buoy, and the police telephoned the signal station and asked the officer on duty to advise the Harbour Trust, after which the matter was attended to by the Chief Harbour Master. The following day the shore lines carried away, and a boat was lowered from the "Cooee" and fresh lines taken ashore by members of the crew, who made the lines fast to the Victoria Quay and returned immediately to the ship. This action was necessary for the safety of the vessel. 2, The ship was under Federal quarantine control and a quarantine officer was on board. 3, The matter is one for the Federal authorities.

#### QUESTION—WOMEN'S LEGAL DISABILITIES.

Mr. WILLCOCK (for Mr. Roche) asked the Premier: 1, In view of the announcement of the passing of the old order of things, and in view of the sacrifice and suffering of womanhood during the past five years, is it the intention of the Government during the present session of Parliament to introduce legislation for the removal of the unjust disabilities under which women citizens live, especially in the direction of amending the Constitution Act and other Acts to provide for women becoming eligible to contest Parliamentary and municipal elections, etc., and the amending of "The Marriage Act, 1894" to give to the mother a legal status over her child, equal with that possessed now by the father only? 2, If not, will the Government assist the passage of a private Bill designed to provide these reasonable and just reforms?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The several matters involved in this question will receive consideration. 2, Answered by No. 1.

#### QUESTION—MINING DEVELOPMENT VOTE.

Mr. MUNSIE asked the Minister for Mines: 1, How much of the £50,000 placed on the Estimates last session for the development of the mining industry was expended on the 30th June, 1919? 2, What amount of the total was spent on the purchase of machinery?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, £8,352, and, in addition, the loans approved and recommended total £24,740; but this does not include all our commitments. 2, £2,090.

#### QUESTION—STATE STEAMER "KANGAROO."

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, When will the "Kangaroo" return to this State? 2, Will the "Kangaroo" be insulated as was intended when the State purchased it, for the purpose of carrying chilled meat from Wyndham to Fremantle, in order to bring about a reduction in the price of meat?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, The date is uncertain, and will depend upon a decision as to whether it is to be insulated or not. 2, The matter is now under consideration, and the hon. member will be advised as soon as a decision is reached.

#### QUESTION—FAIR RENTAL LEGISLATION.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to introduced legislation this session for the purpose of fixing fair rents for dwelling-houses, etc.?

The PREMIER replied: The matter is receiving consideration.

#### QUESTION—COAL BUNKERS ON FIRE.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Premier: 1, Was Collie or Newcastle coal used for bunkering the s.s. "War Climax," which arrived at the port of Fremantle on fire on the 22nd June? 2, If neither, what coal was used? 3, What coal was used for bunkering on the s.s. "War Admiral," which arrived at Fremantle on fire on the 30th July?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, The ship was consigned to her agents, and it is not known what coal was bunkered, although it is understood that it was not Collie coal.

#### QUESTION—FLOUR SHIPMENT, SHORTAGE.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Premier: 1, Is it correct, as reported, that on clearing up the shed at the North Wharf, Fremantle, after loading the s.s. "War Duck" on the 19th of February last with flour, it was discovered that there were approximately 3,000 bags of flour less than supposed to have been put into the shed, and on which payments were made to the millers? 2, If so, who paid the amount required to make up for the shortage?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No; the report is not correct. The position is that the full quantity of flour supplied by the millers and paid for by the Wheat Scheme, approximating 527,400 bags, was actually received and correctly tallied into the grain shed at North Fremantle; but the total ship's tallies ex shed showed a deficiency of approximately 2,300 bags in the clean-up. Several Imperial boats loading from the shed have had sub-

stantial excess out-turns and allowances for the quantity involved have already been applied for to the Royal Commission on Wheat Supplies. 2, Answered by No. 1.

#### QUESTION—FREEZING WORKS AND CHILLED MEAT.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Premier: When will it be possible for the Government to bring to Fremantle the first cargo of chilled meat from the Wyndham works to enable consumers to obtain meat at considerably reduced cost than obtainable at present?

The PREMIER replied: A cargo of frozen meat will be available at Wyndham in about four weeks' time. It is impossible to say when a ship will be available to freight the meat.

#### QUESTION—FIREWOOD COMPANIES, PURCHASE OF GOVERNMENT RAILS.

Mr. GREEN (for Mr. Lambert) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has either of the woodline companies carrying on operations at Lakeside or Kurrawang at any time purchased rails and fastenings from the Government? 2, If so, what was the price paid, and what were the terms and conditions of purchase?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Prices ranged as follows:—Rails, £4 12s. to £7 10s. per ton; fishplates, £4 12s. to £10 per ton; fishbolts, £4 12s. to £7 10s. per ton; dogspikes, £4 12s. to £15 7s. 6d. per ton. Terms and conditions were straight-out purchases for cash, except a quantity supplied in 1900 to the W.A. Goldfields Firewood Company, which were paid for by the supply of water by the company to the department.

#### QUESTION—INCOME TAX REMISSIONS.

Mr. PICKERING (for Mr. Johnston) asked the Premier: 1, Does the State Taxation Department, in assessing incomes for taxation, make any remission to taxpayers for amounts bona fide paid to medical practitioners and for hospital fees for dependants? 2, If not, will the Government grant exemption from taxation for such charges in future?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, The Act in its present form does not permit of any such exemption.

#### QUESTION—DAIRY FARMING AND CHILD LABOUR.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the paragraph appearing in the "Sunday Times" of the 27th inst., stating that conditions of child slavery exist at the dairy farms on the Stirling estate in the Capel district? 2, In view of the seriousness of the charge, will he take immediate

steps to have the matter thoroughly investigated, with a view to its disproof or verification? 3, In the event of its disproof, will he take the earliest opportunity to have due prominence given thereto, and, in the event of its verification, will he take immediate steps to bring about better conditions?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, No. 2, If specific charges are made the Government will make inquiries.

#### QUESTION—FOOD SUPPLIES, PHILLIPS RIVER.

Mr. HUDSON asked the Premier: Whether any, and, if so, what arrangements have been made to provide foodstuffs for the residents of the Phillips River district, whose means of supply have been suspended in consequence of the seamen's strike?

The PREMIER replied: Arrangements were made with the owners of the "Silver Star" to ship 40 tons of commodities from Albany to Ravensthorpe, and to have these distributed by the manager of the State smelters at the increased cost involved. The local business people declined the offer because of the alleged excessive cost. Many of the lines required by the people of Ravensthorpe are not obtainable in the State.

#### QUESTION—SUPERPHOSPHATE, COST.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Is he aware that a report in an Eastern States newspaper states that the Victorian Farmers' Union manufactured superphosphate last season at £3 7s. per ton? 2, Can he explain why superphosphate costs £6 here, and £3 7s. in Victoria, to place on the respective markets?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, According to the official list of registered fertilisers, published by the Department of Agriculture, Victoria, there is no registered brand of superphosphate being sold at £3 7s. a ton. There is, however, a Victorian phosphate sold at £3 8s. 6d. per ton, and this is evidently what is referred to; it is, however, quite different from a superphosphate. 2, Answered by No. 1.

#### SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

On motion by the Premier, ordered: That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m., if necessary; and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

On motion by the Premier, ordered: That on Tuesdays and Thursdays Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day.

## COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motion by the Premier, Sessional Committees were appointed as follows:—

Library Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Green, and Mr. Smith.

Standing Orders Committee—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, the Attorney General, Mr. Robinson, and Mr. Walker.

House Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Mullany, Mr. Nairn, and Mr. O'Loghlen.

Printing Committee—Mr. Speaker, Mr. O'Loghlen, and Mr. Smith.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Amendment—No-Confidence.

Debate resumed from the 31st July.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder): It is matter for rejoicing that for the first time in five years Parliament has re-assembled free from the terrible nightmare of war. Whether the terms of the peace settlement will bring in a long era of peace or whether, as many believe, they contain elements of future world-trouble, we are all grateful that the tragedy has at last passed. Hon. members will feel particularly gratified in that the restraint necessarily imposed by war conditions has at last been lifted, and we may look forward to a session in which members will to a greater degree perhaps than has been advisable during the past five years, exercise freedom and independence. Looking back over the war period, I think I may claim that the actions of the Labour party during that time have been such as leave no occasion for self-reproach. It will be remembered that on the outbreak of war we had in this State a Labour Government, who immediately announced that they would avoid the bringing in of legislation of a controversial party character. I think records show that for the two succeeding years during which we remained in office that promise was carried out. However, I do not know that I should be justified in saying that all other parties in this State forsook their party tactics during that period; because I recall the fact that both in the House and in the country a campaign was carried on which had for its object the defeat of the Labour Government, a campaign which eventually succeeded in removing the Labour Government from office. On the formation of the so-called National Government, the Labour party were invited to join the new movement. Whilst declining to accept the invitation, we nevertheless intimated to the head of that Government and to the country that we would co-operate and assist the Government in all matters of truly national concern. That promise has been faithfully observed. During the past two years hon. members on this side of the House have not indulged in anything that might reasonably be described as factious opposition. On all occasions we have assisted the Govern-

ment in the discharge of their duties, consistent, of course, with adherence to the principles for which we stand.

The Premier: You should stick to a good custom.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I propose to stick to a good custom, bearing in mind my observations at the outset. That brings me down to the close of last session. When the National Government last met they had, so far as we knew, the entire confidence of members sitting opposite.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: As shown by their vote.

Hon. P. COLLIER: One, however, is at a loss to know where to begin just now. I am so amazed when I look around that side of the House, I scarcely know what has happened during the recess. It is unfortunate that the Premier has not taken the country into his confidence by delivering a pre-session speech. Had he done so we would be in possession of more information with regard to the intentions of the Government than we now are. Having failed to take the country into his confidence in this respect, it would have been well if the Premier had made a statement to the House.

Mr. Mullany: Do you not read the "West Australian"?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not much enlightened with regard to the matter I am now dealing with.

The Minister for Works: What about the "Sunday Times" and the "Worker"?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Having failed to make a pre-session speech it would have been well if the Premier had on the opening day, or certainly to-day, taken the opportunity of making a statement to the House, at least informing us how it comes to pass that he occupies the position of head of the Government at the present time.

Mr. Underwood: It would take too long.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know that the Premier was altogether staggered at the size of the contract, but perhaps he would be staggered by the difficulties of making a satisfactory explanation.

Mr. Mullany: The "West Australian" will tell you all about that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The "West Australian" has told us a good deal during the past few months. It is necessary that we should have some explanation. I am supposed to speak to the Address-in-reply, and to indicate in some way the attitude of this party in regard to the Government. I really think it is necessary or would be advisable for the Premier first of all to explain the situation.

Mr. Underwood: He is a worker, not a talker.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Unfortunately the work of this House consists of talking. It would, therefore, be necessary for the Premier to tackle work of that description so that we might be enlightened as to what had happened during the recess.

Mr. Underwood: You will never get to the bottom of that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Failing the Premier, will the member for Moore (Sir Henry Le-froy) enlighten us?

The Premier: Why not the member for Pilbarra?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have no doubt the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Underwood) will avail himself of the opportunity afforded on the Address-in-reply to give some information upon the subject.

Mr. Underwood: Why pick me out?

Hon. P. COLLIER: When the session closed seven months ago the member for Moore was the head of a Government having the full confidence of members sitting on the other side of the House. We find that as Premier he no longer exists. Not only has the member for Moore vanished from the front benches, but in the interim there has also floated across the stage another Government, which has come and gone. We, therefore, have a new Premier to-day leading the party on the Ministerial side of the House. It is a complete puzzle to me, and a puzzle to the people of this country. We have heard a good deal lately in regard to constituted authority and constitutional practice, but I want to know how it comes about that Governments can be made and unmade behind the back of Parliament. How does it happen that a Government, which closes the session having the confidence of a majority of members of this Chamber, has been removed by some secret caucus party and another Government placed in its stead without any reference whatever to Parliament?

Hon. T. Walker: Or to the people.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Or to the people through their representatives in this House. Is that what the party opposite stands for in the matter of constituted authority or constitutional Government? Is it not a fact that the Government came into office for the specific purpose of restoring responsible Government? At all events that was the claim made on its behalf before the country. This is the manner in which, apparently, it has been done. Fortunately we know through the columns of the newspapers how the member for Moore was removed from his position and the member for Northam placed in his stead. We have of course read how, at a meeting somewhere after midnight in a dark atmosphere, behind locked doors, and after a struggle lasting for several hours, the hon. member was eventually assassinated.

Mr. Green: At a spiritualistic seance.

Hon. P. COLLIER: On reading the account of that meeting I was reminded of my school days when we used to play a game of oranges and lemons, in which two boys faced each other clasping hands, while the supporters of either ranged themselves behind, and a sort of tug of war took place around the school ground. I can picture the member for Moore and the present Minister for Education in that position with the supporters of either hanging on and swaying around the Premier's office during these midnight hours when the member for Moore met with his

downfall. We do know that eventually, as a result of 15 members of this House being dissatisfied with the leadership of the then Premier, he was compelled to retire. Fifteen members of the Ministerial side of the House said they were in a position to remove the hon. member from office, notwithstanding the fact that only a few months previously he had the confidence of the majority of members of this Chamber. Following that, they elected in his place as Premier a gentleman who has never been a member of this Chamber, a gentleman who has never secured the endorsement of the electors of any constituency connected with this House. His reign was very brief indeed, lasting only for something like four weeks. How does it come to pass, however, that a gentleman who is not a member of this House, the House that makes and unmakes Governments, the only House that can remove a Government, is able to form a Government and carry on, and administer the affairs of the State for a period without reference to the people's representatives in this Chamber?

Mr. Underwood: It was only for a little period.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It might have been for a long one.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but it was apparently a mere accident that his term was so brief. We are informed also that whilst the party sitting opposite stipulated that the present Minister for Education should obtain a seat in this Chamber, and that this was one of the conditions under which he was appointed to the leadership, the members of it sat tight and refused to create a vacancy for him.

Mr. Pickering: Providence did that for him.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Long before Providence came into the matter hon. members determined that he should at any rate not have any of the seats held at present by them. The party he led had laid it down as a condition that he should obtain a seat in the House, but refused to create the necessary vacancy to enable him to carry out the stipulation they had imposed upon him. That is the way in which the party opposite transacts its business.

Mr. Davies: They were subject to the men in control.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, subject to the control of an outside body. I have always thought that the Labour Party was the only party in the State controlled by outside bodies, but the events surrounding the elevation of the present Minister for Education to the Premiership, and his subsequent retirement, prove conclusively that there is a party in this State controlled to a greater degree and in a more cast iron manner by an outside irresponsible body than has ever been the case in connection with the Labour Party. At all events, circumstances occurred which forced the present Minister for Education to resign from the Premiership. I believe it was the unanimous request, or the wish, of members

sitting opposite that he should retire from the Premiership. All were convinced that his actions in connection with the trouble on the Fremantle wharf were such as to render it impossible for him to retain that position.

The Premier: That is not so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I believe it was so. So far as I can learn the majority of those who were responsible for his elevation to the Premiership had made up their minds that he should retire as a result of his handling of that dispute, and of course the inability of the members of the Country party to find a seat for the hon. gentleman came along at a very opportune moment. It enabled the then Premier to get out of an awkward situation and thus save being pushed out, for that was the intention of hon. members sitting on the cross benches. But if the hon. member who now leads the Government in another place, by virtue of his actions in connection with the Fremantle trouble was not fit to occupy the position of Premier of the State, then he ought not to occupy any position in the Government of the country. There is very little difference, after all, in being as he was then on top, and being second in command, as he is now. And those who found fault with Mr. Colebatch's attitude on that occasion, and expressed the view that he should be forced to retire from the Government, cannot consistently support his inclusion as second in command of the Government to-day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You know the difficulty they had in forming a Government.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, and some members in this House enjoyed the distinction of Cabinet rank for a period of 25 minutes. They were not even able to get their names placed on the official records, as they were not sworn in. But the main point is that we now have the member for Northam as leader of the party. What has happened during the recess to change the attitude of hon. members sitting opposite with regard to the position of the member for Northam as leader? Do we not know that a majority of the members on that side of the House have, in season and out of season, expressed their want of confidence in the present head of the Government as an administrator? What has the Country party to say? What explanation have they to make? Their leader has already spoken. He has practically moved a vote of confidence in the Government. All he had to say about the Government was that he was pleased that at last we had a gentleman at the head of the Government who was an optimist. We know, and everyone knows, that when the Farmers and Settlers' Association came into existence as a political party they had their political birth by virtue of their condemnation of the present Premier. Is it not a fact that from one end of the country to the other Country party members and their supporters outside went through the agricultural constituencies and denounced the present Premier's administration of the Lands Department?

Mr. Hardwick: They have since realised their mistake.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If they have done that, why not make a confession? The House is entitled to know whether those hon. members still retain their former opinion of the Premier or whether they have changed their view, or whether the Premier has changed and gone over to them. Do we not know that when the Premier took office in the Wilson Government in 1916 the members of the Country party were so hostile towards him that they stipulated he should not be given the portfolio of Minister for Lands or Agriculture. The late Mr. Wilson's hands were tied. He could give the hon. member any portfolio he liked, but not that of Lands or Agriculture.

The Premier: That is not so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It was so. It was published in the Press at the time.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): You are quite incorrect.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Will the hon. member deny it?

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): I will.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We may expect the cock to crow now.

Mr. Munsie: After the Premier's apology for the Honorary Minister we can expect anything from him.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, after the great sacrifice the Honorary Minister made we can expect him to go to the assistance of the Premier in this matter. It is, however, common knowledge—and I venture to say that members of the Country party will not deny it—that the present Premier was debarred from taking the portfolio of Lands or Agriculture in the Wilson Government in 1916.

Mr. Griffiths: Not Agriculture.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Well, the Lands Department. How else can the position be explained when we find that in the Wilson Government the hon. member was given the portfolio of Railways and Industries, except that the members of the Country party objected to him occupying the position of Minister for Lands? In any case hon. members will not deny that in this House for years past they have over and over again expressed their want of confidence in the administration of the present Premier. If I thought hon. members were going to deny that fact I would bring in a cart load of volumes of "Hansard" to prove what I am saying. One could start on the first shelf and go through all the volumes of "Hansard" and find denunciations and condemnations of the Premier during the period he was Minister for Lands in this State. Did not the high priest of the Country party tell the delegates at the farmers and settlers' conferences year after year that the present Premier was responsible for causing misery and hardships to hundreds, in fact thousands, of settlers in the agricultural districts because of what was described as the reckless manner in which he

placed those people there during the period he was Minister for Lands? Will the member for Sussex deny that assertion?

Mr. Pickering: I was not in the House at the time.

Member: In the eastern districts.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Perhaps there was no harm in the Premier ruining settlers in the eastern districts. Having ruined hundreds of settlers there he is now turning his attention to the south-west, and apparently hon. members on the cross benches opposite are willing that he should repeat in the south-west what they have stated he accomplished in the eastern districts.

Mr. Harrison: That was in the dry areas.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Was it only in the dry areas that he was dangerous? If the present Premier was able to pursue that policy which resulted in sending men to areas where there was not sufficient rainfall to ensure successful farming, is it not feasible to say that he will go to the other extreme and settle people now where there is too much water, and where again they will fail? The facts stand on record in a thousand places that the members of the Country party came into existence as a political party because of what they alleged—not what I state—was the foolish policy of the present Premier. They built up their strength in the agricultural districts, and they won seats from Liberals by virtue of the alleged shortcomings of the present Premier. There is no escape from that situation.

The Premier: They have taken your advice.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not asserting that the Premier's policy when he was Minister for Lands resulted in all these evil things I speak of; I am only repeating what members of the Farmers and Settlers' Association said at the time, and I want to know now how it is that a party which has for years expressed the views which I have outlined can to-day be found supporting a man who is now in a position of greater power, and where he can work greater havoc with regard to land settlement than he was able to do in the years to which they have referred. Is it because sops have been thrown to the Country party that they are now prepared to follow the Premier, whom they metaphorically kicked last year? Can it be possible that members of the Country party have been bought by the difference of between 5s. and 9s. per day? Is that at the bottom of the change of hon. members? When the Labour Government were in office and members of the Country party then gave a more or less friendly support to the policy of that Government with regard to land settlement, it was charged against them that they were selling themselves to the Labour Government. In fact, Mr. Colebatch, the present Minister for Education, questioned the attitude of the Country party members in that regard only a few months before the Labour Government went out of office. He said—

Did the Country party stand for increased taxation, which of the alternative

policies was the State to choose, the Labour policy of increased taxation or the Liberal policy of economy in administration? Mr. Gardiner said they would support whichever party gave them what they wanted.

Hon. J. Gardiner: That is what Mr. Colebatch said.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is what Mr. Colebatch said the hon. member said. Mr. Colebatch went on—

If that meant anything it meant that if a Government were prepared to make concessions to the farmers it might be permitted to continue in such financial maladministration as had characterised the history of the present Government. To throw high political principles to the winds for temporary class advantage was unworthy of a great party.

That was the view held by Mr. Colebatch in 1916. Are we to believe now that our friends on the cross benches, representing the Country party, are prepared to throw high political principles to the winds for concessions that they are receiving from the Premier? Is that what we have come to? If it is not, I shall be pleased to hear some explanation from hon. members opposite. In any case the situation is truly extraordinary when we find that in the short space of six months, three Governments have been brought into existence, behind the backs of the people, without reference to Parliament. Having regard to the manner in which one of those Governments was displaced and another created, I think the only way in which the tangle can be unravelled is by testing the position of the Government at the earliest opportunity. To that end, mainly in the interests of hon. members opposite, I propose to submit an amendment to the Address in which will enable members to explain their position to the House and to the country, to explain what has brought about their change of attitude towards the Premier. Passing away from the doings of the recess, which constitute the worst degradation of Parliamentary Government which this or any other State has ever experienced, we are reminded that when, last session, the present Premier moved a motion of no-confidence in the then head of the Government, only two members sitting on that side were prepared to support him. By their votes 24 members declared they had no confidence in the present Premier, but had confidence in the then Premier. So far as we know, the position was unaltered right up to the close of the session. Then, during recess, in caucus, behind locked doors, that position was reversed. It is such a reversal of form as calls for the strongest condemnation of those members responsible for it.

Mr. Maley: You always pick on us.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Only because the members of the Country party have been so pronounced in their opposition to the present Premier. Members of the old Liberal party have generally supported the Premier in his



land policy; they have not shown that opposition to the Premier which members of the Country party have manifested. Therefore it is incumbent upon the members of the Country party to explain to the House why they have changed their attitude. Coming to the Government's policy, we find that, after all, whilst premiers come and premiers go, the same old futile policy of drift is to be continued. The policy of the Government, as outlined in the Governor's Speech—could anything more futile be presented to Parliament?

The Premier: We have heard that before.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is true, nevertheless. Can the hon. member point out anything in this Speech that is worthy of two minutes' consideration?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is nothing in it at all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Take the legislative programme forecasted. Of the 14 Bills, all, save possibly the first mentioned, are of about tenth rate importance.

The Premier: We have enough legislation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Well, why not secure supplies and get back into recess again? Last session we were told that what the country needed was sound administration. Day in and day out Ministers complained that owing to their Parliamentary duties they were unable to get into their offices. Yet immediately Parliament closed, Ministers started fighting like Kilkenny cats, and they have been so fighting ever since, engaged in replacing each other in office. Nothing else has been done. There has been nothing but intrigue, wire-pulling and the making and re-making of Governments.

The Premier: You have no right to say that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If we are to judge of the work of the recess, then in the interests of the country we should keep the Government here all the year round. Having to present some degree of solidarity before Parliament, they might agree a little better. Immediately they are released from their Parliamentary labours they start fighting each other. Their first act in recess was to rush off to Melbourne. Half the portfoliod members of the Government went to Melbourne and remained there for weeks.

The Minister for Works: Quite unwillingly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Unwillingly they remained, but it was unnecessary that they should have gone in the first place. It was an absurd idea that it should require the Premier and the Treasurer and the Minister for Works to deal with questions that one alone could have dealt with.

The Minister for Works: It was at the special request of Mr. Watt.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Possibly so, but it was not incumbent on the Government to comply with that request. It is all very well for Eastern States' Ministers, who can reach Melbourne in a night, to go three or four strong to a conference and remain there for a day or two, but it is quite a different thing

for Ministers who have to travel all the way from this State. Could not one Minister have taken in his pocket all the information in regard to works required by the conference, instead of taking the Minister for Works along as well? It is absurd to say that one Minister could not have attended to all matters dealt with at that conference. To revert to the policy of the Government: "We have it here outlined in these forecasted Bills—tiddlywinking, unimportant little matters which do not affect the people of the country in any degree whatever. The first Bill, certainly, if it is conceived in the right spirit, and with a genuine desire to deal with the problems of the cost of living, will be of first-rate importance. But I have misgivings in regard to its fate.

Mr. Davies: It will have a chance in this House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but after all it will depend largely upon members of another place. We know that the one strong man of the Government, who will have the responsibility of endeavouring to secure the passage of the Bill in another place, was largely responsible for the defeat of a Price Fixing Bill in 1915.

Mr. Munsie: And he said he defeated it on principle.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is a matter of history. Members on that side come back today to the position we were in in 1915. By the very fact that they recognise the necessity for the Bill and propose to introduce it they admit that they have been neglectful of their duty in this regard during the past three years. Mr. Colebatch does not believe in the principle of price fixing, but believes rather in the law of supply and demand regulating prices. He has declared that any attempt to regulate the prices of commodities is bound to fail. Has he altered those views, or is he going to secure the passage of a Bill in another place contrary to the principles which he holds? I do not believe that much will come of it. Mr. Colebatch, when the Bill of 1915 was before the Council, induced a majority of the members of that House to throw out the Bill. The cost of living is a problem which this State is facing in common with other parts of the world. For four years of war the Government of this State have sat idly by and allowed people to remain at the mercy of unscrupulous profiteers.

The Premier: We have had the Federal price fixing.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Federal price fixing was a farce and was never seriously attempted in this State. The Price Fixing Commissioner appointed by the Federal Government was there merely for camouflage purposes. He never attempted seriously to deal with the question. But even though the Commonwealth Government had been dealing with the question in a haphazard manner, there was no reason why the Government of this State should not have supplemented the work of the Federal Government in that respect. The Government say they are anxious to reduce the cost of living. Yet at a time

when, in consequence of the difficulty of securing fat stock from the North-West, people are paying extortionate prices for their meat supplies, we have had Government ships idle in Fermantle harbour for weeks past.

Mr. Davies: Whose fault is that?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Clearly it is the fault of the Government, who are holding up two ships rather than pay a miserable increase of 1s. 2d. per day to the seamen. That concession, if granted by the Government, would release those ships to-morrow. Do the Government say that the increase is not justified, that 1s. 2d. per day is too much for the seamen? If so, it is a different attitude from that adopted during the war towards the men who man the merchant service. Then we were told from all quarters that the men of the merchant service were saving the Allies.

Mr. Pickering: Jellicoe said it the other day.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And thousands have said it on thousands of occasions. Those men, without hesitation, manned ship after ship, even after being torpedoed by the German submarines, and carried the commerce and food supplies of Great Britain and her Allies over all the seas of the world. When the war was over, these men said they should at least share, to some small extent, in the wealth created and built up for the ship-owners. But what attitude do these National Governments adopt? They say—"No; you cannot get it; we cannot afford it, or we are not willing to pay you an extra 1s. 2d. a day. Rather than concede your demands we shall tie up all the ships until you are starved into submission."

Mr. Davies: They are adopting a similar attitude to what was adopted by you as Minister for Railways.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No such thing, and the hon. member knows it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Take no notice of it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member lives and moves in a little circle of the railways at Midland Junction.

Mr. Davies: It is a very big one.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member might as well enjoy it; he will be there for only a little while. The Government are losing a thousand times more by having these ships idle than they would lose if they conceded what is being asked.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are paying the officers now for doing nothing.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Is it to be said that the owners of our merchant fleet, including the Government, cannot afford an increase of 1s. 2d. a day to our seamen?

Mr. Underwood: We stand by the Arbitration Court.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If that were the attitude of the Government, I could understand it.

Mr. Underwood: But the Government have no attitude.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so. If the Government said—"We believe in arbitration and are not prepared to depart from it,"

I could understand the position; but we know that on more than one occasion in recent months the Government have not stood by the policy of arbitration. If the Government could concede practically all the requests made by the tramway employees during their strike, without reference to the Arbitration Court, could they not do the same with regard to our seamen? As a matter of fact, the seamen have a better claim to be dealt with directly by the Government than had the tramway men. It was not possible for the seamen to approach the State Arbitration Court; they approached the Federal Arbitration Court in December last and failed to secure what they believed to be justice. They, therefore, have some grounds for declining to repeat their experience. Apparently the Government are anxious to stand in with the shipping combine and allow the ships to remain in port growing barnacles, rather than out earning revenue for the State and bringing down stock from the North-West to reduce the cost of living to the people of this State. I said the Government have no policy; not a scintilla of policy have they with regard to any of the important questions of the day. Take the question of finance. What is the Government's attitude towards the financial position of this State? So far as we can gather from the Speech, the finances of the State are in a satisfactory condition. The whole question is dismissed in four lines. After drawing attention to the revenue and expenditure for the year, and the deficit, the Speech goes on to say—

Now that peace has been restored it is confidently anticipated that the resumption of normal conditions in our great revenue-earning departments, combined with the general expansion of business consequent upon increased production, will lead to a gradual improvement in our financial position.

That is all. The matter is dismissed in that light fashion in four lines of the Speech. Do the Government not feel it incumbent upon them to put forward some policy to deal with the deplorable condition of our finances? Does the Premier think we can drift on in the present fashion, year after year, going to the bad at the rate of three-quarters of a million pounds, without finally reaching bankruptcy? Have the Government no ideas; have they no policy or no proposals to deal with the situation? The Premier talks about production, and about building railways here, there, and in other places. He talks in millions all round the country.

The Premier: You spent the millions.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No; your colleague spent it. He was Treasurer. I helped him to a certain extent, but he had control of the purse.

The Minister for Mines: All right, we spent it.

The Premier: It is still in the pockets of the people.

Mr. Munsie: No; you have taken it out since.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. P. COLLIER: Can this State continue in the manner in which it has been going during the last three years?

The Minister for Mines: Can we go on as we have been going for the last three months?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Can we go on as we have for July?

Mr. Jones: Cheer up! We shall have a revolution soon.

The Minister for Mines: You want one.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We have had a deficit of £1,050,000 in three years. It is useless to talk of development, or any other policy, because it depends upon the finances of the State. The Premier was not slow to criticise his predecessor in office because no attempt had been made to deal with the financial position, and yet he meets Parliament with four lines in the Governor's Speech to deal with a State drifting on to the rocks, drifting rapidly to bankruptcy!

Mr. Underwood: In his own words.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Used so often when he occupied a seat on this side of the House—

Mr. Underwood: And he sat just about where you are sitting.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And at a time when deficits were very small indeed compared with the deficits at the present time.

Mr. Underwood: He was as dismal as you are.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No; he used to talk about "Gone a million Jack." The present Minister for Mines must have crowded thoughts of the speeches he listened to from this side of the House with regard to his financial administration, drifting and carrying the State to ruin. The Minister for Mines was a financial genius compared with those who succeeded him.

The Minister for Mines: I will take your word for it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There are few people who will deny him that credit. Compared with those who have succeeded him he was a perfect Rothschild in finance. He did manage to carry on as Treasurer for five years with an accumulated deficit of £1,360,000, and in the last year of office of the Labour Government the affairs of this country were conducted with a shortage of £340,000.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And we left them goods enough to pay that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then succeeded the party to which the Premier now belongs with a deficit in 1917 of £697,000.

The Premier: After paying your debts.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Auditor General's report shows that the deficit was much smaller than appeared on paper after all the accounts had been adjusted. The deficit in 1918 was £705,000 and in the present year £652,000. For the month of July the shortage was £162,000, which would seem to indicate that the Premier did not pay all the accounts that ought to have been paid in June.

The Minister for Mines: You know that is not unusual for July.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know the July deficit has always been large, but this is a

record for all the Julys that have ever gone before.

The Premier: So is the interest bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier talks about having to pay £97,000 more in interest for last year, but he received an increase of £180,000 in direct taxation over the previous year. We are in the position now of having to borrow, apparently for all time, three-quarters of a million per annum to aid our revenue account. It would not be so bad if that money were being expended in developmental work, which might return interest and sinking fund in future.

The Premier: Half of it is invested in sinking fund.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is adding a burden to the interest and sinking fund from which we receive no return. What is the Premier going to do? Have the Government no financial policy?

The Premier: I will tell you later on.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We should have had some intimation as to the Government's proposals. The Premier apparently relies upon his policy of produce, produce, to eventually overtake the financial difficulties of the State. The Railway Department plays an important part in the finances of the State, and last year the railways went to the bad, compared with the previous year, to the amount of £70,000. Whilst there was an increased revenue of £50,000 there was an increased expenditure of £120,000.

The Premier: Fifty thousands pounds odd of that is due to the Arbitration Court.

The Minister for Mines: There is an additional expenditure this year of £31,000 for Collie coal.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is not spent yet.

The Minister for Mines: That is what we are up against already.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have instanced the railways because of the important part the system plays in the finances of the State. The party sitting on the opposite side of the House—I am not referring to the present Government—have shamefully neglected their duty towards the State in the management of the railways. In March of last year the Government decided not to re-engage the then Commissioner of Railways, Mr. Short, but to make a new appointment. After a lapse of 16 months we find that the railways are still in the charge of the acting Commissioner. It is a shocking state of affairs that public property costing millions of money should be permitted to drift along in the charge of an acting Commissioner for 16 months.

The Minister for Mines: We have been actuated too much by sentiment.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know to what the hon. member refers.

The Minister for Mines: I think you do. It is a difficult position to fill, especially when one tries to fill it from sentiment.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not believe that blame attaches to the present Government for this delay. No doubt the choice that has

to be made between the various applicants for the position must be carefully considered. Blame, however, must be attached from the fact that no definite action was taken to call for applications until something like 10 months had elapsed. As one who has had a little experience of the railways, I hope the Government will not allow sentiment to play too important a part in the selection of a Commissioner for Railways. I am of opinion that men in this State should receive preference in the filling of important positions, all things being equal, and also that men in Australia should obtain preference over others who may have applied from overseas. At the same time, I hold the view that sentiment should not prevent the Government from selecting the most fitted individual to do justice to the position, having regard to the important part that the railways play in the finances of the State. If the Government adopt that attitude they will have my support, no matter whether sentiment be introduced and disappointed applicants complain as a result of that selection. This, however, does not get over the position with which we are faced. Does the Premier believe that we can carry on as we have been doing? Does he believe that the State can afford to continue going to leeward to the extent of £700,000 a year?

The Premier: I know it cannot.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then what is the policy of the Government to meet this position? What are the proposals of the Premier? We shall probably be told that the financial policy of the Government will be outlined in the Budget Speech. We have heard that before. We know that very little in the past has come of such promises. Apparently the present Government are simply pursuing an attitude of helpless drift in regard to our finances, just as Governments during the past three years have done. If Ministers have given serious consideration to the matter and have any proposals adequate to meet the situation, this House should have been informed of them in the Speech delivered by His Excellency. In a matter of this kind we should not have to make guesses. If the Government do not wake up and take serious hold of the position, they will be compelled to do so. So far as we can learn, we shall be faced next year with a considerable reduction in the amount that will be received from the Commonwealth authorities. The policy of the Federal Government is to reduce the per capita payments by 2s. 6d. per head per annum. That will mean a reduction of about £40,000 a year on the amount received from the Commonwealth. Instead of becoming lighter as we go on, our difficulties are becoming greater. We are in the position now of having to borrow money at an increased rate of interest to the tune of three-quarters of a million a year in order to pay our current accounts. This cannot go on. Unless the Government come down with some drastic proposals to meet the situation, nothing but ruin lies before this State. Our friends opposite came into power with

a definite policy of economy. At the last general elections it was stated that there were to be amalgamations of departments, and that economy was to be exercised to such an extent that taxation would be unnecessary. Notwithstanding this, no economies worth while have been effected. On the contrary, there have been increases of expenditure all along the line. If we compare the returns of expenditure by the various departments for last year with the expenditure of three years ago, we find that there have been increases in almost every item, some of these increases being very large indeed. That is the manner in which the pledge given to the people that economies would be exercised has been carried out.

Hon. T. Walker: It was upon that pledge that they came into power.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They have held office under false pretences. Apparently they had not the courage or the honesty to undo the things they denounced when they were in opposition. If there was one question more than another which the Government were under an obligation to deal with, it was that connected with the financial position of the State. That was the one point above all others upon which they carried out a campaign of attack against the Labour party during the years they were in office, and upon which they pledged themselves to the electors that, given an opportunity, they would restore the finances to a sound position. To-day we have confronting us the deplorable circumstance that in three short years we have gone to the bad to the extent of more than two million pounds. Where are the critics of to-day? Do we hear anyone criticising the finances? One seldom reads an article in our newspapers pointing out the serious position of the finances, or the manner in which the Government have failed to deal with them. The matter is smothered away and covered up as a thing which does not need to be dragged into the light. Apparently they have reached the hopeless stage of the prodigal who has expended all his cash and cares not what happens to him in the future. Quite a different attitude was adopted when the Labour party was in power. The first of the month was never allowed to pass without the people being reminded in the leaders and special articles throughout the Press of this State of the deplorable manner in which Labour was handling the finances. To-day we never read a line connected with the financial position of the State.

Mr. Munsie: The papers pay attention to the finances of Queensland only.

Hon. P. COLLIER: To-day all that we see is the comment on the financial position of Queensland. The "Daily News" is very much concerned about the financial position of that State. It frequently points out that the Government of that State are running the country upon the rocks, and that there can be only one end to it, and it was further stated by a section of the Press, at the time when the Queensland Government had a de-

ficit of £400,000 for the year, that the State would soon be bankrupt. In the same year this State closed its accounts with a deficit of £700,000.

The Premier: Queensland has no sinking fund.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No reference, however, was made to our deficit. Other States have no sinking fund either. We have a sinking fund and have to face the position as we find it. Unless the Government are prepared to face it, sheer necessity will compel them before long to do so. I hope the Premier will indicate to the House and to the country what he proposes to do to meet the position confronting us. It is incumbent on him to do so. The people are entitled to know, and this House would be justified in refusing to grant supplies until the Government announce some definite policy in this direction. Are we to pass supplies month after month and year after year, and see the country going bankrupt, without making an effort to retrieve the position? In this respect there is an obligation cast upon every member of the House, particularly those supporting the Government. I know that the Premier when speaking on the finances last year had something to say. He said—

I do not know what will happen to the State if the present drift is allowed to continue. It should be regarded as serious even by the Government; and something will have to be done to check it. There must be an end to borrowing to cover the deficit. We should do something that is possible, and we should do everything that is possible to gain that result. To-day there is really no difference between the loan and revenue expenditure. We are not spending much of the money we are borrowing on public works. It is largely going to meet revenue charges. This is a deplorable state of affairs.

The position is not less deplorable at the present time.

The Premier: I have only just gone into the Treasury.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not hold the Premier responsible for the deficit for the financial year just concluded. That responsibility belongs to others. He cannot, however, evade the responsibility of putting forward some proposal to meet the future.

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

Hon. P. COLLIER: At the tea adjournment I was dealing with the disastrous drift of the finances, and the apparent inability of the Ministerial party to provide a policy to meet the situation. Looking back over the record of the financial administration of the National party, we see the most conspicuous failure in the Parliamentary history of Australia. The fact that the National party, meeting Parliament after seven months of recess—a period which they claimed from this House last session in order that they might be given an opportunity of attending to administration and framing a policy to meet

the requirements of the State—do meet Parliament with no more constructive programme than that outlined in the Governor's Speech affords in itself a justification for a motion of want of confidence in the Government, and furthermore demands, in my opinion, that the members supporting the Government should clearly define their attitude in this respect. As I have said, Parliament has imposed additional taxation upon the citizens of this country to the extent of £180,000 last year, and that is not taking into account indirect taxation which has been collected in several directions. Notwithstanding those facts, the Government are hard put to it to maintain the deficit at the level it reached during the past two years. If that condition of things is to continue, where shall we find ourselves? It means that every year there will have to be imposed additional taxation amounting to not less than £100,000 if the deficit is not to be increased, if it is to be merely maintained at its present level. Our interest and sinking fund charges increase year by year to the extent of roughly £100,000; and in order to make that good and prevent the deficit from rising, the Government will have to bring down taxation proposals or some other policy which will return them at least £100,000 a year additional revenue. Is that a situation which Parliament can face with equanimity? If members are content to allow a position of that kind to drift on, they will deserve not only the displeasure but the contumely of the electors when next they go before them. In fact, members are shirking their plain duty, and particularly hon. members sitting opposite, in not insisting upon the Government facing the situation boldly, fairly, and honestly. Are we to have more taxation this session? Apparently we are. We have had from the Premier a repetition of the platitudes, may I say, to which we have listened in this House during the past three years, that with the return of normal times and the resumption of trade generally, we may expect things to right themselves. That is what the Government tell us in the Governor's Speech. But that is a policy of hopeless despair, a policy which can only lead to the bankruptcy and ruin of Western Australia. There is no getting away from the position. To sit back in helpless fashion means that in the interim the patient may die. Indeed, the patient will die, there is no hope of his recovery, if the Government consider that such an attitude suffices to meet the case. The Government expect, now that peace has been restored, "a gradual improvement." Very gradual indeed! Of "increased production" we have heard before. But what is the Premier's remedy for the financial position? If we may judge from the speeches he has been delivering in the agricultural areas of this State, we are justified in arriving at the conclusion that his only remedy for the situation is that of increased production. He has taken up the famous cry of one of his predecessors, "Produce, produce, produce!"

Mr. Underwood: In other words, get work.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member interjecting expressed that policy more tersely some years ago, when he advised a certain section of the community to "get work." Desirable as it is to increase production in the State, surely the Premier knows that no policy of that kind is in itself sufficient. One cannot obtain an increased production of wealth spontaneously, nor can it be done in a month or two, nor indeed to any considerable extent in a year or two. And in the meantime this country may drift on the rocks. Even a cheerful optimist cannot finance the country without funds. It is not sufficient to sit back in a self-satisfied way saying, as the leader of the Country party has said, "All will be well now because we have at the head of the Government an optimist." Even upon optimists it is incumbent to have some definite, concrete policy that will meet the financial situation. That situation will not be remedied by talking in a by-and-large fashion of millions. The Premier never makes a speech without talking in millions. Millions of immigrants, millions of broad acres, millions of pounds, thousands of miles of railway. The hon gentleman said, "Let us get this kind of policy going, and that is all that will be required." I submit there can be only one end to such a policy. Whilst we are waiting for all this development to take place, the State is forced to borrow money at a very high rate of interest in order to make good the shortage on revenue account. In view of the fact that we are no longer able to obtain funds through the agency of the Federal Government but are thrown upon our own resources, as it were, to go upon the London market or the markets of the world for money, it is certain that we shall have to pay a very high price indeed for any money we may obtain in the future. It seems as though every penny we can raise by way of both revenue and loan will be required to meet the services of the State and to make good the deficit. We have reached a stage when practically there will not be available one pound of loan funds to carry out any of the public or development works that are required in Western Australia. All that we can gather in from every source is now required by the Government to finance the State from day to day. And that is the position of a party who came into office with the specific purpose of straightening out the finances. What explanation have they to make? What justification have they to offer to the electors of this State for the concentrated criticism that was directed for years upon the members of the Labour party in regard to their financial administration? What explanation will hon. members opposite have to offer to the electorate for the fact that in the short space of three years they have permitted this State to drift on to the financial rocks to the extent of more than two millions sterling? With an accumulated deficit of over 3½ millions and commencing the financial year with a shortage of £163,000—a record for the month of July—faced as we are with a position of that

kind, we are told by the Premier in four lines to wait for the return of normal times. If the Labour Government were in office, if I were occupying the Premier's position and met the House in the circumstances existing to-day, with a statement of that kind, I should expect my party to be impeached for incapacity, for lack of administrative ability in the handling of the finances of the State. Apparently the matter is of no more importance than to warrant a casual few lines in a passing way. In that way only ruin lies. I say again that on this one item alone I would not be doing my duty to the people of the State if I did not take the earliest opportunity of challenging the Government. They deserve to be turned out of office without further consideration, without even giving them supplies, for meeting the House in the manner they have done. Let us see how the Premier's policy of production is going to meet the case. He talks of land settlement. Every hon. member believes that land settlement is a good thing for this or any other country. We are all optimists I hope, but whilst being an optimist I believe, if I may so describe it, in a kind of Scotch optimism, a cautious optimism, and not that reckless whirling kind that can express nothing unless it is contained in millions. While optimism is good, there is one kind that only leads to disaster and destruction. The man who goes abroad borrowing money wherever he can get it without regard to his ability to pay the accounts when they become due, may be an optimist as to the future, but he will generally land in the bankruptcy court. Apparently it is that kind of optimism with which the Premier is endowed.

The Minister for Works: You are talking like the Official Receiver.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If there had been any party or anyone in this State endowed with the power of calling Parliament to book in the same manner as the Official Receiver has power to deal with private individuals, we would have heard from such a party long ago.

Mr. Underwood: That is what the present Minister for Works said about you.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We have talked of production, but, as a matter of fact, production in this State has been on the wane. It may be urged, of course, that that has been due to war conditions, but a careful analysis of the position will show that even allowing for the conditions created by the war, production has been on the decrease. We know that so far as the mining industry is concerned there has been a tremendous decrease in the output of gold. In the short space of five years the falling off has amounted to a value of no less than 1¼ millions sterling. In 15 years the number of men employed in the mining industry has decreased from 16,000 to 8,000. The present outlook of the mining industry, I am sorry to say, is blacker than it has ever been in its history. I regret to say that, but it is a fact. The industry has played a great part in the prosperity of the State

during the past quarter of a century; in fact, it has been responsible to a greater degree, perhaps, than all the other industries put together for lifting the State into the position it has occupied in recent years. It is clear that we cannot look in that direction for similar results in the immediate future. If we turn to agricultural production upon which the Premier stakes his existence, we find that a similar regrettable state of affairs exists there. In the past three years the area under crop has been reduced by 400,000 acres, from two millions to 1,600,000 acres. It will be said that that reduction was due to the war and to the fact that so many of our settlers were withdrawn from their activities in that direction. But that does not explain the whole of it. On top of that we find that land which a year or two ago was under cultivation is now going back practically to its natural state. The area of land which was formerly used for crops and is now used for grazing, has increased since 1916 from one million acres to 1,900,000 acres, or an increase in three years in the area going out of cultivation of 900,000 acres.

Mr. Harrison: Due to the value of wool.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know that in those years there has been such an increase in our flocks. However, that is the position, and the Premier relies upon production to bring the State out of its difficulties. I admit at once that the Premier, on outside appearances, seems to have galvanised a considerable amount of life into land settlement in the South-West, particularly as it affects our returned soldiers. But unless some restraining hand is laid upon the Premier, unless he is made to exercise caution, I am afraid we will experience in the South-West what hundreds of settlers have experienced in the Eastern agricultural belt. When the Premier was in the South-West recently he talked in the usual way with regard to millions. He wants millions of acres surveyed. Speaking at Greenbushes, the Premier gave expression to these words—

He did not know whether the country would be willing to go the pace that he hoped to get, but so long as he remained in power he meant to develop every industry.

The Premier: Don't you agree with that?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. The Premier went on to say—

The great necessity was to secure land for settlement and he had recently asked Mr. Camm, who was superintendent of land settlement in the South-West, to push ahead so as to have a million acres of suitable land surveyed within a year.

The Premier: That is only a quarter of what we did in 1910.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but you cannot have your loaf and eat it. My friends opposite who are supporting the Premier say that that was the great fault of the hon. gentleman, and it would have been a good thing for this country and for hundreds of settlers if the Premier had not gone the pace

so much with regard to land surveys and land settlement in the Eastern areas when he was Minister for Lands in a former administration.

Mr. Harrison: The areas were over-priced.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And the present Premier was responsible for the over-pricing. The member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) will have great delight in explaining to his constituents how it is he is supporting the Premier who is responsible for the over-pricing.

Mr. Harrison: We reduced the price.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The party to which I have the honour to belong was instrumental in getting those prices reduced. Now we find the member for Avon signalling his election to the position of leader of the Country party by making rash statements of that description. It was the Labour party who introduced the Bill to reduce the price of land. The hon. member's party had nothing to do with it.

Mr. Harrison: I said we assisted.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know that the hon. member and others when travelling around the agricultural districts give expression to sentiments which convey the idea it was their influence which brought about the reduction. The Premier went on to say in his speech at Greenbushes that the surveys should have been done during the past four years, but that the work had been neglected. The member for Moore (Sir Henry Lefroy) will note that remark. The Premier went on to say—

We should have to build roads and construct railways, including the one now being surveyed, to link up Bridgetown with Denmark and another from Bridgetown to junction with the Great Southern line. In the one speech the hon. gentleman says he wants millions of acres surveyed and he wants to construct a line from Bridgetown to Denmark and another from Bridgetown to link up with the Great Southern railway. There we have the incorrigible boomster wanting to survey millions of acres and build railways across to the Great Southern. I understand that during the past few months the survey of the line from Denmark to Bridgetown has been in progress. This is subject to correction, but I understand it is a fact. The work is being carried out in the winter and in the wettest portion of the State.

The Minister for Works: They are all right where they are working.

Hon. P. COLLIER: How much is the survey going to cost? This is what the Minister for Works had to say last year with regard to the two propositions to which I have referred—

The survey of a line from Bridgetown to Denmark will cost from £12,000 to £15,000 and a railway will require between £300,000 and £400,000 to build.

On the subject of the other project the Minister for Works said—

It is all very well to talk of connecting Wilgarrup with Mt. Barker, but to build

such a railway would cost between £600,000 and £800,000.

So that, in one afternoon, the Premier spoke of constructing two railways, one of which, according to the Minister for Works, will cost £300,000 or £400,000 and the other from £600,000 to £800,000. Taking the lower estimate, there is a million pounds for railways in one little corner of the South-West. That is the kind of reckless talk in which the Premier indulges. He outlined proposals for the construction of railways involving the expenditure of a million pounds. Then he wants Mr. Cunnm to survey one million acres in the South-West in one year. Where is he going to get one million acres in the South-West?

The Premier: We surveyed nearly four million acres in 1910.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But you cannot keep on surveying at the rate of millions each year. What you surveyed in 1910 is no longer available. When the Premier speaks of surveying one million acres in the South-West in one year, it is pertinent to call attention to the views of the members of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, a body of highly qualified men. Let me read what they said.

The Premier: Read it all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will read quite sufficient. Here is the paragraph in the Commissioner's report—

Your Commissioners regret to report that the South-West is a country of great expectations and great disappointments. Ostensibly we had 17,600,000 acres of the State's territory to report upon—an area which we have always been led to believe by common report embraced a large extent of country suitable for agricultural selection, destined to be dotted by the hamlets of future generations, and capable of great productiveness and expansion. On the contrary, we find that, after allowing some three million acres as the probable permanent reservation of our hardwood forests, and deducting 5,820,000 acres already disposed of, the official estimate is that there only remain some 500,000 acres fit for agricultural selection. Of the balance, something like 8,280,000 acres, the greater portion is poor and worthless ironstone, poison country, indifferent forest, or swampy clay-pans. There may be, and probably is, a portion of which some future use may be made for grazing purposes, but, from the observation of your Commissioners, extending over many years in some cases, and reinforced by the general experience of the Commission itself, there is little ground for any optimistic reference to the bulk of this poor country. The estimate of the remaining good cultivable land may be—probably is—conservative, but it is significant, and it has been a distinct shock to your Commissioners to learn that our agricultural heritage is of such shrunken proportions. The only possible augmentation of our agricultural areas in the South-West would be the reservation of the karri forests for agricul-

tural selection—a debatable step which we set forth at a later stage in our remarks on the forestry question as it affects agriculture.

There we have, on the one hand, the result of a patient investigation extending over a year or two by men well qualified to express an opinion; as against that we have the, shall I say? irresponsible statement of the Premier at an after-dinner meeting. The Commissioners say that half a million acres is the limit.

The Premier: Not of their own knowledge.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier is questioning the value of this report.

Mr. Underwood: The report of his own Commission, too!

Hon. P. COLLIER: A Commission appointed by the Government of which he was a member. It reminds me that this was the compact made by the Country party. They undertook to support the Wilson Government on condition that a Royal Commission was appointed to go into the question of agriculture. Now, apparently, the Premier is prepared to cast aside that report where it does not meet with his own views.

The Premier: Nothing of the sort, but you did not read the whole of the report.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have read sufficient to show that in the opinion of the Commissioners half a million acres is the limit of the available land in the South-West suitable for cultivation.

The Premier: You ought to consult the officers of the department.

Hon. P. COLLIER: What is the use of the Premier's trying to get away from a report of this description? Where are the Premier's million acres in the South-West? Unless he is carefully watched, he will overrun the half million acres referred to by the Commissioners and will send men out to settle on unsuitable land in the South-West, as, according to the statement of members on the Government cross benches, he did in the eastern agricultural areas. And the Premier's proposal for railways in the South-West to cost a million pounds was endorsed by his colleague the Honorary Minister! That kind of recklessness is not going to save the country.

The Premier: You told the Federal Government we would be able to settle soldiers in the South-West.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If we find we cannot do what we said we could do, it is better to come out honestly and confess it. If the land is not suitable for soldier settlement, let us say so, rather than send men down there. Again, if the land is not available, it is better that we should say so.

The Premier: But you would not have said it without knowing.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No doubt the Government will be able to settle 14,000 men, because, apparently, under the policy of repurchasing estates, any number of men can be settled by the expedient of buying out one man and putting another in his place. That policy has been pursued to a considerable



extent in the settling of soldiers. In many cases the State has not added £1 to its assets. Men who have spent a lifetime farming are being removed from their land in order that inexperienced men might be placed in their stead, the net result being a loss rather than a gain to the State. The list of estates repurchased in the South-West, as published in the Press this morning, shows clearly that, in many instances, that is what has been done. The Premier, of course, believing that his policy is a sound one, will go on settling men anywhere, in that spirit of reckless optimism which is a fatal weakness in the hon. member's make-up. No doubt he will return to his old love in regard to soldier settlement in the South-West. Does he still intend to attempt soldier settlement at Nornalup?

The Premier: Ask the member for Kalgoorlie.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for Kalgoorlie is not responsible in this matter. The member for Kalgoorlie, after his pleasant peregrinations in that delightful part of the State, will, doubtless, give expression to his own opinions. But what we are concerned about is whether it is the intention of the Premier to revive his proposal for soldier settlement at Nornalup. Last year, when he moved the motion of no-confidence in the men who now have confidence in him, he made it clear that he still believed Nornalup to be the best part of the State for soldier settlement. He said, "In my opinion Nornalup is the best site in the South-West for returned soldiers." Believing that, and being anxious to do the best for returned soldiers, he is in duty bound to make available for returned soldiers that portion of the State which he believes to be the best suited for the purpose.

The Premier: Every acre in the State is available.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But if in the opinion of the Premier Nornalup is the best locality, the Premier, in pursuance of his policy of doing the best for the soldiers, will be obliged to send soldiers to that place.

The Premier: There is no question of compulsion. We can only make the land available.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But it is not left for the soldier to say where he shall settle. It is the responsibility of the Government to make available to the soldier land in the best areas of the State. The responsibility is on the Government to say where settlement can best succeed; it is not upon the soldier to find out for himself where he can make the best progress. Therefore, I want to know whether the Premier is going to revive the Nornalup proposal and send soldiers there for settlement. If he does, he will not have the support of the Minister for Works because that gentleman is not so enthusiastic about Nornalup as the Premier was and is. Referring to the Premier's belief in Nornalup as a district for soldier settlement, the Minister for Works said the proposal was an utterly fantastic

scheme for dealing with what was a terribly practical question. The practical mind of the Minister for Works came to his rescue at once, and we may hope that that stern practical mind will exercise a restraining influence upon the optimistic make-up of his chief, the Premier.

The Premier: You would not have me down in the dumps, would you?

Hon. P. COLLIER: With regard to the policy of railway construction, the Premier ought to understand, and the people ought to know, that the condition of the State will not permit for many years to come any considerable extension of our railway system.

Hon. T. Walker: What about the Esperance railway?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I said any considerable extension. The financial position of the State is due in a large measure to the fact that we are over-built in the matter of railway construction. Whilst in 1908 we had a mile of railway to every 137 of the population, in 1918 we had a mile of railway to every 89 people.

The Premier: Goldfields railways largely.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Those figures largely tell the story of our financial condition. Those railways are all over the State. We have 3,400 miles of railway to serve a population of less than 320,000 people, and any talk of building hundreds of miles of railways in one corner of the State is absurd and out of the question. A sound policy would not provide for running railways through great empty spaces as we have been doing in years gone by, but would ensure that the land adjacent to railways was settled first. That is the trouble in this country. One may travel by our railways through some of the richest portions of the State and find little settlement there. Because of the construction of these lines, maintenance and upkeep have to be met, but owing to the farcical amount of settlement there is not the trade there ought to be. Instead of the Government purchasing in the South-West estates to the extent of 52,000 acres at a cost of £139,000 to settle 134 soldiers, a sounder policy would have been to introduce legislation or a form of taxation to compel the utilisation by present holders of areas adjacent to railways, or the relinquishing of those areas to others who would utilise them.

The Minister for Works: We have to find land for the soldiers.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We will in reality settle the soldiers if we burden them with an expense of £1,000 per settler for capital cost. What sort of a burden is that for a man to carry for the rest of his life?

The Minister for Works: It is costing considerably more in the Eastern States.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is not only the capital expenditure, but interest and other charges will have to be met by the soldiers. They will be saddled with the cost of £1,000 with survey and other fees, and with the £600 advanced by the Commonwealth Government, so that they will be handicapped from the beginning. The fact that so far

the Government have not felt it necessary to put into operation those sections of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act dealing with compulsory resumption indicates that the men who disposed of 52,000 acres at a cost of £139,000, have been well satisfied with what they obtained for their land. Particularly in the South-West which has been boomed so much, men will not readily or easily part with their holdings unless they get a price to them entirely satisfactory; and if it is entirely satisfactory to them, quite possibly it will not be so satisfactory to the men who will be settled upon it.

The Minister for Works: That does not follow.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It does follow. Instead of talking about building more railways when the country already is gridironed with railways carrying little population adjacent to them, and heaping heavy financial burdens on the taxpayers, we should confine ourselves to peopling the lands already served by railways. Do the Government propose to introduce land taxation proposals this session?

The Premier: There are three taxes now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There will be any number of taxes excepting those of the right kind. The Premier dare not do it. The support of the Country party, I believe, would be withdrawn from him at once if he introduced fresh land taxation proposals.

The Minister for Works: If you are prepared to assist, how far would you go?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I would go a good deal further than the present land tax to begin with. The point is the Minister and his colleagues will not move at all with regard to it. They would borrow millions of money to build railways in the South-West rather than introduce taxation to force into use idle lands along existing railways.

The Minister for Works: The Commission had something to say about idle lands along the railways. They investigated the matter—

Hon. P. COLLIER: And found it to be so.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. Munsie: Then they kept their eyes shut if they could not find them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have shown that the Government are entirely destitute of a financial policy. We have heard a good deal about industrial unrest. The member for Avon spoke of it and of the influences responsible for it—the extreme sections on both sides. During the war period, were not the people of this country, in common with those in other parts of the world, told by men in responsible positions that there should be a new world for the workers after the war? Where is the new world portrayed in the Governor's Speech? No policy of social reconstruction; no policy of industrial reconstruction; apparently Ministers are of the belief that we shall revert to pre-war conditions, and that the people will be content to drift along in the same old haphazard fashion. Where is the evi-

dence of a desire on the part of the Government to remove the anomalies which have existed hitherto in our social, political, and economic life? Industrial unrest is a demand of the workers for better conditions. Instead of the Government, now that the war is over, recognising the fact that in every country in the world big strides forward are being made and will have to be made if we are to have industrial peace, instead of bringing down a policy which shows evidence of some imagination behind it—

Mr. Underwood: Supposing we do not have industrial peace, what then?

Hon. P. COLLIER: We shall not have industrial peace so long as men in responsible positions shut their eyes to the causes responsible for the unrest.

Mr. Underwood: You did not have it when I was with you.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, we endeavoured to pass legislation which according to our ideas would remove much of the industrial unrest. We were prevented from doing that, but the present Government have come down without any policy of social reconstruction.

Mr. Underwood: We passed an Arbitration Act, you know.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And in the light of the experience of recent years, it needs to go into the melting pot. It is not an Arbitration Act which the workers will accept and, so long as employers believe that the workers should be content with merely a form of industrial arbitration, so long shall we have industrial unrest.

Mr. Underwood: Suppose we do not have industrial peace, what then?

Hon. P. COLLIER: We might have an undesirable condition of things; as the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) suggested, we might have a revolution.

Hon. T. Walker: Rest is a dead state; we can never have it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Men holding the powers of government in other parts of the world have realised their responsibilities; they have realised that the great masses of producers will never be content to revert to pre-war conditions. Are Ministers unmindful of the fact that in Europe there are nations with populations of 500 millions who have thrown off old conditions, thrown off the monarchy and revolted? Are they unmindful that drastic, far-reaching changes have been and are being effected in the whole of the social and economic life of Great Britain? One would expect the Government to recognise the part that the workers and producers have played in the international scheme of things. Are we not to have any constitutional reform in this country? Do not the Government think the time has arrived when the restrictions and disabilities imposed by our Constitution upon a large section of the citizens should be removed? Is there no policy of constitutional reform whereby a man or woman shall stand on an equality as a citizen with fellow men and women, no matter what his or her position in life may be?

Is the old idea of restriction, that capital, class and caste only are entitled to the full rights of citizenship, to prevail indefinitely? The Government should realise what is required at the present time. If they would bring some measure of contentment to the masses of the people of this State, they must sweep away those barriers which have existed for so long. They have to sweep away the restrictions imposed upon the citizens in regard to the actions of another place. The time has arrived when one House should be swept away altogether. I do not care whether it is the Council or the Assembly that remains. This will be for the people to decide. I maintain that one House is quite sufficient to perform the duties required in the government of the country, one House elected on a broad basis of adult franchise. Let that House which is the fittest to survive be the one that remains, which ever that House may be. What is the policy of the Government in respect to the restrictions that still exist upon our womenfolk here? Have they any ideas or policy in this connection? Are these disabilities to continue?

The Premier: You had your opportunity.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We had our opportunities restricted by those hon. members with whom the Premier is now associated. We could not do everything in the few years that we were in office. Indeed, the main charge against us was that we were continually breaking new ground, that we were embarking upon unheard of programmes and policies, and yet in three years' time nearly every new path blazed by the Labour party has been trodden by the Premier and those sitting behind him. They have come round to approve of and endorse nearly everything they condemned three or four years ago.

The Minister for Works: Virtue is not always its own reward.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Look where we will in this State, that is apparent. In the old country women have been emancipated to a large extent. Let the Government come down with a really progressive and democratic form of administration. Let them understand that there must be radical, drastic, and fundamental alterations in the state of society in this as well as every other country. A programme which provides only for piffing Bills dealing with fruit cases, the endowment of city lands in Perth, the Droving Act Amendment Bill, and others of that kind, do not affect the daily life of the people. Of what value are they in this connection? If we passed millions of such measures of what use would they be?

The Premier: The meat supplies.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is the one Bill in the whole programme that is of any importance. Even there we shall have to wait until we receive it before we can judge of its value. During the war period the workers of this country, as well as of every other country, have been bearing the burden. All legislation and administration have been for the protection of the rich.

The rich have grown richer and the poor have grown poorer. That is an undeniable fact. I put it to those, who have held certain conservative views as to the rights of capital in the past, that in their own interests unless they throw overboard these ideas their own ship will sink. People talk to-day of Bolsheviks and Bolshevism. We have the Tories, who stand against any change, the old Conservatives, who want to sit still and preserve the rights of capital and wealth. These are the people who create Bolsheviks at a greater pace than any other set of individuals in the country at present. So far as society is concerned, they are the real Bolsheviks.

Mr. Davies: That is what Mr. Hughes said.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If Mr. Hughes said that he is quite right, and I am glad he agrees with me. They are doing this, and I was going to add that unfortunately Mr. Hughes was doing nothing to improve the position. The Government should come down with a definite programme of root reform, and sweep away these cobwebs in our Constitution. They should start at the top, and say that in future this State is to be governed by one House of Parliament only. They should go further and say that in future we are not going to have imported Governors coming to our State, and that we are going to cut out expenditure of that kind.

Mr. Underwood: That is settled.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I was not aware of that.

Mr. Underwood: I am telling you now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Having arrived at that conclusion, let the Government then say, "We are going in for a root constitutional reform; we are going to broaden the franchise and say that in future no one shall have special rights merely because he is the owner of property." Let them recognise the services rendered by the womenfolk of this and every other country in the British Empire during the war, and say that these disabilities and restrictions which have been placed upon them in the past shall be removed. Let them take steps to see that the women are rendered eligible to take a seat in the House, upon municipal bodies and roads boards, and other representative institutions. In fine, let them see that the sex disabilities are made to disappear. Let the Government go in for a thorough-paced policy of protecting the producers against the profiteers. Let them see in future that our arbitration laws are amended in such a way that consideration will be given not only to what the worker can live upon, but also to what the employer can live upon. If it is a good policy that the worker should have to go into court and place upon the table the whole of his cards, give evidence as to every penny of expenditure that he incurs from week to week and year to year in order to live, and go into the most minute details of his daily life, then it is also a good policy as regards the employer. If a limitation has to

be placed upon the worker, let a similar limitation be placed upon the employer. Let there be a limitation placed upon the profits made in the commercial trade of the country. Do the Government believe that the people will be content to be reduced to a state verging on poverty, and be compelled to subsist upon less in the way of foodstuffs than they have been accustomed to in the past whilst, on the other hand, other men are making unlimited wealth? Will they not see that a limitation is placed upon a man's profit? Why should this be overlooked merely because a man is placed in a certain position in society or occupies another in the economic sphere of things which enables him to extract huge profits from his fellow-men? If the Government do not realise that, they have learnt nothing as a result of the war. To-day this State, in common with other States, is in the backwash of progress. Older countries of the world, to which we have been wont to look as the embodiment of Conservatism, have already swept away some of the things I have indicated to-night, and have realised what is due to the people who have maintained their national existence during the war period, and towards whom their leaders have now acted accordingly. To-day we are the most backward of any country in the world. We are further behind to-day in Australia in many respects than old conservative Great Britain. If anyone were to stand up and talk about a 6-hour day he would be called a Bolshevik. He would be charged with wanting to destroy our economic life. And yet that is the position they have reached in Great Britain. The world has shown to an extent we could never have hoped for in the course of a hundred years of peace that the policy laid down and pursued for a number of years by the Labour party, that of national control and ownership, is the only sound and suitable policy for any country. The whole world, and every nation, adopted the policy of national control, the Labour party's policy, when the crisis came. In many respects in those countries they will never yield up that policy.

The Minister for Works: I wish they had gone a bit further.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They would have gone further if it had not been for men like those surrounding the hon. member. The war has been the justification for labour in that respect. The responsibility lies with the Premier, and unless he amends the Constitution by means of a policy of social restriction and constitutional reform, in the manner I have indicated, we shall have disputes and industrial unrest which will paralyse our trade and recur every week of our history. No one will dispute the fact that industrial troubles, strikes, and cessations of work mean commercial paralysis in many respects. No country can hope to make headway against such a condition of things. Instead of sitting down and merely complaining about it, yelling Bolshevism and calling for the deportation of this or that individual, wise and far-seeing

men would endeavour to probe to the root and cause of the trouble, and take steps to introduce, by way of legislation or administration, measures that would tend to remove the cause of these things. The difficulty will never be overcome by any other means. Having regard to the fact that no provision of the kind I have indicated is outlined in the Governor's Speech, and that this stands on the face of it condemned as a policy totally and miserably inadequate, following upon some years of war, I have no other course, in order to clear the atmosphere and test the position of Ministers in this House, than to move an amendment to the Address-in-reply. Accordingly, I move—

That the following be added to the Address-in-reply:—"We regret, however, that your present advisers do not possess the confidence of the House."

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans): I second the amendment.

On motion by the Premier debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Norham): The amendment which has just been moved by the leader of the Opposition I must accept as a motion of want of confidence in the Government. I therefore move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 p.m. on Thursday next.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 8.43 p.m.*