

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Hon. W. Kingsmill: He should not.

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

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