

in this Chamber a gentleman who has been so closely associated with the industrial position in the past, he might assist us in the direction of improving the Arbitration Court, and so help it to become more effective. Everyone is most anxious that the industrial relations should be improved. There is no prospect of any advancement in that direction until this problem is more or less solved. Industrial strife and social hatred do not appeal to me in any way. I shall be pleased if by some change in our policy of settling disputes or by amending the Arbitration Act, more amicable relations between employer and employee can be achieved. This is one of the most important questions to which we can give consideration. I shall be most grateful to assist in arriving at a satisfactory solution of a problem, the solution of which will be in the best interests of this State.

Mr. HERON (Mount Leonora) [9.55]: I hardly know whether I am a new member or an old member. I had a long life in Parliament last session, namely two long nights. I take it, however, that as this is my first attempt to address this Assembly I shall be regarded as a new member. At the outset, in common with the Leader of the Opposition, I would like to congratulate the Premier on again being elected to that position. After facing the electors on the 12th March, the verdict of the ballot box showed that, in the opinion of the electors, the time was not ripe for the Labour Party to assume control of the Treasury benches. The voice of the people also decreed that the Government were to be made up of a conglomeration of parties. In looking over the faces of those who occupy the Treasury benches, I can see no one there I would prefer to Sir James Mitchell as Premier of the State. I, therefore, compliment him on again being elected to that position. Secondly I would like to congratulate the member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) on being the first lady to be elected to a Parliament in Australia. I do so for two reasons: in the first place, it was the Labour Party who paved the way for the entry of a lady into this Chamber. At all conferences I have attended for years past our platform has included a plank advocating equal rights and full citizenship for women. I am pleased to be connected with a party who made it possible for a lady to be elected to this Parliament. Secondly, I think that the member for West Perth is a member of this Chamber partly by reason of the vote of the workers in her electorate. Knowing that we had no direct Labour representative standing for West Perth, I know that not many workers were likely to vote for the late Attorney General, and, that being so, they would vote for the present member for West Perth. I think she is on the wrong side of the House. That I judge from her remarks in the House and from conversations with her. The reforms she aims at will not receive much sympathy from members on her side of the House. I am not going to occupy

time in talking of the constitution of the various parties, but I shall briefly refer to matters concerning the party to which I belong. I stand to support our platform. For a number of years it has been my privilege to assist in formulating a policy for the masses. Other members on this side had the same privilege before coming to the House, and since being here they have had the privilege of attending Labour conferences. We have heard something of outside domination. In a closely restricted sense, it is justified; justified to this extent, that if I neglect to do my duty by those who sent me here, I expect to be carpeted for it. So, too, with other members of our party; if they fail to support the party's platform in the House, they will be carpeted by their electors outside. Beyond that there is no outside domination whatever. One or two members on the Government side have endeavoured to belittle the masses. If we on this side did not raise our voices in protest we would not be worthy of our position. The deputy Leader of the Country Party told us what the leaders of our party should do. He challenged them to advise the workers to accept lower wages. I have been connected with the Labour movement for many years, and I know that on nine occasions out of ten the leaders do point out to the rank and file what is best for them to do. They give the unionists the benefit of their opinions. But it is the members of a union, not the leaders, who have the right to say what they will do. They say, "If the employers will not meet us, we will take such and such a stand." When the majority decide to make a stand, it is only the appointed leaders who are permitted to lead them.

Mr. Munsie: And they have to abide by majority rule.

Mr. HERON: That is so. On many occasions strikes have occurred against the advice of the leaders, and thereupon the leaders have bowed to the decision of the majority and led the strike. Would a leader be worthy of his name if he did otherwise? The deputy Leader of the Country Party did not know what he was talking about when he said the leaders should advise the men, for I know that they have been doing that for many years past. That brings me to the difficulties on the goldfields at the present time. For a number of years we worked for less than a fair wage. The men eked out a living as best they could, and when the condition of affairs became intolerable they went to the Chamber of Mines and asked for a conference. After lengthy negotiations the request was granted. At that conference the men asked for a minimum of 15s. per day. But the Employers' Federation and the Chamber of Mines would not grant any relief. They turned us down and told us to go to the Arbitration Court. Being law-abiding citizens, the men went to the Arbitration Court and, after a long fight, secured an increase in wages and a lot of privileges which were not asked for at the conference. No one will say that the miner is not entitled to the best that is

going. There are only two resorts awaiting the miner who stays long enough in a mine—either the sanatorium at Wooroloo or the Old Aien's Home at Claremont. The miner is entitled to the best award the Arbitration Court can give him. No one in the community is better entitled to an annual holiday than is the man who has to work below. What was the attitude of those who had to pay the new award? How many men have had the privilege of working under that award? From Kalgoorlie to the back country, everybody who could get out of paying under that award has done so. The Lancefield mine closed down, and those men who were working there were thrown out by a wave of the hand and had to seek employment elsewhere. In my own district we had the unfortunate fire, and so the workers there have never come under that award. By the last papers I had from there I saw that the company does not intend to rebuild. Why? To defeat the award. I do not think the decision rested with those in control in Australia. I am sure the local manager had nothing to do with it, and that even those representing the company in Kalgoorlie had nothing to do with it. Who, then, said that the worker should not have the benefit of that award? None but the Jews in London decided that the mine should not be rebuilt until the return of normal times. I dare say that under the Act they are entitled to certain privileges but, seeing that the insurance company had to bear the brunt of that fire, and remembering that it is a profitable mine, I say that the Jews in control should be forced to rebuild, so that the men might have the benefit of the long-awaited award. That brings me to the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Boyland). I listened attentively to his remarks the other night. I cannot reconcile the position he holds to-day with that which he held two or three years ago. To-day he sits here practically the direct representative of the Chamber of Mines.

Mr. Boyland: That is untrue; quite incorrect. I sit here a free man, freer than are you.

Mr. HERON: The hon. member is a Nationalist. Who voted for him? Not the workers. He may have had a percentage of workers supporting him, but they did not put him into the position he holds. His thanks are due to those representing the employer class. Therefore I say I cannot reconcile his position with that which he held three or four years ago as leader of the workers. The hon. member says he is a free man. In the course of the next month or two he will have an opportunity to show whether he is free and whether he stands for the worker.

Mr. Boyland: I shall show more freedom than you.

Mr. HERON: The hon. member, being a Nationalist, thinks he will be able to get everything he wants.

Mr. Boyland: You were a Nationalist, were you not? Where are you to-day?

Mr. HERON: I can assure the hon. member that his hopes will be shattered in this

House. I repeat that I have had very little experience as a member of Parliament, but what little I had in the closing days of last session convinced me that we cannot expect too much from the members on the Government side of the House. I was here when the Mining Act Amendment Bill dealing with tributing was going through its last stages. The provisions of that Act, I might mention, have never been given effect to. The mine owners simply say, "We have the mines; you have the Bill. We are keeping the mines." When the measure was going through, we were discussing the only clause likely to be of assistance to the tributer. This clause provided that where the tributers had entered into an agreement for a certain period, the agreement should be made retrospective. A vote was taken and the clause was declared carried on the voices. A member of the Country Party, who evidently had had no mining experience, called for a division, and although the benches had been almost empty all night, some members not having been in the Chamber for five minutes, when the bells were rung and the whip was cracked, did members vote for the clause which would have assisted the workers? No, they ranged themselves behind the Government and defeated the clause. Although the present member for Kalgoorlie says that he represents the workers, he will find that his hopes will be shattered. I repeat that the hon. member is a representative of the Chamber of Mines and that I cannot reconcile his present position with that of a few years ago. A few years ago the hon. member was stricken with miner's phthisis, and I am honestly sorry for his bad state of health to-day. When he was stricken with that disease, who assisted him? Was it the men he is supporting to-day?

Mr. Boyland: No, nor the workers either.

Mr. HERON: Was it the workers whom he deserted?

Mr. Boyland: They never assisted me.

Mr. HERON: I do not want to enter into private matters—

Mr. Boyland: You can go into anything you like concerning that.

Mr. HERON: I know who assisted him and who did not. This brings me to another member who was in the Labour Party at one time. Last session he was an Independent; this year he ranks as a National Labourite. I refer to the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood). I have not had an opportunity to visit the North-West—

Mr. Latham: He has received his salvation, you see.

Mr. Corboy: His damnation.

Mr. HERON: The member for Pilbara referred to a man who was drunk while at work. We have been reminded during this debate on the Address-in-reply that people who live in glass houses should not throw stones, and I think this applies to the member for Pilbara. He is not in a position to

throw stones. I have not been long in this House, but I have seen sufficient to satisfy me that the hon. member should not throw stones. He should have been the last one to be guilty of this. The hon. member is one to whom the workers gave an opportunity to better himself. He was one whom the workers sent here, and thus was given an easier living than they enjoyed. Yet to-day he takes the opportunity to belittle those workers who in the first place sent him here.

Mr. Boyland: Not a bit of it.

Mr. HERON: The interruptions of the member for Kalgoorlie do not interest me.

Mr. Munsie: Anyhow, the member for Pilbara went a good way in that direction if his speech in "Hansard" is to be believed.

Mr. HERON: Two or three years ago, when the workers required a strong hand to guide them, the member for Pilbara, had he done his duty, would have remained with them and given them the best advice of which he was capable. He would not have left them and taken every opportunity to throw mud at them and kick them. The workers gave him his chance to rise and he should have stuck to them. I suppose we should not expect too much from him. Perhaps we cannot expect anything better from him than the remark he made the other night. The hon. member even went so far as to say that if it came to the worst he would support coloured labour for the North-West. I suppose that is all we can expect from him. One day during the period of the railway strike, I happened to be travelling to Fremantle when the subject of the strike was under discussion. The strike leaders, the disputes committee, and the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) were mentioned, and an ex-member of this House remarked, "They ought to be shot or deported." The name of Mr. Panton was coupled with that of the member for South Fremantle, but I was in a position to know that it was against the wish of both of these men that the strike occurred. I know they did all in their power to avert a strike. I know that they would have done anything in their power to arrive at a settlement. The men, however, had the right to say whether they would strike or not, and by a good majority they decided to strike. The member for South Fremantle was their paid official, and when they decided to fight for better conditions, it was his duty to fight and do his best to obtain the conditions they sought. That was all these leaders were doing. They were doing what they were paid to do; they were doing more than some members of this House do, namely, the work they were paid for.

Member: Speak for yourself.

Mr. HERON: I have known occasions when this Chamber has been almost deserted. This is not a fair thing to the electors. If members of this House did their duty as well as the strike leaders did their duty, the State would be the better for it. The Labour movement

is misunderstood. The member for South Fremantle could not have stopped the strike. Had he failed to carry out orders, he would have been replaced by someone who might have been a bigger menace to the community. I have been returned to this House as a representative of a mining community, a representative of the out-back where I have lived practically half my life, where I have engaged in the occupations of miner and prospector and in business. Therefore, I think I am in a position to speak with a fair knowledge of what my district requires. We have been informed that there is plenty of work and no unemployment. As one who knocks about and meets those who have to seek employment, I know that this statement is incorrect. In every centre of any importance to-day, there are unemployed. Even in the city itself, there are hundreds of men walking about, men who are prepared to work but who cannot get work. A meeting of unemployed was held and a deputation waited on the Premier who told them to go and clear land. A large number of the unemployed cannot clear land. If members of this House through some unforeseen circumstances were thrust on the Labour market, they would not like to be told to go and clear land. I am satisfied that they would not make enough to keep themselves, much less a wife and family.

Mr. Latham: I hope you are not referring to the member for West Perth.

Mr. HERON: I think she would be well able to keep herself. I can speak with some experience of the land, and I say that if I were thrown out of work and the only thing before me was to go out clearing land, I would think twice before accepting the work, not that I would be unprepared to work, though my physical condition might lead members to think differently. I have been accustomed to hard work all my life, but clearing land is a different proposition from what most men have been used to. It is not a fair proposition to ask men with a family and a home in Perth to go to outback centres and clear land. They would have to wait a certain time before they received any payment for their work.

The Premier: They get paid for what they do.

Mr. HERON: I am sure the Premier would not like to start clearing land.

The Premier: I would not mind at all.

Mr. HERON: They have to make enough not only to keep themselves, but to keep up a home in Perth. Although the Premier says there is plenty of work in the country the Government should do all in their power to make available some other class of work in which these men could be employed. There are numbers of tradesmen who have taken many years to reach a certain standard in their occupation, men in the Railway Service and the Civil Service of the State, who are not fit to go upon the land.

The Premier: The civil servants are not only fit, but they have gone on the land.

Hon. T. Walker: Some of them, not all.

Mr. HERON: Some of them.

The Premier: Most of them.

Hon. T. Walker: There have been failures and successes.

Mr. HERON: A strong and able man can generally adapt himself to new surroundings. There are many men who have been in the Service for years and are not physically able even to chop firewood. On the present cost of living they could not make wages either for themselves or their families.

The Premier: They can, and do make good wages.

Mr. HERON: Seventy-five per cent. of them could not do so.

Mr. Munsie: They don't do it; that is the proof of it.

The Premier: I will bet you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Premier cannot bet here.

Mr. HERON: They cannot be expected to do it. They have never been used to hard work, and it is not fair to ask them to start now. It is the duty of the Government to do what they can to relieve the situation.

Mr. Latham: You do not think our race has deteriorated to that extent?

Hon. T. Walker: It has, and you are trying to import other people to take their places.

Mr. HERON: I recently read an article in the paper showing that practically half the population of the State was living in and around the city.

Mr. Mann: Two-thirds.

Mr. Munsie: In the metropolitan area, not in Perth.

Mr. HERON: The Government do not encourage these people to live outside that area. The man in the country is far more heavily taxed than the man in the metropolitan area. If he goes to the fields he is faced with increased freight and fares, which are even greater than for those who live in the country. Every article he requires has to pass over the railways either through the city or other parts of the metropolitan area. The man who lives in the agricultural districts is not so badly off in this respect as the man who lives on the goldfields, because the former grows his own vegetables, keeps his own cows and enjoys other privileges which the goldfields man cannot enjoy. Even on present rates the taxation upon the people of the fields is unjust. When the Government send a civil servant to the goldfields they pay him a special allowance of 1s. 6d. per day in addition to his salary. I would advocate that no one receiving under £300 should be taxed at all. If a man is only receiving £300 on the goldfields he should also get that allowance. That would bring the salary of a goldfields man up to £330 before he was subject to any tax.

The Premier: Let everyone off.

Mr. HERON: It would perhaps be fair to expect people in the metropolitan area to live on £6 a week. The great cry is that wages are too high and are killing our industries.

Some time ago a deputation waited on the Premier with regard to the building of workers' homes. Although we have our own saw-mills, our own brickyards, and manufacture cement at reasonable rates, the Premier told those who waited upon him that he could not build workers' homes at a price that would enable the worker to pay interest on the amount of his purchase. Where does the high rate of wages come in? If a man possesses a horse he is obliged by law to provide housing accommodation for it. If this has to be done in the case of a horse it is surely reasonable that a human being should live in his own house. It was suggested that to remedy the position we should invite the workers to accept lower wages.

The Premier: Who said that?

Mr. Munsie: The deputy Leader of the Country Party, and yet he wants 9s. per bushel for his wheat.

Mr. HERON: The deputy Leader of the Country Party said we should do our best to bring down wages, notwithstanding that the workers cannot even now afford to buy their own homes. Have the workers' wages gone up first and caused this increase in the cost of living, or has the cost of living caused the workers to make an effort to catch up to it? The cost of living went up first and the workers tried to go up too. Members of the Country Party and others now advocate that there should be a reduction in wages. We are told that we should instruct the workers not to fight. We were told that if we gave our wives a vote we should not have so many strikes. Why should we so belittle the wives of the "dinkum" workers?

Hon. P. Collier: They have not any less wisdom than their husbands.

Mr. HERON: It has been said that this vote would save them a great many hardships. Did anyone say that our soldiers should not go to the front and fight? Did not their going cause plenty of hardships and privations to their wives? There is suffering and hardship to-day as a result of their going to fight. We know we have to go short when a strike occurs.

Mr. A. Thomson: Do you think a strike is beneficial?

Mr. HERON: Our object is to ensure that some benefit will accrue to those who come after. I remember when wages were low in the Eastern States and the conditions of life were hard. What kind of a legacy did the parents have to leave their sons and daughters in those days? All they left were debts, and their children had to face those debts when they came to start out in life. I spent 20 years of my life on the fields when conditions were very hard, and I followed many avocations. I was the secretary of a union and of a friendly society and was also in a business where I was instructed by the boss to serve no more goods until people had paid their accounts. Wages were not high enough to live on in those days. The father of a family of six or eight children had nothing to leave when he died. He should have been getting a reas-

enable wage, which would have enabled him to leave enough for his children to make a start on their own account. Later on when the children of such parents began to think of getting married they had nothing to start with, and so the struggle went on. And yet members opposite, who have plenty themselves and do not know what it is to want, say we should advocate a reduction in wages. We would not be worthy of the name of men if we did so. If members opposite did their duty they would advocate a reduction in the cost of living. I heard the member for York interject the other evening that we did not live on bread.

Mr. Latham: I said bread did not cost you a great deal even with the increase.

Mr. HERON: I should be sorry to see the time come when the workers had to live on bread alone. The price of wheat not only affects the price of bread, but it affects the bacon factories, the poultry farmers, the dairymen, and countless other people. I have here a letter from one of my electors, a man over 70 years of age, who while living on a pension is trying to eke out an existence by rearing poultry. He cannot make a success of that because of the high price of wheat for his poultry. Last night, or the night before, the president of the Primary Producers' Association said, "I am going to fight the Trades Hall if I stand alone;" and he received applause from all around the hall for making that statement. I suppose the member for Katanning, the deputy Leader of the Country Party, was one of those who clapped; and still that hon. member tells us that we should recommend the worker to accept a lower rate of wages. As regards taxation, the Minister for Mines and Railways has intimated that the Government intend to bring down a measure which will relieve the mining industry and the prospectors of some portion of their burdens. A prospector may be going out to-day without having had a return for years. Such was my own experience. Now, if I went prospecting again to-morrow and found anything that I could sell, or from which I could obtain a fair return during the 12 months, the Commonwealth and State Governments would step in to grab a large share of my earnings. If a show is sold, the two Governments between them take about 60 per cent. of the proceeds of sale. I am pleased that a Royal Commission was appointed by the Federal Government to go into the question of taxation. I believe that the promised amendment of our State law is one effect of the inquiries of that Federal Royal Commission. The Governor's Speech makes reference to good rains on the goldfields. There have been good rains, and the present time is opportune for the Government to do all they can towards assisting the prospector to go out. There is now plenty of water and also plenty of feed for the horses the prospector must use. The Government should go a little out of their way to assist the prospector at this juncture, considering the low ebb of mining in this State.

True, a few new shows have been opened up; but there has been nothing in the nature of a sensational discovery. Therefore the Government should help the mining industry along. I take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Mines for the assistance which he has rendered to my electorate since I have been member for Leonora. However, it was explicitly stated that this assistance was being given only in view of special circumstances. My electors are grateful to the Minister. On the first occasion he had to obtain the sanction of his colleagues for what he proposed to do; and I thank the Government as a whole for their generosity in that connection. The concession was a special one, granted in view of a disastrous fire which had occurred in the district. Let me urge the Government to grant the prospector assistance to a greater extent than £1 per week. As the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) said, the prospector is not usually a young single man. Young men cannot, as a rule, be induced to go out prospecting. Generally, the capable prospector is a man of middle age; and in nine cases out of ten he has a family to look after. Therefore an allowance of £1 per week is not reasonable.

The Minister for Mines: Previously he got nothing at all.

Mr. HERON: Quite right; but that is no reason why the allowance should not be raised now. With a view to getting more genuine prospectors out, men who will give of their best, I would advocate an allowance of £2 per week. The Government should also establish local mining boards in centres of any consequence. These boards could advise the department from time to time of suitable men prepared to go out prospecting. Under present conditions much time is, unfortunately, lost in making application and in waiting for the department to reply; the correspondence passes backwards and forwards for some considerable time. Local mining boards, knowing something of prospecting and of mining, would assist to prevent any undue delay. Men thoroughly qualified to sit on such boards can be found at the various mining centres. I am glad if steps are being taken to establish such boards; I had not heard previously that such was the case. The member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Boyland) spoke of using the rails between Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie to push along the construction of the Esperance line. I also hope that the Government will adopt that expedient.

The Minister for Mines: They are 60-lb. rails.

Hon. T. Walker: They are not too good for the Esperance line.

Mr. HERON: A question was recently asked by the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) regarding the rendering of Government assistance to men prepared to go on the land in the Esperance district. A reference was made to the use of traction engines for the benefit of such settlers. The Premier stated that from advices he had received he thought horses would be more suitable.

But are the Government prepared to put teams on for the purpose of assisting the settlers? I have interviewed the Premier repeatedly in regard to this matter. After the first disaster at Gwalia, I was one of those who waited on the Premier. The disastrous fire at Kalgoorlie caused a revival of the Esperance lands project. I know of men in my electorate who are prepared to spend a few pounds in settling on the Esperance lands if the Government will assist them by furnishing plant to roll the land. Of course I do not suggest that a plant should be furnished to each settler. The settlers could be placed close enough together for one plant to serve several of them. While one man was burning off, another man could be rolling his land; or settlers could co-operate in the matter. In my opinion, some arrangement should be made by the Government, so long as there is no railway extending into that district, for settlers' requirements being transported at reasonable rates. Otherwise, settlers without teams will not be able to obtain the goods which they need. The Government, having delayed the construction of the Esperance railway so long, should make it their business to see that men desirous of settling on the Esperance lands get settled there quickly, and have reasonable facilities for obtaining their requirements. As to the Bills forecasted in the Governor's Speech, I shall not go through them, more especially those which do not affect my electorate. I am disappointed to observe an omission from the list—namely, a Bill for national insurance. The time is ripe for the Government to initiate such a system. That brings me back to the remarks of the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Boyland) regarding the Mine-workers' Relief Fund. That fund has done a wonderful amount of good. However, I agree with the member for Kalgoorlie that the fund has largely outlived its usefulness. Owing to the decline in mining the subscribers are not there, and therefore the money is not available to meet the liabilities which are being incurred. Some hon. members will advocate the abolition of the fund, but I am not prepared to do so until such time as the Government have something to put in the place of the fund. Possibly a system of national insurance will meet the case: I am not positive on that point. The decline in mining has reached such a pitch that the fund cannot, in any case, continue much longer. I was disappointed to hear the member for Kalgoorlie declare that the secretary to the fund was receiving too large a salary.

Mr. Boyland: I did not say that. What I did say was that the secretary's salary should not be increased while the beneficiaries were being asked to live on 12s. 6d. a week.

Mr. HERON: Even on that statement I am rather disappointed, for I know from experience that the secretary is a very able man. When a good servant gives of his best, he should receive of the best. I am quite prepared to admit that the revenue of the fund has very materially decreased.

It has been found necessary to raise contributions. While the revenue has decreased, the work of the secretary has increased. There were a very few men who had to come upon the fund at the start but the numbers were increased very largely, involving a great deal more work. I would advocate a system of Commonwealth insurance, but seeing that we have so little voice where matters connected with the Commonwealth Parliament are concerned, the next best would be State insurance. I would make it compulsory so that there would be no necessity for collectors to go round collecting the dues; the employers should deduct the money for insurance from the wages of their employees. If that were done, it would relieve the Charities Department of a lot of calls which are at present made upon it. There are many who do not make provision for the bad times ahead. Some do, and they have to pay for those who do not. The Government should bring in a system of State insurance and make it compulsory.

The Minister for Mines: Would it not be preferable to get these men away from the mines before the necessity for advances from the fund arises?

Mr. HERON: I agree with the Minister that it would be a good thing if such a scheme could be brought about. When I was 18 I was only given till 30 to live.

The Minister for Mines: You have spread out a lot since then.

Mr. HERON: That is so. It is my good fortune that I escaped the full effects of miner's complaint. I got out of the mines and worked hard on the surface on the sands and slimes. At any rate, the outside work saved me from going to the Wooroloo Sanatorium. At the same time the suggestion made by the Minister would only affect the miners; it would not affect many others outside mining who become a charge upon the Charities Department. If men are not prepared to make provision for themselves, the Government should be prepared to force them to do so. The Government should take into consideration the question of the cost of living. We know that a Commission was appointed to deal with this problem, but it has not resulted in the cost of living being kept down.

Mr. Angelo: It is falling every day.

Mr. HERON: In some directions, perhaps it is, but I do not think the hon. member who has interjected will say other than that we are paying too much for meat at the present time.

Mr. Angelo: Quite so, but even that will fall.

Mr. HERON: But in the meantime the people are being robbed. The Government should see that the consumers are protected. I was pleased to see that according to the Governor's Speech, the Government intend to introduce a Bill to deal with hospitals. I hope the Bill will make provision for the hospitals throughout the State, for that is a very necessary move.

I know the difficulties we have to face in the country to keep our hospitals going. In my electorate we have a hospital second to none in the State. It has been a matter of great difficulty to keep the hospital open; therefore, I hope this Bill will help to relieve the position. Another Bill mentioned in the Governor's Speech is the Constitution Act Amendment Bill. I hope that Bill will have the effect which I desire. I trust that under that measure the number of members of Parliament will be reduced. The Labour Party have for years advocated that the Upper House should be reduced, or done away with altogether. A considerable amount of time is wasted in this House but there is more wasted in another place.

Mr. Corboy: They do not waste it there; they go away and waste the time.

Mr. HERON: The Minister for Agriculture referred last night to the necessity for putting the land alongside the existing railway lines into full use. I regret that no Bill is being brought forward to deal with this question. We have advocated for years past the imposition of a tax on unimproved land values. I think members generally agree that it is essential that such a measure should be introduced. I am disappointed that no Bill is to be brought forward by the Government. I will not touch upon the other Bills mentioned in the Governor's Speech for we will have an opportunity of discussing them later on. I would like to refer to the Railway Department, however, for we know from the speeches delivered in this Chamber that our railways are not paying, and we also know that a number of trains have been cut out. Some trains have been cut out in my electorate and no one has objected to that. Economy has to be practised and something has to be done to rectify the finances of the State. In bringing about such a reduction in the number of trains, however, consideration should be given to the comfort of those who have to travel over long distances. I refer particularly to the goldfields express which arrives in Perth on Sunday morning. The last time I travelled by that train I found that, during the concluding stages, it had been converted into a suburban train. Leaving my electorate at 7 o'clock one morning we expect to reach Perth at about 9.30 next morning. Many people who travel that long distance cannot afford sleepers, in consequence of which they have a very uncomfortable ride. The discomfort of the ride is accentuated during the last few miles owing to the suburban traffic.

Mr. Mann: It only involves about seven minutes extra.

Mr. HERON: You do not travel second class; you travel first class in comfort.

Mr. Mann: That does not affect the time taken.

Mr. HERON: It takes more than seven minutes and as the hon. member travels first class he does not appreciate what it

means to the poorer people. Just when the long distance passengers are busying themselves straightening up their luggage, preparatory to leaving at Perth, they are interfered with by the passengers from the suburban stations. In addition, this alteration hangs up other trains either in Perth or outside the central railway station. I am living at Cannington at the present time and the alteration has meant that our train is often hung up either at the central station or at East Perth. Some change should be made and the convenience of long distance passengers consulted.

On motion by Hon. T. Walker, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.13 p.m.*

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## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 23rd August, 1921.*

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

### ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1), £1,640,320.

### QUESTION—RETRENCHMENT, GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to retrench a number of railway and other Government employees and officers? 2, If so, what is the approximate number of employees and officers to be so retrenched? 3, What is the approximate date of such retrenchment taking effect? 4, Have the Government considered the question of finding productive employment for men so retrenched?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, So far as departments in the Public Service are concerned, every effort is