

the land; we want population more than anything else; the country is pining for people. If we can get them here we have to put them on the land, and it is a bad thing in the interests of this country whilst endeavouring to place people on the land to lead them to believe that further burdens will be placed on the shoulders of those on the land. Because every man that goes on the land hopes not always to remain the holder of merely a few acres. It is ambition that makes the world go round, and it is ambition that is going to make this country. I hope the natural ambition of man, and man's individuality are not going to be smothered by any legislation to be passed through the House. It is the natural ambition of man to go forward, and it is the optimist who makes the country, and not the pessimist; it is the man with a belief in the country, the man who is prepared to go out on to the land and open it up. But that man goes there, not with a view of remaining all his life the owner of a few acres, but with a natural ambition to get on; and if in a few years' time he finds he requires a thousand acres instead of one hundred acres, I say he should have those thousand acres, and should not be at once weighted down by taxation or some other form of oppression. Unfortunately that appears to be the object of many I have heard on the subject. I hope the present Government will never introduce to this Parliament measures which have in view the crushing of the ambition of the individual or the crushing of the individuality of the people of this country. If the Government do not do that, if they desire to forward the progress of this country by helping to push it up instead of pulling it down, I can assure them they will have my assistance, and, I feel confident, the assistance of all members on this side of the House. I would not call it a waste of time speaking on this motion, seeing that it affords members an opportunity of speaking generally on matters referring to the State; but at the same time I think it unnecessary to unduly prolong speeches in addressing the House on this motion. It is not my intention to delay

hon. members any further on this occasion. I trust that their deliberations under your guidance, Mr. Speaker, may be to the best advantage of Western Australia and may be carried on without heat or acrimony.

Mr. DWYER (Perth) : I rise with a considerable amount of diffidence to address this Assembly for the first time. However, I hope to have the indulgence of hon. members, not perhaps with regard to the matter of what I say, but rather the manner, which I hope may be pardoned in a new member addressing an august Assembly presiding over the destiny of Western Australia. As the result of the recent elections we have heard the country pronounce its decision in no uncertain voice. We have had the labour side returned with a huge majority, and the anti-labour side returned with shattered forces. No doubt there are many causes to which we may attribute this crushing defeat of what was the Ministerial party, but I believe the chief amongst these causes was that termed the Redistribution of Seats Act, an Act termed "redistribution," but which really meant retribution upon the heads of those who were the authors of its being. "Built" as it was "in the eclipse and rigg'd with curses dark," deep and profound as were the methods of political engineering which hurried and manouvred that Bill through the Assembly, the persons who were the authors of it reaped at the hands of the electors the just reward of their pains. But in addition to that Bill, which the people looked upon as an outrage of their constitutional principles and liberties, and indeed an outrage of the decency of common Parliamentary usage, another, and a very powerful factor in the defeat, was the increase in Ministers' salaries, or, to speak more correctly, the manner in which that increase was effected. I have no hesitation in saying that practically all the country was in the dark as to these increases until it leaked out towards the end of the campaign for the general elections just passed. Ministers increased their salaries by the very dubious and questionable method of remodelling an Act and dropping a few sections of that Act,

which to the uninitiated would be left quite unnoticed. The dropping of these sections was really the cloaking of the purpose in hand; because the people themselves did not know that by the fact of Ministers being members of Parliament, as well as occupying the Treasury bench, they were entitled to receive £300 in addition to their Ministerial salaries. When, however, the country found out what had been done a shout of indignation went up, and rang round the ears of Ministerial candidates during the contest just finished. In decent government and decent administration I think the public should always be taken into the full and complete confidence of the Ministry in power. More especially is that so in a matter affecting themselves personally, such as this was. Another matter which I think had a great influence over the result of the recent elections was the high cost of living, which the people attributed, and to a great extent rightly, to the unsympathetic nature of the past Administration. The cost of living is an item which must always be taken into consideration when wages are being fixed, and as such it is almost of equal importance to the daily wage paid to the working man. Because, after all, it is of very little use to raise a man's wages if the increase is to be all swallowed up in the purchase of the necessities of life. The cost of living has been increased, and that not by natural but by artificial causes. If it had been due to natural causes we would have had to bear it as well as we could, but when the cost of living is increased by artificial causes I submit it is the duty of any Government to do what they can, first of all to investigate those causes, and, if they can be removed, to remedy the evil by having those causes removed. The cost of living, or of the necessities of life, in Western Australia as compared with the cost of living in the other States was out of all proportion, and there was no logical or natural reason why we should be paying so much more than was being paid in the Eastern States; in fact the whole of evidence on this question seemed to show that there was some influence at work

producing the artificial cause of the high cost of living. The members of the past Administration did not concern themselves in the least about this artificial cause. They were troubled rather with having the country so mapped out or distributed as to ensure their own return to power; and the people looked at the matter and considered they were being dealt with unfairly by the neglect to take this artificial cause into account. I am glad to hear now that one of the first acts of the present Administration was to institute an investigation into the causes producing this increased cost of living; and knowing, as I do, the gentlemen occupying the Treasury bench, and realising that they have so much at heart the interests of the country, I feel sure that if it be found possible to remove these artificial causes they will be removed, and the people will obtain the necessities of life at something like reasonable prices. I have stated that the cost of living was an item or element to be considered when wages were being fixed or apportioned, and we know, too, that the day is past when the wages were a mere matter of supply and demand. I think it will be conceded even by hon. members on the other side of the House that wages should not be in this country of ours a matter of mere supply on the one hand and demand on the other, and the time has arrived in our conception of economics when the law of supply and demand, as applied to the wages of the working man, must disappear for ever from our school. What really is and must be the basis and the irreducible minimum is not the law of supply and demand, but rather what it costs to maintain in decent comfort a working man having family interests at stake. When this working man with a family to maintain and support finds that he has to pay a good deal more for the necessities of life than he ought to under normal conditions, it is time to call out for an amelioration of the existing set of circumstances, for, after all, if the wages he is getting have not the purchasing power they had a few years ago, and no increase has taken place, he is bound to be worse off; therefore, while it has been

necessary to increase the minimum wage of the employees in the railways in order that they may maintain their families in comfort, had the cost of living been taken into account, and had it been recognised that there were artificial conditions existing which should not exist, it would not have been necessary to heap this extra burden on the community. I find also that the Government intend to introduce an amendment of the Arbitration Act, and I hope that the fixing of a minimum wage on some such reasonable or scientific basis as I have mentioned will be taken into account, and that also some power will be given to the court whereby they can grade employees, fixing not only the minimum wage but also increasing the minimum by gradations to correspond with the years of service, experience, and capabilities of the man whose case the court is, for the time being, considering. The Government announce their intention of introducing a measure to remedy the existing set of circumstances as regards the Public Service appeal board, and never was a remedy more needed. Without reflecting in the slightest degree on the present Public Service Commissioner, I do say that it was ridiculous in the extreme and unjust, not only to the occupant of the position but much more to the public service at large, that he should have been compelled to sit as judge on cases which he had already decided. The two others who sat with him represented the respective parties to the appeal, and the Public Service Commissioner occupied the ridiculous position of being arbiter of cases he had already adjudicated upon. I am very pleased to find from the Speech that this, at any rate, will be amended. There are many grievances of the public service which I hope will be taken into consideration at the same time. I think that every large employer of labour—and the Government in their relation to the public service are employers of labour—should make some provision whereby a gratuity, or pension, or monetary consideration of some kind should be paid to an employee on his retirement, or to his widow or dependants if he dies whilst in the service. That should be

done not only by the Government but by every large employer, and I hope that the Government will set an example to others in this matter. Under the Public Service Act as it stands now we find that some provision is made for insurance but this provision is not at all adequate, and I believe that in many instances it is being entirely neglected. The provision for insurance may at the most give a man, who has spent his whole life in the service, a sum of £200 to retire upon and last him to the end of his days. That is altogether inadequate, and I trust that the Government will take this matter into consideration when framing the amendments, and see if something cannot be done whereby either a decent retiring allowance will be paid, or a system of pensions, based on some scientific principle, will be carried into effect. There are many ways of doing that, amongst them contributions from the service and, perhaps, from the Government, but this is a detail which can be left to the Government and their officers. All I urge is that the Government should in this matter set a prompt example to private employers. It is not a mere matter of generosity, but rather a matter of justice to employees who have done long service, or who have died in harness. I notice that the Government intend also to introduce an amendment to the Early Closing Act. This amendment comes not a day too soon. Whilst in the Eastern States it has been customary for some considerable time past, at any rate in the capital cities, that the employees in the shops should get their Saturday afternoon free, the custom here, except for a brief interregnum, has been all the other way about. I have never been able to see any reason why these shop assistants should be treated in this matter in any way different from other wage earners. There is no reason why they should not have their Saturday afternoons free when everybody is having them free. The present Wednesday afternoon closing is a sort of hybrid arrangement, being neither a holiday nor a working day. Both employers and employees are agreed in advocating the abolition of the Saturday opening, and I hope that in a very

short time we will find the shop assistants, and others in similar occupations, conceded this right, so that they can enjoy their week-end holidays just the same as employees in other avocations. Everybody in this community finds it necessary during the summer months, with the hot days and tepid nights, to have a week-end respite for rest and enjoyment. Hitherto the shop assistants have been debarred from this, and I shall be pleased to see a measure introduced by which they will be able to take the same advantages as other people of the natural resources of river and sea which this City possesses. I should have liked to have seen some reference in the Speech to the early establishment of the University, but I understand that matter is being assiduously pursued by the Government at the present time. I am anxious to see this coping stone placed on our educational establishment. We have a large enough population to support a university now; many of the universities at the present time most noted throughout the world were established with small beginnings, and not as great a prospect of success as we have in Western Australia to-day. After all, it is not necessary that we should have buildings in order to establish a university, because a university is not a thing of bricks and mortar but rather of human beings and souls. It will not be necessary for us to wait till we can afford extensive grounds and an elaborate type of buildings. If we have the growing youth of this State to receive education in the higher educational walks, even in such buildings as we have at present at our disposal, and take such other measures to instruct them as we can with our present meagre resources, we will find our university established. Let us leave to the future the elaborate grounds and trappings and dress which belong to university culture of a high order, and let us get together a university of living, palpitating beings, and everything else will come in time. We must have this university in order to correlate all the stages of our present system of education. We have now our primary and secondary schools, and all we want

to complete the educational edifice is the university. We must have that correlation so that a boy beginning at the kindergarten and going through the primary and secondary schools may finish at the university, and, if necessary, go in for research work.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. DWYER: I was referring to the matter of university education. I will just conclude my remarks on that point by stating that I hope when the new University is established it will be made absolutely free to all who can avail themselves of the education there offered. I make the qualification of being able to avail themselves of the education there offered, because I think there must be some limit or other, and the limit I would place is this—that the boy or youth who would take advantage of this free university system should be able to display some mark or characteristic that would indicate that he will be able to reap the full advantage of the expenditure of the State in organising, equipping, and establishing this University. There is a matter in the Governor's Speech which peculiarly and particularly affects me as the representative of Perth in this House, that is, the Bill which is to be introduced to amend the Local Courts Act. This may seem a small matter, but inasmuch as it affects every trader and every business person in Perth, it is a matter of grave and urgent importance; and not only so to Perth, but it extends its ramifications right throughout the whole of the State, particularly in any town of importance. The present Act and the regulations framed under it seem to be peculiarly instituted for no other reason almost but to put every obstacle in the way of a creditor and put every assistance in the hands of the dishonest debtor. In addition to that, the proceedings under the Act are so cumbersome as to make it almost farcical. When it is remembered that for a debt of a few shillings or a few pounds one has to go through the same method of procedure as if the debt amounted to hundreds, with the issue of plaints, summonses, and affidavits and documents of that kind; and when in addition to

that one has to go through a more cumbersome form of procedure and a great many more forms than to issue a Supreme Court proceeding where the amount claimed may run into thousands, it is seen some amendment to this Act is essential. I think when the Act is amended it should be endeavoured to establish if possible a court of summary jurisdiction for very small amounts. To have the time of the magistrate of the local court taken up in deciding claims of a few pounds seems ridiculous and an utter waste of public time and money. I hope the opinions of the business people and of the legal practitioners will be obtained in order if possible to obtain a fair and workable Act that will commend itself to the legal practitioners and at the same time to the business people at large. Under the present circumstances the litigants who go to the court in the form of plaintiffs have frequently, because of the rules there, which give them small costs—practically no costs—when the amount is under ten pounds, and no costs when the amount is under two pounds, to pay the piper every time, and frequently they reap no reward whatsoever from the verdicts they receive. I hope this Act will receive the particular attention of the Ministry so that this anomalous conditions of things may be amended. People have been groaning under it, complaining about it for years—in fact, ever since the new Act was passed and the new rules promulgated—but all to no effect. Now, however, we have a Ministry which has laid to itself the task of remedying the evils which affect the community, but I hope in this case the remedy will be of far-reaching effect and that we will have a local court which is not only conveniently workable but which will also enable the honest creditor to recover the amount due and which will not assist the dishonest debtor to evade his legal and moral responsibilities. In the matter of the proposed Criminal Appeal Bill, we have an effort that is being made to bring our law into consonance with the present law in England. There they have had a Criminal Appeal Act passed and established for some years, and it has been found to work well and very con-

veniently. When hon. members recollect that, while in the case of a small amount recovered in the local court or the Supreme Court it is possible to go to the Full Court for an expression of opinion and, furthermore, to go to the High Court, and even to the Privy Council, and when they also remember that when it is not a mere matter of money but lives and persons that are concerned, personal liberty at stake, there is no chance whatsoever for an appeal from a decision of a judge and jury, then I think members will see it is high time this state of things was put an end to. It seems practically useless to state that a man's liberty is dearer to him than all his personal belongings and possessions; yet while we find that over his personal belongings and possessions the law places a mantle of protection around him in the shape of appeals from the decision of one court to another, where his personal liberty is involved in the highest form of criminal tribunal, in a case heard before the Supreme Court in its criminal jurisdiction, there is absolutely no appeal whatsoever except in a case where a case may be stated by the judge for the opinion of the Full Court. I hope this appeal court will be so established as to remedy some of the glaring effects of the vagaries of our juries. I am glad to see the Government have taken the personal liberties of all the subjects of this State into consideration in establishing beyond all question that they will have the opportunity of bringing on appeal before the highest tribunal in a criminal court of appeal, the question of guilty or not guilty in criminal cases, thereby helping to safeguard the lives and liberties of the citizens of this State. The member for Moore (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) has said that although there were great principles laid down in the speeches delivered by members of this party on the hustings, he did not see any signs or tokens of them in the Governor's Speech. The hon. member must have been rather blinded by his own predisposition in this matter. If he had looked carefully into the Governor's Speech he would have found that the principles embodied in the speeches made on the hust-

ings prior to the general elections have been, so far at any rate as the work to be accomplished this session is concerned, laid down clearly and distinctly as the line of policy in the Governor's Speech. Nothing can be accomplished all at once, or soon; and there is no doubt that Ministers require time to make themselves acquainted with the details of departmental workings; but so far as it goes, the Governor's Speech is an announcement of policy and projected legislation which any Government might be proud of. The hon. member has also said that the agricultural policy of the Government, particularly with respect to water supply, would have been carried out had the old Ministers remained in office. It is all very well saying that; but, unfortunately for the hon. member, facts contradict it. The hon. member must know quite well that the Ministers who vacated their positions could have done much while they were in office to have taken steps to ameliorate the conditions brought on this country by the drought we are now feeling; but they did not move an inch, they did not stir a hand to do so.

Mr. Mitchell: You are wrong.

The Premier: The hon. member spent a lot of money but did very little.

Mr. DWYER: There was much talk of sympathy, but words like everything else are cheap. When it came to the point of doing something and accomplishing something, it was left to the Labour Ministers to bring into effect some remedial measures for the relief of settlers in the agricultural districts. Not only was it left for them to do, but they grappled with it at once, and one of the first steps on taking office was to relieve the settlers in the drought-stricken districts. The hon. member has also said that we on this side of the House were of the opinion that the land should find the money for everything. I do not know why the hon. member should say that. But if he means that the land is the primary source of all wealth, directly and indirectly, he is correct. On the other hand, if he means that hon. members on this side believe that every burden should be laid on the land and on nothing else, then he is merely

talking for the benefit of the settlers in the farming districts, or rather he is merely talking to gain the applause of the unthinking residents of the farming districts; because while the land is the primary source, directly or indirectly, of all wealth, I am sure Ministers do not intend to relieve any portion of the State, or any class of the State, from their rightful burden of taxation. All must bear the expense in connection with the carrying on of the government of the country; and that every effort will be made, as it has been foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech, to alleviate the distress existing in the agricultural communities, is a direct contradiction of the statement that members on this side of the House say the Government intend to tax all the land and let everything else escape. If fresh burdens of taxation have to be laid, and perhaps they may, I am sure that Ministers will find places whereon to rest them without injuring any class of the community, and that they will have the burden shared equally by all. I trust that it will be found that no member on this side of the House will, as has been suggested, endeavour to crush individuality in any shape or form. We hope to see the best individual traits developed for all they are worth because one of our leading acts and one of our most important principles is that of giving equal opportunity to all, and that means nothing if it does not mean the development in all of that individuality which resides there, provided the individuality is for the good of the community. Any good individual trait which may be characteristic of any person or any body of persons here will be given fair scope to display itself, and if it is commendable to the Government and if it is for the interests of the country at large, it will be given every opportunity to develop. I will conclude by thanking hon. members for the patience with which they have listened to me during this my first speech in this Assembly. We have been singularly blessed in that we possess a land practically flowing with milk and honey, a land where the reward remains to be gained and gleaned by anyone possessing enterprise, and a land to

which nature has been most bountiful in its gifts. I hope hon. members on both sides of the House will endeavour to cultivate and develop the natural resources of this country, and by so doing show that they are true patriots of their country, and are endeavouring so far as they can, and consistent with their position as politicians on either side of the House, to develop all the latent resources of this country and make it the foremost among the States of Australia. Since nature has been so kind it will be unkind on our part not to co-operate with its efforts and not to do what we can to develop them. So far as members on this side of the House are concerned—and I think I may speak even more than personally—we are here representing the people with the fixed purpose and intent of developing all the resources in this country for the good of all classes of the community. That will be our object and we trust that all members of the House will assist us towards that end.

On motion by Mr. Mitchell, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.50 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 8th November, 1911.

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

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motions by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, Sessional Committees were appointed as follow:—

Standing Orders Committee.—The Hon. the President, the Chairman of Committees, Hon. M. L. Moss, Hon. R. Pennefather, and the mover.

Printing Committee.—The President, Hon. W. Patrick, and the mover.

Library Committee.—The President, Hon. W. Kingsmill, Hon. Sir J. W. Hackett.

House Committee.—The President, Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom, Hon. J. E. Dodd, Hon. A. G. Jenkins, Hon. B. C. O'Brien.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. M. L. Moss, leave of absence for the remainder of the session granted to Hon. F. Connor on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—GAME.

Introduced, on motion by Hon. W. Kingsmill, and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West): Since the last meeting of Parliament there has been a general election, with the result, which is well known, of a new party having come to power to rule the affairs of this country for the next three years, and as a member of a non-party House I congratulate my friend, Mr. Drew, on having assumed the responsible and onerous position as leader, and his colleague, Mr. Dodd, on having attained Cabinet rank. As a result of by-elections we have amongst us two new members, Mr. Do-land and Mr. Davis. They come to this Chamber as direct nominees of the Labour party, and I think these gentlemen, after having had some experience of this Chamber, will easily come to the conclusion that every measure that comes to this Chamber for the consideration of members is dealt with fairly and on its merits, irrespective of the party responsible for its introduction. I congratulate both these gentlemen on having become members of this House. I hope when they have the opportunity of knowing more about the methods and business of this Chamber, instead of being advocates for a reduction of the franchise, with a view