

dwelt at any great length to-night upon this subject, but from what I have said before it must be fresh in the minds of hon. members that the position is impossible. The settlers cannot pay the rates to-day, and have not been able to do so in the past. We find that they are rated, not on the quality of the land but on the acreage, and from this it will be seen that it is impossible, not only that the good land can bear the rates, but utterly impossible for the poor lands to carry them. We have no land in Western Australia that can bear the imposition of these water rates. I trust the Government will deal with the matter at an early date and relieve these persons. It is not much use placing a load upon their shoulders which they cannot bear or be expected to bear. There is a question which affects the City to a certain extent on account of its being a nuisance, and also affects the country. I refer to the sewerage system. This system, as it is worked at present, means a direct loss to the country. The whole of the valuable bye-products of that system is wasted and being thrown into the river becomes a nuisance. There is a tremendous quantity of phosphates of lime and ammonia wasted in this way. No doubt there are many other ingredients which are also lost, and which would prove of great value to our soils which are deficient in such chemicals. If the Government wish to make any alteration at all and at the same time do away with a nuisance they should take steps in the direction of providing facilities to handle these waste products so that they might prove of value to the State through giving to the soil something which it needs. In conclusion, I trust that the Government will give consideration to the primary industries which will so unmistakably respond to such consideration and will follow on the good work they have commenced. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.45 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 21st September, 1916.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Honorary Minister: Report of the Senate of the University of Western Australia for the year ending 31st December, 1915.

By the Minister for Works: 1, Boya Quarry—Trading account and profit and loss account and balance sheet for year ended 30th June, 1916. 2, State Implement Works—Balance sheet, profit and loss account, and manufacturing account for year ended 30th June, 1916. 3, Beenup Brickworks—Balance sheet, profit and loss account, and trading account for year ended 30th June, 1916. 4, By-laws of Yilgarn Road Board *re* Cyanide and other Poisonous Waters.

QUESTION—WHEAT MARKETING SCHEME.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Industries: 1, Are the Government aware that a dividend of an extra 6d. per bushel is being paid during this week under the Australian Wheat Marketing Scheme to the wheat growers in South Australia, New South Wales, and Victoria, and that in the latter State the producers had previously been paid a flat rate of 2s. 6d. per bushel on their wheat? 2, Do the Government intend to pay a further sixpence per bushel to the wheat growers in this State? 3, If so, when will it be available?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, Yes, the payment to this State is being withheld by the Australian Wheat Board pending an arrangement for adjusting the amount which was overpaid. 2, Under the Australian Wheat Marketing Scheme for the harvest of 1915-16 this State can only advance to the farmer about 2d. per bushel, the balance of the 6d. per bushel advance being needed to refund to the scheme overpayments made against certificates. 3, 2d. per bushel can be available as soon as the money is received. The Government are now negotiating with the object of securing a greater advance to our farmers.

QUESTION—STATE STEAMSHIP SERVICE.

Report and Balance Sheet.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to place on the Table of the House the balance sheet and manager's report for year 1915-16 of the State Shipping Service? 2, If so, when?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Forthwith. The balance sheet must be accepted, however, as being subject to audit.

QUESTION—STATE BRICKWORKS.

Balance Sheet.

Mr. ANGWIN: asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to place on the Table of the House the balance sheet of the State Brickworks for year 1915-16? 2, If so, when?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Forthwith. The balance sheet must be accepted, however, as being subject to audit.

BILLS (6)—FIRST READING.

1. Electoral Districts (introduced by the Premier, for the Attorney General).
2. Franchise (introduced by the Attorney General).
3. Permanent Reserve (introduced by the Attorney General).

4. Roman Catholic Church Property Act Amendment (introduced by the Attorney General).
5. Special Lease (Lake Clifton)—introduced by the Minister for Lands.
6. Adoption of Children Act Amendment (introduced by Hon. J. D. Connolly, Honorary Minister).

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day—Amendment.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [4.42]: I was glad to hear from the lips of the Premier the other night that he looks on the primary industries, agricultural, pastoral, etc., as part of the sure foundations of this State. In a young State, such as Western Australia, this must surely be so. Build up the primary industries and the secondary industries will naturally follow in due course. I was also pleased to note what the Premier said about the pastoral leases. Care must be exercised that the small man is not shut out. Also, in my opinion, it is absolutely necessary to make a careful classification of our pastoral leases. It is just as necessary to classify pastoral leases as it is to classify our conditional purchase lands. The old method was all right for old times, but the time has arrived when we should go carefully in this matter. Those of us who are acquainted with the huge areas used for pasture know that in many cases pastoralists own hundreds of thousands of acres of land very poorly grassed and unwatered, while others have small areas richly grassed and well watered. Yet we find them paying the same rent. The system is absolutely wrong, and classification is necessary. Of course, we all know that the development of the North-West is also most necessary for reasons which, obviously, it would be indiscreet to mention. We are, surely, aware that we must use our utmost endeavours to populate the North of our State as soon as possible.

Mr. Foley: Why as soon as possible?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Regarding our agricultural industry, I am indeed both pained and surprised to hear hon. members of this House interjecting to the effect, "If the farmer is helped, God help the country."

Opposition members: Who said that?

Mr. W. D. Johnson: You have no right to say that.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I say, if the farmer is not helped to keep on producing, God help the country.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: Nobody said what you allege, and you know nobody said it.

Mr. WILLMOTT: In the past these unfortunate farmers have had to contend with bad seasons, with lack of railway communication, and with many other disabilities.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They have had bad representation.

Mr. W. D. Johnson: They claim it is all due to want of representation.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Even where railway lines have been constructed in farming districts, what do we find? We find what I consider the iniquitous spur line charge put on.

Mr. Collier: Who put it on?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I do not care who put it on. That does not affect the question. In my opinion, it was an iniquitous charge. If prices had been high and seasons good, the farmers might have been able to pay these charges; but, unfortunately, prices have not been high and seasons have been bad. We all know what a severe time these people have gone through.

Mr. Foley: The wheat growers, not the farmers, have had the best time any wheat growers in the world have had, absolutely.

Mr. WILLMOTT: They have had a shocking time. Some of them, unfortunately, have gone out altogether. Others are slowly pulling through. Let us hope, as far as this country is concerned, that they will pull through; and I say that in spite of the sneers of some members who ought to know better. Now I come to the dingo trouble. This subject is, as usual, treated as a source of joy. Facetious members laugh.

Mr. Underwood: You do not want us all to howl, surely, because you are talking about dingoes?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Why do not those hon. members try to grasp the facts as to the fearful effects of the pest?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They cannot realise it.

Mr. WILLMOTT: No; they cannot realise the injury done, or they would not laugh. Whatever statements may be made regarding the pest cannot exaggerate the damage done by the dogs. Thousands and thousands of acres of fenced in paddocks, well grassed, on which a great deal of money has been spent in improvements such as tanks, wells, and so forth, are lying to-day absolutely idle. The owners of the paddocks have sold their sheep, because they cannot keep sheep on account of the dingo trouble.

Mr. Angwin: Because prices are high.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Prices are high, but no man will sell good ewes at the present time if he has grass and water and can keep sheep.

Mr. Angwin: If he wanted money he would sell.

Mr. WILLMOTT: What do we find? Many hon. members have never seen a dingo. Those who have seen them seem possessed with an idea that the dingo is a pretty little creature of small size. They go to the Zoo and see that kind of creature. But what do we see in the South-West? I now exhibit a dingo skin, and I wish to remark that thousands of ferocious animals such as this are roaming the south-western country at the present day. Just let hon. members realise that these animals are travelling in hordes through the South-West.

Mr. Underwood: In packs.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Yes; in packs like wolves. This dog, whose skin I exhibit, killed to my knowledge 228 sheep before, fortunately, he was shot. This one animal accomplished that destruction. How many other sheep this dog killed, I do not know.

Mr. Holman: Did the dingo keep a record?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Yes; he kept a record by lining his inside with fat. Those who know anything about dingoes know how seldom they are found in a fat condition. Years ago they were poor, mangy things; but to-day the dingo has increased in size to something that will be a menace to children going to school in the backblocks.

Mr. Collier: The dingoes are multiplying very rapidly in the cut out timber areas between Busselton and Karridale. There

they are to be found in hundreds or thousands.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Yes; that is so. Moreover, they are unfortunately increasing in numbers right through the south-western district.

Mr. Bolton: The Liberals are going to give them a vote.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I would put them in the *Labour Vanguard*.

Mr. Collier: "To what base uses"?

Mr. WILLMOTT: But this is really a serious question. We laugh, but we should weep to think of the enormous damage this pest does year by year. The scalp bonus, instead of being increased, has been taken off. Not only should I like to see the bonus re-established, but I consider that trappers should be employed and every possible means adopted to deliver the country of this scourge. If the men on the land have to go out of sheep, it means that they will not be able to farm properly. The pest is found not only in the South-West, but also in the eastern districts and in the Esperance country. I was speaking with a man from Esperance only this morning, and he told me that the damage done by dingoes in his district is appalling.

Mr. Underwood: What is done by the people in the North-West? They do not wait for the Government, but kill the dingoes themselves.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I draw the attention of the Minister for Lands to this matter, and I hope he will give it earnest consideration. If, after due deliberation, the hon. gentleman thinks that it would be better to establish vermin boards, I am with him. Let the people help themselves, as well as being helped by the Government through grants and bonuses.

Mr. Angwin: We had experience of that in the Gascoyne case, you know.

Mr. WILLMOTT: That was quite a different thing. A large sum of money was handed over to the Gascoyne people, and, from what I have heard, they had a pretty good time while the Government grant lasted. The vermin boards I have in mind would not have sums of Government money handed over to them, but would be called upon to tax themselves for the purpose of dingo destruction.

Mr. Foley: But do you think they would do it?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Yes. I have sufficient faith in them. The orchardists tax themselves to help to get rid of fruit pests; and why should not the owners of flocks do likewise? In spite of some disparaging remarks which have been made, I hope that good will result from the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the agricultural industry. Time alone can show whether good will result. It is no use arguing on that point now. Let us go by results when the report of the commission is submitted. No doubt the taking of evidence and the preparation of the report will occupy some time. It is no use rushing through an undertaking such as that, which needs to be dealt with carefully. Next, regarding the timber industry. I shall not dilate on that subject at length now.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why not?

Mr. Collier: What about the regulations?

Mr. Underwood: What do you intend to dilate on?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I would recommend the Minister in charge of the Forestry Department to give full and careful consideration to the suggestions and recommendations of the Inspector General for Forests, remembering, at the same time, that that officer is new to our local conditions. He is not yet fully acquainted with local conditions; and therefore he may, in his eagerness to preserve our magnificent forests, perhaps be inclined to press upon the Minister the making of regulations of so drastic a nature as possibly to interfere unduly with the commercial side of the timber industry. Therefore I recommend the Minister to go carefully into the regulations.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You want to curb the Inspector General of Forests straight away.

Mr. WILLMOTT: An eager horse always needs curbing.

Mr. Collier: The regulations have already been adopted.

Mr. Underwood: They have been gazetted.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What do you think the Minister should do with the regulations?

Mr. WILLMOTT: What I have suggested—give them the most careful consideration. Then, if he considers them too drastic, it will be easy for him to make them less drastic.

Mr. Angwin: You believe in paying a heavy salary to an expert and then refusing to take his advice.

Mr. Collier: You want to protect the big interests which came along on a deputation to the Minister.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am thinking not only of the interests of the big men, but also of the interests of the hewers.

Mr. Collier: The hewers were not represented on that deputation, but all the big timber interests were represented.

Mr. Underwood: The hewers are nearly all in France, fighting.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I do not know much about the deputation, but I understand it was a deputation of mill owners, not of sleeper cutters. However, if the regulations are too drastic—and I say frankly that in my opinion they are unworkable as at present gazetted—then I have no doubt that the good sense of the Minister will be quite sufficient to ensure their amendment so as to make them workable.

Mr. Angwin: Which regulations do you refer to—the increased royalty?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I have always been in favour of increasing the royalty. Many and many is the argument I have had on that subject with the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen).

Mr. O'Loughlen: Can you justify the increase?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Yes.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why does it not apply to all, big and small alike, concessionaries and all?

Mr. WILLMOTT: The concessionaire is outside the regulations.

Mr. Collier: Yes; he is well entrenched in every possible way.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The concessions, as we all know, were granted for the purpose of initiating the industry in the early days.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How do you expect the small man to compete against the concessionaire?

Mr. Underwood: He does not want the small man to compete.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The small man has been able to compete in the past. I say all this talk about the royalty is a bogey.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Well, prove it.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I know of my own knowledge that the people who say that they cannot afford to pay 2s. 6d. per load in the square to the Crown are paying 7s. 6d., 8s., and in one case as much as 10s. 6d. per load in the square for timber on private property which is adjacent to the railway system.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are they doing it now?

Mr. WILLMOTT: In a small way.

Mr. Collier: The royalty is largely a bogey.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am glad to hear the late administrator of the Forestry Department say that. I do not propose to take up the time of the House in dealing at length with the Premier's remarks on the trading concerns. I have expressed my opinion on these in this House previously, and it is that I am absolutely opposed to State enterprise interfering with private enterprise. Regarding the question of the Esperance Railway—

Member: What about the State saw mills?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I have given my opinion as to that. The Esperance railway question should be considered with calm deliberation, and I cannot for the life of me see why it has been so often spoken of as a party matter. No railway should be a party matter in my opinion, and surely no member in this Chamber would rejoice to hear that that huge tract of country is useless for any purpose.

Mr. Bolton: I think so.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I say that there is no member in this Chamber who would be so unpatriotic; at least I have yet to learn that there is such a member. I hope that the report of the Commission will be such that the construction of this railway will be proceeded with.

Mr. Collier: No matter what the report is, the land has already been condemned.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am a practical farmer and I have yet to find the farmer who will allow himself and his land to be condemned by the report of any analyst. I have myself had certain soil analyses made condemning land which is the best soil

for producing I have. Therefore, I say the only practical way of dealing with this question is by practical men, and for this reason I cannot understand the howl which has been raised, not only here but outside, against those gentlemen who have been appointed to this commission.

Mr. Walker: The Government is relying on the commission condemning the land, that is why.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Personally I always held the hope not only that this railway would run north and south but that ultimately there would be another line running east and west to join up with the Great Southern. If the report is unfavourable, which I do not for a moment anticipate, then I, like the late Attorney General, shall be disappointed.

Mr. Walker: I am disappointed at the appointments.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am not. I say that the personnel of that commission has been unfairly attacked.

Mr. Walker: Why?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Mr. Dempster would have been the very last man I would have picked to appoint on that commission if I had a wish for a report which would condemn the railway and the country.

Mr. Walker: Why?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Common sense answers why. The man's whole interests are there.

Mr. Walker: No; not in the mallee country.

Mr. WILLMOTT: We had an hon. member the other evening (Mr. Munsie) who stated that it was unfair to appoint him because the line ran through his land, that he ran cattle there.

Mr. Walker: What nonsense.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Exactly, what nonsense. I am acquainted with the country. I was there for 18 months.

Mr. Walker: Then you know where Mr. Dempster lives.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am quite aware that Mr. Dempster lives at Esperance; also that he has a station at Fraser Range.

Mr. Walker: Quite so; that is away beyond this country.

Mr. WILLMOTT: How can it be possible that a railway from 30 to 60 miles away will detrimentally affect Mr. Dempster and his land? Surely no hon. member will have the

audacity to say that Mr. Padbury, of Koo-jun, is not a man of honour and integrity.

Mr. Walker: Is he a mallee expert? Does he know anything about that class of country?

Member: He is a supporter of the Liberal party.

Mr. WILLMOTT: As a matter of fact, he is a staunch supporter of the Country party.

Mr. Bolton: It amounts to the same thing.

Member: He was appointed as representing the Country party.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I had no knowledge of the appointment of Mr. Padbury.

Mr. Collier: Alex. Monger did.

Mr. WILLMOTT: That is absolutely incorrect. If the honour of men like Mr. Padbury and Mr. Dempster is to be attacked in this way we will never get anyone to accept seats on commissions at all. I have the interests of this railway as much at heart as anyone in the State of Western Australia.

Mr. Bolton: You used to have.

Mr. WILLMOTT: And I would raise my voice in strong protest if I thought these men were biased in the matter.

Mr. Collier: Your protest would not be worth twopence.

Mr. Munsie: Have you heard Mr. Dempster's opinion on this railway?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Am I bound to answer that question? If so, I will answer it by saying that Mr. Dempster has expressed his opinion to me—but what was it? When you see the report you will find out; and then you will be sorry that you have attacked him so readily.

Mr. Munsie: No one has attacked him yet.

Mr. WILLMOTT: You have. You have attacked him and the whole personnel of the commission, and I say it was absolutely wrong to do so.

Mr. Angwin: A protest came from your executive.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Am I responsible for my executive? Are you responsible for what your party is doing to Hughes in the East?

Mr. Angwin: I am talking of Western Australia.

Mr. WILLMOTT: And I am talking about the Eastern States. It is the wish of

the Country party that a very full and true report shall be obtained. I think the only way to settle this vexed question of the Esperance land is to have experimental plots. It may be that when the commission arrives there they will find crops are already growing and that evidence may be sufficient to settle the question of the suitability of the soil. I have heard all sorts and conditions of reports about this land. I have been told that the wheat is waving there to-day from four to five feet high and I have been told that in other places the wheat has died off almost as soon as it got above ground. When you have contradictory reports like that, all from people one would be inclined to take notice of, then I say there must be something wrong. Is it that the country is patchy, or that one farmer farms on so much better methods than another? We know that men have cleared out from that district after having spent years and a lot of money there. Those men say that whereas the rainfall is there in inches it falls during the wrong period of the year. I cannot speak on this point myself, for during the 18 months I was down there we had very little rain, and I was told afterwards that it had been a particularly dry season. There must be, however, something wrong in country which has an apparent rainfall of from 14 to 17 inches and yet gives such poor results. I feel sure the Commission will give us the reason for this, and that as a result of the investigations of the Commission we shall be able to properly open up this huge area of country. I hope that every assistance which can be rendered by Government experts to the Commission will be rendered. I want to emphasise this point that in my opinion—and I think hon. members opposite will agree—it would be foolish to have experts on the board. We want their knowledge as witnesses.

Mr. Walker: We want experts in both capacities; one to draw up the evidence and another to get it from the witnesses.

Mr. WILLMOTT: We can draw out the evidence from the experts and can get our witnesses from the people working and living in the districts. We have been told that some experts have already condemned the land.

Mr. Walker: No experts have condemned it.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Did Professor Lowrie ever make any remarks about it? I think he did. I am pleased to hear that we are not going to have a continuance of the everlasting trouble of drawing up two income tax returns in the future. No taxpayer should be worried twice a year. Everyone who has had to fill up that return wonders at the brains of the men who drew up those forms. I want to compliment the late Government, and also the present Government, on having men in their Taxation Department who will not scruple to get the tax out of one whether it is owing or not. If you do not owe it they will bluff that you do.

Mr. Foley: In other words you say the Taxation Department are robbers.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I say they are practically robbers.

Mr. Foley: Whether you owe or whether you do not they get it out of you.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I hope that we will have a chance of laying this matter before the Premier. I do not think it is right that we should have a bludgeon held over our heads. A man makes out his return honestly, and what do we find? That the officers of the Taxation Department say, "How did you come to expend so much money this year on your orchard?" You write and explain that it has been a particularly bad year for pests, and they reply that they cannot accept that as an excuse. Then again I have known cases where they have written to inquire why, with so many sheep, you did not have a greater increase. How is it, they ask, that you had 900 sheep and no increase in lambs? The answer is that the sheep were wethers. It seems to me that every man who sends in an income tax paper is looked upon as a rogue and a scoundrel.

Mr. Collier: They look on you with suspicion right enough.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am glad that the recommendations of the select committee on horse-racing are at last going to be carried into effect. A lot of valuable information was collected, and I am sure that, when the House deals with the question, members will find that the information will be most useful to them. The opening up of the lime deposits in various parts of the State must also receive early consideration. I was pleased to hear the Bill dealing with this matter read

the first time to-day. We have been waiting long enough for it.

Mr. Angwin: You might have had one last year if it had not been for the Legislative Council.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I do not hold any brief for any particular line deposit. Thank goodness we are well provided with deposits, and I believe the right should be given to work all. The bulk handling of wheat is a question of magnitude and importance, and the advantages are great, but owing to the present condition of the Treasury I am afraid the matter cannot be entertained in the immediate future. We should in the meantime get all the available information regarding this great question, though we should not swallow holus-bolus that which has been handed to us by those interested. Of course they may be right in what they say, but we should prove they are right by getting the best information from all parts of the world.

Mr. Angwin: There is a very good report on bulk handling in America by our Engineer-in-Chief.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The working of the Industries Assistance Board, owing to the new system, I hope and trust will relieve the settlers of some of the annoyances they have had to put up with. In that regard, again time will tell. I have already in this Chamber expressed the opinion that better results would be obtained by having inspectors out amongst the farmers than having them centralised in the office of the board. Regarding education, the pioneers who go out into the backblocks must have these facilities for their children. I am aware that the cost of education is already very high, but hon. members will agree with me that if we want people to go out into the back country we must be prepared to follow them up with educational facilities. I know of many instances, unfortunately, where people with families of young children have been obliged to leave their holdings to go into the nearest towns to reside, simply because they were unable to get together the required number which would have permitted a school to be established. Of course we all know that the war has made it exceedingly difficult for the Director of Education to get suitable teachers to fill the many positions that are vacant. He has, however,

done remarkably well to keep up the standard. But I wish to impress upon the Minister for Lands that if he wants to settle the back country in the South-West and Eastern districts he must be prepared to follow up the settlers with school facilities. If we are to make our great South-West what it should be we must open the purse-strings of the Agricultural Bank. This part of the State is heavily timbered and well watered, and it will yet carry a very big population. Funds are not available, and it is almost vain to ask that railways should be built. The time has come, however, when the line from Busselton to Margaret River should be built. The people who would be served have been down there for many years. In some instances the people there have been waiting for 60 or 70 years for that railway. I was told the other day that they had waited so long that they might as well wait for another 60 years. If that is the way those people are going to be treated, how can we expect them to induce their children to remain in that part of the State?

Mr. Collier: I think we have reached the stage when we shall have to utilise all the unused land alongside existing railways before we build lines in sparsely settled districts.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Quite right. And I say that those people holding such lands should be made to work them or else they should be taxed so heavily that they will be forced to dispose of them. When we do embark on our railway construction policy, the line from Denmark to Mamjimup should receive full consideration.

Mr. Walker: Not until the Esperance line is completed.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Then the Wilgarrup to Cranbrook line is worthy of early attention. If, after the war, we are to have the big influx of men, which has been spoken about so freely, then all the lines recommended will have to be built.

Mr. Heitmann: I would like to see you put soldiers on land that will cost £30 an acre to clear.

Mr. Taylor: It is all very well to talk about it.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The South-West should have more attention than it has received. If hon. members, instead of jeering about the south-western portion of the

State, only visited it they would form totally different opinions.

Mr. Taylor: I have heard that for the past 15 or 16 years in this House.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Regarding the proposed adjournment of the House to enable members to take part in the conscription referendum campaign, I do not think it will be necessary to adjourn for any length of time.

Mr. Bolton: One week ought to be sufficient.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Surely it ought not to be necessary in Western Australia to canvass town after town and go through the backblocks to try and induce people to vote on this question. There is hardly anyone here who has not some relation or some dear one either fighting or training, and that being the case there should be no occasion to have to bludgeon people to vote for a measure which, I feel sure, will be carried by an enormous majority.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle) [5.27]: I am disappointed somewhat with the speech of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. In view of the recent political changes in which the party of which the hon. member is the nominal leader has taken a prominent part, one would have expected at least some references from him to the matter which is one of great importance to the public of Western Australia. I do not know whether the hon. member himself was consulted in regard to those changes, neither do I know whether, as leader of that party, he took any active part in bringing them about, but I do think the public had a right to expect, the first time he spoke, to hear from him some particulars as to why he and the party behind him took the step they did. Instead of that what do we get? The hon. member in a somewhat dramatic way shelters himself behind a dingo skin, and further than that, he misquotes a remark made by an hon. member on this side of the House, which, by the by, was wrongly attributed to me in the *West Australian*, and he attempts to misrepresent the view, not only of the member who made it but of myself towards the farmers.

Mr. Willmott: On a point of order, is it a fair statement for the hon. member to

make that I deliberately misquoted with intent to deceive?

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member takes exception to the remark it is not a fair statement.

Mr. CARPENTER: I did not use those words. I stated that the hon. member misquoted a remark of a member of this side of the House for the deliberate purpose of misrepresenting the views of members of this side towards the farmers.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the difference between that quotation and what the hon. members says? The hon. member takes exception to the remark which was made.

Mr. CARPENTER: If so, I must withdraw in accordance with the Standing Orders; but facts are facts.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not withdrawing the remark. The hon. member had better withdraw first and then proceed with his speech.

Mr. CARPENTER: I withdraw the remark; but I say that the hon. member misquoted a member who made the remark to which I have referred. He must have seen it in the Press and must know that he misquoted it.

Mr. Bolton: That is so; there is no doubt about it.

Mr. Willmott: I did not see it in the Press.

Mr. Bolton: Up again! You are like a bit of string.

Mr. CARPENTER: All I want to say following that, is that while I have been in politics now for some 20 years I have never known of any Government who laid themselves out to help the farmers in every possible way as much as did the late Scaddan Government. Nothing that the Government could do was left undone to help these farmers in their times of trial and distress, and if the hon. member can point to anything which was not done by the late Government in fairness to the farmer and the rest of the country I would like him to state it. So far, he has done nothing of the sort. He has simply tried to misrepresent the attitude of those who have done more for the farmers than the Government which he is now following will ever do if they remain in office for ever so long. That brings me to the fact that we have a change of Minis-

try, and if I was to be very candid I should say, speaking for myself, that I am somewhat revelling in the fact of being on this side of the House enjoying all the freedom of an opposition member.

Mr. Taylor: Do not start your blood-thirsty speeches straight away.

Mr. CARPENTER: I certainly have had to restrain myself while on the other side of the House in the way the hon. member for Margaret (Mr. Taylor) has not done.

Mr. Taylor: Wait till you have heard me going properly.

Mr. CARPENTER: I quite expect the hon. member will take full advantage of his liberty as I intend to do. My only regret is that we shall not be here long enough to give ourselves full scope.

Mr. Angwin: We shall be here in the House all right.

Mr. CARPENTER: It is my conviction that the change of Government does not represent a change in the views of the electors of the State. I say that deliberately. I do not believe that the change of Government which took place lately represents in any degree a change in the views of the electors towards the policy of the Labour party.

Mr. Hickmott: What about the Canning election?

Mr. CARPENTER: I will come to that presently. What has brought about this change of Government? First of all we had shall I say, the moral defection of one supporter of the Labour Government, which led to the loss of the Roebourne seat. It is easy to comprehend, when an hon. member has neglected his constituents, that when the party to which he belonged sends a fresh man the electors naturally resent their ill-treatment, and take their revenge against the party as well as against the man. We have had a second seat lost as a result of the political somersaulting of another member of the party.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Why did you not contest my seat?

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member has committed that somersault.

Mr. Munsie: You never went out as a Labourite.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The leaders were there.

Mr. Munsie: To assist you.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There has not been much gratitude shown for the efforts put forward to help you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member was careful when seeking election not to disavow the Labour principle. His whole grievance was on account of something which he imagined the late Premier and the Labour Government had been guilty of doing.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Bad administration and a long series of broken promises.

Mr. Bolton: Bad land deals, and that sort of thing. They all help.

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member does not quite realise, as he will before long, that he has simply been made a cat's paw of by the Liberals, and that all this booming and boosting of the Liberal press was not done for the glorification of Johnston but for the defeat of Labour and those principles of which up to lately he was an avowed supporter. So far as the loss of these seats is concerned, they do not represent any appreciable change in the voice of the electors towards Labour politics.

Mr. Munsie: We only lost the Roebourne seat by 36 votes.

Mr. CARPENTER: Then there was the grand coup which took place in the turn-over of our farmer friends. There has been so much secrecy about this that one could only hope that the leader of that party in this House, when he first got up to speak after the change had taken place, would have given some sort of explanation or an apology of some kind. We might have expected from him some reason for the change taking place and how it was accomplished. But we have been dependent on what had been allowed to appear in the daily paper, which has printed what was given it from the results of certain conferences also held in secret. The paper has elaborated upon it and the result is that the country, at least some portion of the electors have been misled into believing that the change of attitude on the part of the Country party indicates that they have grown tired of the Labour administration.

Mr. Taylor: There was altogether too much secrecy about it.

Mr. Foley: There was not much secrecy at York.

Mr. CARPENTER: It would perhaps be out of place to attempt to criticise too closely the position of members of the Country party. Personally, I have a great regard for every individual member of that party, and I believe that so far as they individually are concerned this feeling is general on this side of the House. I have before expressed my sympathy, if I may so put it, that they were in the somewhat humiliating position of being subject to the decision of man, and of a very small body of men outside this Chamber. I am glad to hear, though it is not announced officially, that this portion of their constitution has been amended to relieve them of that obligation.

Mr. Heitmann: Did you read that latest book "Gardiner's opinion of Stannistreet."

Mr. Angwin: What about Stannistreet on Gardiner?

Mr. Foley: They could not print it; it would have burnt the paper.

Mr. CARPENTER: After listening to their leaders this afternoon one concludes that, so far as their political prospects are concerned, they have little indeed to expect from the change which has taken place. All that we have heard from the member for Nelson (Mr. Wilmott) is that he hopes the Government will do this or that, that the Commission will report something else, and altogether an expression of vague policy of hope for the future as a result of the change. One would have thought if they were going to sell themselves politically they would have made sure of getting something more than a vague hope of that sort.

Mr. Taylor: They will soon know something about it.

Mr. Angwin: Mr. Hamersley's election showed what the people thought of it.

Mr. CARPENTER: I wish to reply to the interjection made earlier as to the Canning election. This has acquired some importance because our friends on the Government benches have been making a great song about it on the grounds that it indicates very clearly a great change in public opinion. Where is the evidence of such a change?

The Minister for Lands: Four hundred and sixty-two.

Mr. CARPENTER: It was a Liberal district before, and it returned a Labour member. Since the previous election some hundreds of Labour voters have left the district and gone across the sea. Had it not been for the dozens of these men who are at the war 80 per cent. of whom were workers and Labour supporters, the hon. member would—

The Minister for Lands: Everyone would have voted for the present Attorney General.

Mr. CARPENTER: The hon. member would not now be holding the office of Attorney General.

The Minister for Lands: He would have been returned by a still larger majority.

Mr. CARPENTER: He would be back in his private office and the gentleman who previously sat in his seat as Premier would be here again. The fact that Labour did not capture the Canning seat does not indicate in any degree whatsoever any change of policy or attitude towards Labour politics. It is simply an evidence that hundreds of those who formerly supported Labour in the district had not an opportunity of voting and if they were back again next week and there was another election they would show a very different result.

The Minister for Lands: You can have another election next week.

Mr. Bolton: And get it over before they come back. That is your policy.

The Minister for Lands: You sent your big gun and I suppose you will send No. 2 gun next time.

Mr. Collier: You have no more room for any more bridges, you know.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Government have given two great grounds for complaint against the previous Scaddan Government and the first and the largest has been on the score of finances. Look, they say, at the huge deficit which this wicked Labour Government are piling up. I have pointed out more than once previously that since the inauguration of Federation, when we lost the control of our Customs revenue, this State has had nothing but chronic deficits year after year. And we will con-

tinue having deficits until we readjust our finances, until we call upon the people of this State to pay more taxation in return for the services they receive from the State. The Labour Government was honest and courageous enough to make the attempt. The people who sent them here at the 1911 election gave the Labour Government a mandate to readjust the finances, and, in accordance with that mandate, the Labour Government brought in a Taxation Bill. What became of it? It went through this Chamber by a big majority; and then we found what had been found before, that while nominally the Government of the country sits in this Chamber, the real Government, the stranglehold, is in another place. That other place is willing and anxious at all time to go before the section of the people which it represents and claim that it is non-party. But when the responsible House, and the Executive, call upon these people to pay for their services, then another place asserts its power, defies the Government and the people, and says this taxation shall not be levied.

Mr. Nairn: And at the next appeal the people supported them.

Mr. CARPENTER: At the next appeal the Labour Government was returned with a majority; certainly a reduced majority, but still a majority, authorised to impose taxation. The Government again brought in a Bill, again this House passed it, and again another place rejected it. It does not matter what Government, or what party, holds the reins of office, there can be no adjustment of the finances until something is done either to break that power of another place or to bring it to subordination to the wishes of the electors.

Mr. Munsie: They will pass any taxation which the present Government cares to bring forward.

Mr. CARPENTER: Possibly in a party spirit another place—I will not call it a non-party House—may, to save the face of the Government now in office, say, "Send us up a Bill and what we would not do for the Labour Government we will do for you." I should not be surprised if that proves to be the case. But, until that House can be brought to see the necessity for readjusting the financial burden and for raising further

revenue, it does not matter what Government is in office, or what party supports them, the country cannot get sound finance. The present Government told the people that if returned to office their first work would be to adjust the finances. What have we had thus far to that end? A paltry tax to take a pinch out of the 3d. ticket for which a child pays to go to a picture show. A great statesman-like proposal brought before the country for the purpose of readjusting the finances!

Mr. Nairn: Your party introduced a similar proposal.

Mr. CARPENTER: And in the meantime the Government have given to a section of the people, in return for support afforded them on that side of the House, a concession which will swallow up more than the total sum to be raised by the proposed taxation. What the Government have done therefore has simply been to make the deficit larger than it was; and the country or at least that portion of the people which was so blind and misled as to expect a readjustment of the finances from this Government is now asking what the Government proposes to do to abolish the deficit. There is only one answer, and that is that the Government are making matters worse than before, for the sake of keeping themselves on the Treasury bench. The other day I heard a man, after having read the Premier's speech, make remarks such as I would not care to repeat—it would be out of order. Amongst other things he said, "It looks to me as though Wilson has crossed over to the Treasury bench under false pretences."

Mr. Bolton: That is not out of order; it is the truth.

Mr. CARPENTER: That man was a Liberal supporter, who sincerely believed, and who was consequently sincerely deceived, that when the late leader of the Opposition pledged himself to square the finances he meant what he said. The Premier attained office by virtue of that pledge and this man is disappointed, as he had expected the Premier would keep his promise. The second ground for criticism of the Labour Government is on the score of the State trading concerns. We who have sat on that (Ministerial) side of the House have had to listen session after session for two or three

years past to a reiteration of condemnation of State trading concerns. The people have been led to believe that the trading concerns were the cause of the loss of a considerable sum of money, and they thought that so soon as there was a change of Government something would be done to abolish the trading concerns and thus save the money they were losing. What do we find? Two butcher shops have been closed up—a marvellous performance on the part of the Government after having been in office nine or ten weeks. If they go on at this rate they will be required on the Treasury bench for the next 50 years, in order to abolish all the trading concerns. Two butcher shops have been closed, and the State brickworks, I understand, have stopped working for the time being. So far the only effort towards abolishing trading concerns has been to close up two butcher shops, both of whom were in districts represented by Labour members.

Mr. Allen: That is why they were opened.

Mr. Bolton: And why they were closed, too.

Mr. CARPENTER: I do not propose dilating on the question of State steamers; we have had rather too much of them lately, and Ministers controlling those departments may be expected to give us details. I want in passing to point out that the hon. the Premier, and his colleagues, who set themselves up against a policy of State trading, in doing so set themselves against the best economic thought and the growing practice all over the civilised world. The best economic writers and thinkers to-day have proved beyond all doubt that private enterprise and private competition in industry and commerce are killing themselves, are breaking down. Opposition to State trading enterprises is not the way in which the more progressive nations are grappling with this problem. One of the secrets of Germany's prosperity, which surprised the world by her peaceful penetration of the world's markets, was due to a recognition of this factor. Further than that, what has happened since the war began?—Conservative England has adopted the control of industry and commerce, a thing which would not have been thought possible two years ago.

Mr. Munsie: They had to do it in the interests of the people.

Mr. CARPENTER: Exactly. The necessity has been brought home sooner by the war than it would otherwise have been. The war has emphasised this necessity in a way nothing else could have done. Yet, in spite of all this, the Premier and his colleagues tell the people that if they are put on the Treasury bench they will put a stop to the practise of tinkering with enterprises and thus interfering with private enterprise. I am here to assert that, despite what mistakes may have been made in the past, the policy of State trading entered upon by the Labour Government has the approval of a big majority of the people of Western Australia.

The Attorney General: Not of an absolute majority, though.

Mr. CARPENTER: It would be a difficult matter to ascertain the opinion of an absolute majority, but I am quite willing that the Premier be put up on one side and Mr. Scaddan on the other, and the question submitted to a referendum of the people, one to be the champion of private enterprise and the other the champion of State trading. If that were done Mr. Scaddan would win hands down.

Mr. Allen: Who won the Canning cup?

Mr. CARPENTER: May I repeat for the benefit of the member for West Perth (Mr. Allen), who was absent from the Chamber, what I have already stated regarding the Canning election, that in my opinion the Canning election was lost to Labour because of the absence from this State of hundreds of Labour voters. Both grounds for the criticism indulged by the present Ministry while on this (Opposition) side of the House have failed to make good, and if one may judge from appearances, the Government have no intention of attempting to make good any promises which the electors have been led to believe were sincerely made. We have indications already that the Government have no wish to face Parliament for too long a period. On the very first day on which the House met after the change of Government, the Honorary Minister, sitting in solitary glory, informed the House and the country that the purpose of the Govern-

ment was not legislation but administration. That they did not want to spend too much time in Parliament. Accordingly, he asked for a long adjournment and got it, with the help of friends on the cross benches. Since then the Premier has been careful to tell the country that he does not intend to have a very long session. He has also indicated that if members want an adjournment for the conscription campaign he is quite willing to give it to them, and I would not be at all surprised if in the event of someone suggesting an adjournment for a wedding or a dog fight he gave it to us at once. He does not want to be in Parliament too much; he likes the seclusion of his ministerial office and, unless I am a false prophet, we shall not be here very long before we close up again and the Government get back into the safety of recess and stay there a very long while. I listened with much interest to the speech of the Premier, because I had happened to read the leading article in a morning journal on the day the House assembled, and I was very much amused to find that the writer of that article had set himself out to tell the country just what the Premier was going to say that same afternoon.

Mr. Bolton: And he said it.

Mr. CARPENTER: It was truly remarkable. There was something more than coincidence between the points in the Premier's speech and the points in the leading article. He followed instructions almost to the letter, and when I heard the Premier I thought, "Well, what a waste of time; he might just as well refer to a certain leading article, say 'ditto' and sit down." One of the points which it was prophesied he would make read something like this—

He can point to a reduction of railway freights as evidence of valuable accomplishment.

He can. It is valuable to those who receive that concession, but to the country at large it spells robbery and loss. The same writer also said that the proposal to appoint a Royal Commission on the agricultural industry was another evidence of the Government's earnestness; but he did not say earnestness for what. The member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott) in his speech this afternoon expressed the pious hope that much good

would result from that commission, but I ask my friends opposite if they honestly expect any practical result whatever from that commission. I do not believe that anyone of them expects to find any benefit whatever from that commission's report. What can the commission ascertain and tell us? We know what is the matter with the agricultural industry. Give us a commission which can assure a rainfall, and more than half our troubles will be over. But, what in the world can a commission do with a subject like that? We know what our wheat lands can do and what they have done, but we must have moisture, and must have it spread over a certain period of time if we are to grow wheat.

Mr. Harrison: Are there not any artificial barriers to the industry?

Mr. CARPENTER: Does the hon. member know of any?

Mr. Harrison: Yes, many.

Mr. CARPENTER: Well, the hon. member has been here long enough to have told us all about them. If there are any artificial barriers the men who come here as farmers' representatives ought to have given us that information long ago, and it is an evidence of neglect of duty on their part if they now tell us that the agricultural commission is going to give us any new information on the subject. This commission, this bundle of carrots—

Mr. Thomas: Carrots! What do you mean?

Mr. CARPENTER: I used that expression because at the recent Farmers and Settlers' conference one of the delegates said "We are out for the carrots."

Mr. Holman: I did not know that "Gardiner's goats" eat carrots.

Mr. CARPENTER: Hon. members who represent the farmers in this House cannot honestly tell us that they expect any practical results from this commission. It is simply an expedient on the part of a Government that have hung up this question for I do not know how long. We have a commission now in respect to coal. I do not know for how long that has been sitting, but I know that since the commission was appointed we have not heard very much about Collie coal. The appointment of that commission has served to suppress the question

most effectually and, I suppose, encouraged by that example, the present Government have said "This is a capital way of shelving a question; let us appoint a commission and we shall not hear any more about it for the next year or two."

Mr. Wansbrough: Did not your Government appoint a commission?

Mr. CARPENTER: I never heard of it if they did. I am putting it from the point of view of the farmers' representatives here when I say they have nothing whatever to hope for as the result of the appointment of this commission. It is merely one of the bundle of carrots dangled before them and their supporters in order to justify their change from one side of the House to the other at the dictation of some persons outside the House who have not as much interest in the farming industry as they have themselves. Let me put this further point to my friends on the cross-benches: When negotiations were proceeding with a view to dragging them across the Chamber and attaching them as a tail to the Liberal dog, there were two or three propositions; and it was remarkable that the concessions made to them were concessions at the expense of the Treasury. But the one thing they asked for themselves, which would have cost the Liberal party something, was emphatically denied them. They said—"Give us lower railway freights on fertilisers." "Yes, certainly" was the answer. "Give us something to help the agricultural industry." "Yes, anything you like." "Give us also a few seats for ourselves." "Oh, certainly not. What more will you expect? Why we are out to knock you out as soon as we can." The Liberal party was simply flabbergasted at the audacity of the farmers in asking that certain seats should be held for them, and hon. members there sold themselves too cheaply. It was a gift, and the only regret I have is that their political purchase price does not come out of the pockets of the men who have got all the benefit, but comes instead from the pockets of the people. I say it was a venal political bargain. Now a word or two in reference to my friend the Attorney General. During the recent discussion interest somehow centred around the Attorney General just as a whirlwind sometimes centres round an empty jam

tin. He has been made the central figure during the recent fight between the parties. The Press have lauded him to the skies. He has been on the goldfields, where they gave him a brass button, and the Press announced in large headlines that he was the winner of a gold medal.

Mr. Bolton: For beauty.

Mr. CARPENTER: And they said so much about him that I am beginning to wonder whether he took himself seriously and thought it was meant for him.

The Minister for Works: Were the miners' union sincere when they gave him the medal?

Mr. CARPENTER: They were sincere, of course; the miners are always sincere, and they readily said, "When a man comes up to do his best, whatever it may be, let us give him a fair deal."

The Minister for Works: Then why do you criticise him?

Mr. CARPENTER: Just wait a minute. The hon. member's leader has expressed some indignation because someone had the temerity to say that the Attorney General did not know anything at all about the mining industry, and that therefore the appointment ought not to have been made. Not only the Premier, but other speakers, both inside and outside the House, have been at great pains to assure us that the Attorney General is an ideal Minister for Mines. Now the strongest condemnation of the appointment has come from the Premier himself. Here are his own words—

We are going to call a mining conference—
What for?

In order that the new Minister may obtain the benefit of the knowledge and the experience of others, and so embark on correct lines.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. CARPENTER: Before tea I had quoted the words of the Premier, words used as a kind of apology and at the same time as an attempted justification of the appointment of the Attorney General to the position of Minister for Mines. I am bound to say that in the calling of this conference on mining—a conference called in order that the new Minister for Mines may gain the advan-

tage of other men's experience and thought—the Government have shown considerable of the wisdom of the serpent, and to that extent are deserving of congratulation.

The Minister for Railways: Why should not the Government seek assistance?

Mr. Collier: There is every reason for doing so if you have no knowledge yourselves.

Mr. CARPENTER: I wish, however, to take mild exception to the efforts which have been made to boost the Attorney General as a heaven-born Minister for Mines just because he happens to have been fortunate enough to secure a temporary settlement of what might have proved an extremely awkward dispute.

The Minister for Railways: You do not object to his having secured the settlement, do you?

Mr. CARPENTER: The dispute had been pending for some months; and anyone—whether he were Attorney General or an ordinary citizen—who had gone to the fields with authority to give the men three-fourths of what they were demanding, could hardly have failed of procuring a settlement. I shall not say anything about the merits of the dispute. So far as the inquiry has proceeded, it has only shown that the men had a good case. The Attorney General was wise enough to recognise that, and to use his influence with the Chamber of Mines—an influence which, perhaps, a Minister on the other side in politics might not have been able to exercise—to induce the Chamber of Mines to agree to the proposal for a Royal Commission of inquiry into the standing of the alleged aliens, which commission of inquiry had been asked for. The proceedings so far have gone to show that the men had a genuine grievance. I trust that the grievance will be remedied and future trouble thus avoided. But I wish to point out that the dispute regarding the employment of aliens was not in itself a mining question. The fact that the Attorney General has been able to devise a means of settling that dispute does not prove that he is a paragon as a Minister for Mines. As a matter of fact, the dispute might just as easily have arisen in connection with the timber industry or the coal mining industry, and the

very same steps could then have been taken to settle it.

Mr. Walker: And generally are taken.

Mr. CARPENTER: Exactly. Therefore, I say that the Premier, in telling us that the Minister of Mines has done all this, and that therefore the Attorney General is a paragon as a Minister for Mines, is quoting evidence which has no bearing.

The Premier: I do not think I used the word "paragon" at all.

Mr. CARPENTER: I do not think the Premier did, but the hon. gentleman quoted this proceeding of the Attorney General as a good and sufficient reply to those who criticised the Attorney General's appointment as Minister for Mines.

The Premier: Do not you think it is a very good reply?

Mr. CARPENTER: No. I think it has nothing whatever to do with the case.

The Premier: You are not generous.

Mr. CARPENTER: The same dispute might have occurred in any other industry, and any other man could have done what the Attorney General did as Minister for Mines.

The Premier: Your friends on the gold-fields thought a lot of him, and a lot of his action.

Mr. CARPENTER: I say that any man who went to the fields and gave the miners right away three-fourth of what they wanted, could not help being popular.

The Premier: The Attorney General did not give them all they wanted; but he was given a gold medal by the men. I think they elected him an honorary member of the union.

Opposition Members: Was it an iron cross?

Mr. CARPENTER: I have referred to the fact that the miners were generous and presented the Attorney General with a brass union badge. The Press has been trying to make the public believe that the men were so pleased with the Attorney General's cleverness that they gave him a gold medal. What they did give the hon. gentleman was the ordinary union badge.

The Premier: At Boulder they gave him a reception, you know.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am not endeavouring to detract at all from the work of the Attorney General in settling that dispute; but I say his work, contrary to what the Premier would have us believe, is no evidence whatever that the Attorney General is a heaven-born Minister for Mines.

The Premier: I did not say that he was. I said that he had shown that tact and commonsense which the member for Boulder (Mr. Collier) reckoned my colleague did not possess.

Mr. Collier: Permit me to say that I never offered any opinion about either his tact or his commonsense.

The Premier: Yes; you did.

Mr. Collier: No.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. CARPENTER: It is an axiom of men of long experience in politics that the most successful Minister has often been the man without any knowledge whatever of the work of his department. I can only hope, for the sake of the mining industry, that the Attorney General will not attempt to interfere too much with that industry, but that he will have sufficient wisdom to be guided by the advice of his officers, who do know something of the industry. Otherwise, this State may experience in gold mining the same disaster as it is suffering from to-day in some other industries, owing to circumstances which have not been the result of Ministerial control. Before leaving the subject of the Attorney General, may I say that I have been a little amused at the dual personality which he has exhibited during the late election and even since? He has conceived a marvellous knack of being two persons, when he finds that this suits him. He tells us to-day that he is doing something in his capacity as a private member; and to-morrow, in his capacity as Minister for Education, he does something else. But we have not yet heard of his doing anything in his capacity of Attorney General. I am quite sure, however, that with all these wonderful capacities which the hon. gentleman is developing we shall by and by find him doing something in an all-round capacity. It reminds me, if I may be pardoned for quoting the story,

of the foreign prince who was also an archbishop, and who was, moreover, very profane. When he was challenged as to his profanity, in view of his sacred office, his reply was, "I am not swearing as an archbishop, I am swearing as a prince." And thus I am quite prepared to find the Attorney General by and by doing a multitude of things as a private member, or in his capacity as member for Canning, which he could not, and would not dare to, do in his capacity as a Minister of the Crown. He is young, and he has been subjected latterly to a good deal of eulogy and laudation, for party purposes. I am afraid he has taken all this praise somewhat to himself; and I am only sorry that the reporter of the "Daily News" succeeded in drawing him, on the subject of his motor car, into a little bit of snobbery. The Attorney General boasted that on a private trip, made for his own private pleasure, he used his own motor-car, and not a Government car.

Mr. Collier: He has laid down a doctrine pretty rough on all the other Ministers.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Attorney General was just then suffering slightly from swelled head on account of the wonderful things that had been said about him and done for him. When the sly reporter came along and gently pulled the Attorney General's leg on the subject of motor cars, the hon. gentleman gave way and indulged in a little bit of snobbery.

The Premier: Perhaps it was that miner's badge.

Mr. CARPENTER: I wish to express my disappointment with the statement of the Premier regarding what the Government intend to do for our returned soldiers. During his election the Premier promised great things, leading many of our soldiers to believe that something very definite was to be done as soon as the Government got to work.

The Premier: Did I? Will you quote what I said?

Mr. CARPENTER: I speak feelingly on the subject, because every day I come in close contact with numbers of our returned soldiers, many of whom are looking for work and cannot find it. Because of that, a bitter spirit is growing in their hearts, and they are asking what this country is doing for them after they have risked their lives in its

defence. And one would expect that after the promise given by the Premier he would have laid down a definite and distinct policy as to what he intended to do.

The Premier: What was the promise?

Mr. CARPENTER: I cannot give the exact words but the Premier gave the impression that he was going to do something at once for the returned soldiers. What have we been told in the statement of the Government's policy? Simply a promise that some time in the future it will be necessary to introduce legislation to provide for the settling of these soldiers upon the land. I have to remind the Premier that only yesterday in the *West Australian* there appeared an advertisement that some 65 returned soldiers were seeking employment. Although the State War Council may be doing its best to place these men, the fact remains that the number of unemployed returned soldiers is steadily increasing and bitterness is increasing with it.

The Premier: Your late leader has been the head of the State War Council for the past two years.

Mr. CARPENTER: He has not the power to do more than to recommend employers to take on men; the War Council have no control over industries or the finances.

The Premier: Who has the money?

Mr. CARPENTER: The man who has the money is supposed to be the Treasurer of the State.

The Premier: No fear.

Mr. CARPENTER: And if he and his colleagues do not get to work at once to provide work for the returned soldiers they will be lacking in their duty.

The Premier: I am afraid you do not understand the position.

Mr. CARPENTER: I want to know what the Government intend to do in this matter.

The Premier: Do you know that the funds are controlled by the Federal authorities and not the State?

Mr. CARPENTER: I have heard that excuse before.

The Premier: It is true; ask your leader.

Mr. CARPENTER: The obligation to find work for the returned soldiers does not rest alone with the Federal authorities, it rests with us as well. Those men have fought for Australia and for Western Australia.

and the obligation is as much ours as it is that of the Federal authorities.

Mr. Allen: What have you done personally?

Mr. CARPENTER: I have closed up the hon. member once, and I will close him up again. The hon. member is all noise and froth, nothing else. We must get something definite done for the soldiers; it is no use sheltering ourselves behind the Federal Government, or behind the fact that we are contributing a paltry £16,000, which is less than 1s. per head of the population, for the repatriation of the soldiers. We are not released from our obligations because of that. Last session, I endeavoured to point out that the Government had it within their power to do something, and I referred to the estate at Yandanooka in connection with which they could at once put into operation a scheme for settling, at least those soldiers who were able to go on the land. Those men could be given something to do right away, and with the prospect of becoming permanent settlers on the land. There is a large area at Yandanooka, and some of it has not yet been cleared. I see no reason why some scheme cannot be devised whereby soldiers who have a taste for that occupation can be placed on that estate under the control of the present manager. Their work could be carried out on co-operative lines, and so become part owners of the property allotted to them. There is also at the present time suitable work awaiting a good number of men at Rottnest Island. The Federal Government have allotted a sum of £2,000 to restore the island to the position it was in before it was made an internment camp. I have already asked the Attorney General by letter to take a personal interest in this matter, and I ask him again if he and his colleagues are sincere in their wish to give the returned soldiers a fair deal, to take into consideration the question of putting these men at work at Rottnest. We have at the present time over there a few civil prisoners and there is work waiting to be done, in fact it is crying out to be done. The money granted by the Federal Government has been held back by the Tourist Department, with the result that the island, which should be getting into shape for the next holiday season, is being ne-

glected. The Attorney General should make a special point of sending a dozen or 20 soldiers now out of work, to the island, where the officer in charge could have full control of them. These men could do a great deal towards improving the island. If the Attorney General can do what I ask I will forgive him a great deal that he may have been guilty of in other directions. We find that the Government of Victoria only this week declared that they have at the present time 1,500 blocks of land available for returned soldiers. The New South Wales Government have made a somewhat similar statement, and if those old settled States can find so much land to place at the disposal of the soldiers, what should we in Western Australia be able to do? So far not a single soldier has been put on the land, and we have abundance of land which is suitable.

Mr. Allen: You have had two years to do it in?

Mr. Angwin: Have the soldiers been back two years?

Mr. CARPENTER: A few pounds spent at the present time would be a beginning and the greater work could be taken in hand when the soldiers come back in hundreds later on.

Mr. Allen: Whom do you blame for that; why did not your predecessors do it?

Mr. CARPENTER: It was not my fault. The hon. member now is trying to raise dust, but he cannot do it. He had better hold his tongue.

Mr. Allen: What did you do when the soldiers returned?

Mr. CARPENTER: I understand the hon. member is interjecting that I did something to prevent the soldiers being properly welcomed on their return. The hon. member knows he is misrepresenting me. He is only re-opening an episode which he ought to have been heartily ashamed of, an episode of a few months ago when he tried to manipulate the patriotic feeling of the people of this State for party purposes, and when I exposed him he was furious.

Mr. Allen: I should think so.

Mr. CARPENTER: And because of that exposure he has been furious ever since. That is the reason for his interjections to-night. He is still smarting under the ex-

posure I subjected him to because of what he and his Liberal colleagues were doing in putting up returned soldiers for Liberal party work. The hon. member may protest as much as he likes. Of course, I know that the lashing I gave him has made him sore. He is sore to-night and he will always be sore because he knows he was guilty and I found him out. Instead of replying to my charges he went down to the Liberal League where he got behind some lady's petticoat and he tried to snipe me from there.

Mr. Taylor: Behind the embroidery.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. CARPENTER: That is the wonderful courage displayed by the member for West Perth. I think he had better hold his tongue. Perhaps now I had better stop.

Mr. Allen: I think so too.

Mr. CARPENTER: While I recognise that the present Government got into office by devious methods, and while I reassert that the change of Government does not represent any change in the attitude of the electors towards the Labour policy, or those who stand for that policy, and while the occupation of the Treasury bench to-day by the gentlemen on it is an accident of politics and nothing else, I am glad that they have got there for the time being, because they will soon learn something about the difficulty to which they have closed their eyes during the past few years. It was very easy for them to sit on this side and gibe the Labour Government because the finances were going behind and because the Labour Government were not doing this, that and the other thing. The first time the new Premier rises to declare his policy, what does he propose? He proposes to increase the deficit absolutely; to bring in a paltry amusement tax which will not produce anything like the amount which has been given to his farmer friends who put him there, as the price of putting him there. The policy of drift that he has been howling about so long is still continuing. If I were a prophet I should say that what will happen is this, that we are going to have a short session with as little legislation as possible, and a bolt into recess; and afterwards he will go to London. Then, by

and by, from the calm security of the Agent General's office he will look back and see his poor colleagues still struggling with the difficulties and problems which he himself could not face. May I conclude by saying that whatever changes may have taken place, or may take place in the future, I believe that Western Australia has no cause for despair as to her material prosperity.

Member: We are all agreed on that.

Mr. CARPENTER: The shock and devastation of war has not been felt here, nor is it going to be felt here to anything like the extent it has been felt in other parts of the Empire. We have still a margin of prosperity which enables us to stand up to it without suffering privation to anything like the same extent others have been called upon to undergo. We may have to put our hands into our pockets, and still have to go without many things we have been accustomed to having in the past. But I want to urge upon the Government that this is no time for heroics in finance. We have simply to take things as we find them and to mortgage our future. Had we been told three years ago of the many millions of pounds Australia has been called upon to borrow for war purposes, we would have shrunk from the prospect, and I dare say would have urged that Australia could not possibly do it. The war has been a revelation in this regard. It has shown Australia and other countries also what the resources of Australia are. I believe we have no cause to despair, and that with the judicious handling of the revenue, we have to-day no necessity whatever for inflicting suffering upon our poorer classes, that we can still keep at least some public works going which will prevent our people being thrown upon the labour market, and from going short of the necessities of life. I make an appeal to the Premier and his party not to attempt anything in the way of heroics, or retrenchments, as he did when he was previously Treasurer, when he cut down the municipal grants and starved the municipal councils. One result of that policy in my own district was that the Fremantle council had to borrow £20,000 to put its roads in order, and a repetition of that policy would be false economy. I think the Premier, in spite of

all he has said in criticism of the late Treasurer, will be well advised if he takes a similar view of the situation, makes the best of what he has and looks forward with hope and confidence to the future, believing that Australia, which has gone through many worse trials than the present, will come out on the right side.

Member: Not worse.

Mr. CARPENTER: Yes, worse trials—I am speaking now of Australia, not Western Australia. I was in Victoria when they went through a worse time from drought. In spite of all we are at present suffering, there is no reason to despair. If the new Treasurer will put aside that natural pessimism which he has been proclaiming from this (Opposition) side of the House over the last few years, and will face the position cheerfully, we may yet see the breaking of the clouds and Australia emerging into the bright sunshine.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin) [8.7]: One would imagine, from the amount of criticism indulged in to-night, that the Government had been in office some years, instead of only a few weeks. A debate on the Address-in-reply carried to extremes, as it has been to-night and also last evening, is not in the best interests of the State.

Mr. Angwin: Then why continue it?

Mr. S. STUBBS: It is not my intention to continue it. In the few moments I shall be speaking it will be my endeavour to deal with larger and more important affairs of State than have been touched on by those gentlemen who recently retired from this (Government) side of the House, and whose criticism might have been delayed until it had been proved that criticism was necessary. With a deficit of a million and a-half the proper thing to be done, it seems to me, is to see if it be not possible to stop the drift. That is utterly impossible at the present juncture without economy in every shape and form. Heavy taxation will be necessary in the future to find the money to pay interest and sinking fund on the 100 million pounds that have been almost entirely spent by Australia on the war. We are up against a hard time. Providence has been unkind in sending us wet weather which has prevented wheat from growing as it should.

Given good seasons, we have excellent land in Western Australia, notwithstanding the harsh criticism which fell from the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) last night, when he said that Western Australia was a good wheat destroying State. Criticism of that kind is not calculated to favourably advertise Western Australia and bring to us the population necessary for the development of the State.

Mr. Walker: What about the condemnation of the whole of the Esperance district?

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Esperance district, in my opinion, will one day prove to be first class. There are tens of thousands of acres between the Great Southern railway and the Esperance district capable of settling hundreds, probably thousands, of families, and I believe they will be settled within the next 10 or 15 years.

Member: The land will be condemned before then by the Royal Commission.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I do not think so. I think the Royal Commission should be given an opportunity of examining the country and examining those settlers who are still there; and if a report is brought in favourable to a continuation of expenditure of money voted by Parliament, no member of this Chamber will object to that work being carried to fruition. But I do not think the present is the time to criticise the appointment of the Commission. Some men whom you meet will tell you that they have been operating in that district for three years and that their experience has been that crops will not grow there—whether it is due to climatic conditions I cannot say—but they say they have had enough of it. Others again claim that the district is first class. In these circumstances surely we may trust those gentlemen who have been appointed to inquire, and no possible harm can follow on the appointment of the commission. In every agricultural district there will be found men who, unfortunately, have gone on the land without any experience and stick to it so long as they can get sufficient money and other assistance. If they have one or two bad seasons they lose heart. But that class of man never yet built up a nation. For every one man of that class you get in any district you will find seven or eight good men.

Mr. Underwood interjected.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The hon. member for Pilbara was given a hearing last night and I do not think it right that he should interrupt members representing agricultural centres. I happen to represent a centre which has proved to Australia that we have in Western Australia one of the best agricultural centres in which any man could settle. I may say that I also know that portion of the Great Southern country which is represented in this House by the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker), and I believe that in the future it will be necessary for us to build a railway due east from the Great Southern to open up the agricultural land in the Esperance district.

Mr. Angwin: Is the commission going to examine that country? You know there are salt lakes down there, too.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Referring to this very land in which the hon. member interjects there are salt lakes, I may say that only yesterday I was shown a map prepared by a surveyor who has just come in from that country on which are shown 30,000 acres of magnificent land, which it is hoped will be made available for returned soldiers.

Mr. Angwin: There are two million acres in the Esperance district.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The pastoral industry goes hand in hand with agriculture. Steps should be taken to prevent the alienation of large tracts of land in the hands of a few people. I do not care whether it be Vestey Bros. or anyone else, the aggregation of large areas in the hands of a few people is not in the best interests of Western Australia. As the hon. member has said, the land in the North-West is first class, having river frontages. The rents paid for these pastoral leases should be proportionately greater than those paid for leases that have not the facilities of water. I hope the Minister for Lands will do his utmost to reclassify all those lands in the North-West, and that when the time comes for renewal of the leases a fair rental will be imposed. The rabbit pest in the North-West, and also in the Great Southern, is a question that must be grappled with. So, too, in respect to the dingo pest mentioned by the leader of the Country party. Both threaten to become serious evils. Only a few days ago a set-

tlar who has been five years east of Kataning without a holiday, told the Minister for Lands that the rabbits had eaten half his crop, and that unless he could get some wire netting he would be compelled to abandon his holding. Drastic steps should be taken to exterminate the pest. I myself can bear testimony to the ravages of the dingoes. In my own electorate in one instance they destroyed £600 worth of sheep in a month. I hope that every endeavour will be made to settle as many people as possible on the land. The country certainly warrants further expenditure by the Agricultural Bank in providing clearing facilities and in the erection of homesteads for thousands of families anxious to become good settlers. I hope, too, that at the close of the war every effort will be made to bring a stream of desirable emigrants from the Old Country. I cannot conclude without paying a tribute to the mining industry. We all recognise that but for the wonderful developments which took place in the mining districts of Western Australia some 20 years ago, not one half the population we have would be here today. Although a great many million pounds' worth of minerals have been extracted from the mines of Western Australia, it is, in my opinion, nothing in comparison with what still awaits the prospector and the men who can invest capital in the industry. To my thinking the Minister for Mines has made a good start. It is idle for members opposite to be criticising a gentleman who has been in office only some five minutes. They point to him as being a man without experience. What Minister for Mines, I might ask, appointed by the Labour party had any mining experience?

Mr. Collier: What do you know about my experience?

Mr. S. STUBBS: If the cap fits you may wear it, but I did not refer to you. During the last 20 years there have been many Ministers for Mines, but none of them had much experience of the industry before being appointed to office. There are responsible officers in the department, and with the experience of those gentlemen successive Ministers have rapidly become acquainted with the details of the industry.

Mr. Collier: I have not heard anyone criticising the present Minister.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Then you must be deaf. Two or three members opposite took the Premier to task for having, as they said, boosted his colleague, the Minister for Mines. The Minister has been only a few minutes in office, and it is unjust to criticise him before he has a chance to prove himself. It appears to me that the gentlemen who have been objecting are very sore at having been turned out from this side.

Mr. Collier: You are pretty sore, too, about what might have been.

Mr. S. STUBBS: That is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. Thomas: You are sore over not having got what you expected.

Mr. S. STUBBS: That is wrong. Since I have been a member of this Chamber I have endeavoured to avoid personalities, and I would not have mentioned the criticism levelled against the Minister for Mines if it were not that it was so unjust. Members opposite should take their gruel more kindly. The mining industry is of paramount importance to the prosperity of Western Australia, and it will be a sorry day when the mines in this State no longer command the respect of investors the world over. I believe there are in Western Australia many tracts of auriferous country equal to the Golden Mile. Only recently the Westonia mines have been brought prominently before the public.

Mr. Heitmann: And very smelly some of them are.

Mr. S. STUBBS: That comes with bad taste from the hon. member; it does not tend to induce investors to put money in those mines. For my part, I believe that some of the mines at Westonia are going to prove wonderfully rich. Given a continued activity in the mining industry, and a few good seasons in the agricultural districts, the deficit will soon be wiped out. The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) made an altogether unfair remark about country storekeepers when he declared them to be the enemies of the farmers and settlers. I represent an agricultural district, and I happen also to be the owner of several stores. Yet I have never been an enemy of the farmer. Indeed I have been his very best friend.

Mr. Carpenter: You are one of the few exceptions.

Mr. S. STUBBS: No; that is incorrect.

Mr. Heitmann: The member for Pilbara was merely repeating the words of a candidate in the recent election.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Some of the storekeepers have well nigh ruined themselves in assisting the farmers through the drought. I believe that a great portion of the money loaned by the Industries Assistance Board to the farmers will be repaid with interest in the course of one or two seasons. Just the same, the Act that was passed last session is unfair in providing that the Industries Assistance Board shall take all the money while the machinery merchants and others have to stand on one side, the storekeeper being practically the last of the outside creditors. I know of country storekeepers who have not received one penny out of the last harvest. There should be an amendment of the Act. The present position is this: Suppose a man owes to the Industries Assistance Board £200, and to outside creditors £500. If he grows £300 worth of wheat the Industries Assistance Board take the whole of their £200, and the remaining £100 is divided amongst the outside creditors, as per schedule, the last creditor, the storekeeper, receiving for his portion so little as to be almost nil. It is really a serious matter for scores of men who have their capital invested and hung up in this direction. I do not say that the Government were wrong when they brought in this Act, but it appears to me that a little leniency should be extended to them in that way, and that the Government, in taking the whole of the moneys owing to them for back rent and accrued interest to the Agricultural Bank, would be acting more fairly if they took, say, 25 per cent. and divided the rest pro rata amongst the other creditors. If this were done it would encourage the farmers very much. There is nothing more galling to an honest, straightforward settler than to come into a town and go to his storekeeper and say, "I have nothing for you; I have not a penny in the world." In fact, such a man very often comes into town and has not the heart to go to the people to whom he owes money, simply because he is

ashamed. It is not the fault of these unfortunate people, but the fault of bad seasons. If the Government could devise a means to assist these settlers I am sure it would meet with the full support of the majority of the members of this House. I am sure such means would do more to assist and encourage the agricultural industry than anything I could mention to the House at the present time. I hope that we shall have a good season and that it will be prosperous, not only for the agricultural industry, but for the mining, pastoral, and timber industries. We have, as has been said, passed through dark and troublous times; but the darkest cloud has a silver lining and I feel sure that a good season now will, in a few months time, show a marked effect upon the country. Cycles of good and bad years come all over the world. We have had more than our fair share of bad luck in Western Australia during the past three years, and I hope that the end of it has come, and that we shall begin to progress and prosper. I should like to say one word in regard to the treatment extended to returned soldiers. Criticism has been levelled at our Government for not doing something. I am sure that in a few months' time we shall be able to show the House that the sympathy of the Liberal Government and Parliament is with the men who have fought and done so well on the battlefield, on behalf of Australia and in defence of the British flag.

Mr. Carpenter: Something should be done now for the men who are out of work.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Yes, something should be done. In Katanning and Wagin strong committees have been formed and money raised privately to assist returned soldiers in those electorates, men who have fought for their country and returned to the shores of Western Australia. Not only are they being helped financially, but the business people of these towns have guaranteed to give each of these men employment of some kind until a Government scheme is put into operation. If all the country districts in Western Australia did the same thing, it would be a step in the right direction. I consider that the people of Western Australia should stand a tax in order to give a start to these men, and put them in a

fair way of becoming prosperous citizens, especially after the wonderful work they have done for the Empire. I hope that the session will be fruitful of little legislation. I believe that in the past we have had too much legislation here. What we want is good seasons and sound administration on economic lines.

Mr. Walker: And an amendment of the Industries Assistance Act and many other things.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I sincerely hope that the amendment to the Address-in-reply will be carried and that the House will pass legislation which will be in the best interests of the people in this State.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [8.36]: It is very pleasing to myself, and no doubt to members of this Chamber, to see the promise which was given in His Excellency's Speech to the matter of the repatriation of our returned soldiers. I have before me this Speech, in which it is said—

It has now become the duty of those citizens living in charge of domestic affairs to see that our great men at the front shall on their return, not only be received back after the performance of valiant deeds and noble duty, with cheers and gratitude, but that ample provision be made for their reinstatement amongst us in such a way that their sacrifices and sufferings in war shall not be followed by penury or neglect.

Does this Chamber realise that we are engaged in a bitter and deadly struggle? I sometimes think that members do not realise this. Does this Chamber realise the gravity of the repatriation of our returned soldiers? If they do, why is not some definite action taken to try and force the Federal authorities to do something to treat this matter in a national manner? Nothing short of direct taxation will, in any way, be adequate to grapple with this very big problem.

Mr. Collier: Your people have a good deal of influence with them. Why do not you tackle them?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We are told that voluntarism has been a failure, however good it might be in regard to the numbers we have raised to-day in regard to enlistment. Whilst not wishing to decry the voluntary

effort put forward in the matter of enlistment, I suggest that this has been insufficient for the needs of the situation. We have a voluntary repatriation scheme which reads very nicely on paper and looks very nice, and if everyone in the community was a patriot and patriotically inclined, it might fill the bill. The great objection to it, however, is that it savours too much of charity. Surely those men who are fighting for us at the Front deserve something better than to have charity extended to them, and that is practically what this voluntary giving means. Voluntary giving at the present time means that the willing giver is giving, and giving until it hurts. If it filled the bill and really grappled with the problem it would not be so bad, but when we find that the aliens in our midst are dodging their responsibilities and will be on an even better footing than the rest of us, the efficiency of the system does not appear. Those who are the willing givers will be so much the poorer, whilst the aliens who are not giving will be so much the better off. Nothing short of compulsion will force many of these aliens and disloyalists and the slackers in the community to do their duty as the rest of the community is doing it, and nothing short of compulsion will force the slackers into service at the front. Last October, following the member for North Fremantle, I pointed out how serious was the problem that lay before us. No doubt members have to-day read through the casualty lists in the *West Australian* and *Daily News*. We are to-day getting back from the Front a lot of men who, it is admitted by argument and speeches, are not receiving proper attention such as they should receive. If this is the case now, what is going to happen when the great crowd of men return from the various hospitals in the Old World where they are now being taken care of? It would have been rather a tonic for us, I think, if the "Emden" had put a few shots into Fremantle. We should then have realised that we were at war. Had the Pacific fleet been able to get up to the capital cities of the Eastern States I think we should have heard less of these disloyal utterances and less of anti-conscription which is now under way on the other side. It is only a fair thing that our boys, who were ready to go and fight

for us, should be looked after on their return, and it is a standing disgrace to us that we are not ready for them now. Last night that cultured gentleman from Pilbara referred to the squealing farmers. It was a classical speech and I hope we shall not have many more of the kind in the House. I have before me a report which has been set out by a body of responsible farmers which shows the position of wheat growing in answer to the query, "Does it pay?" What the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) said in regard to this country being suitable for wheat growing I will pass by, because his remarks simply betray his colossal ignorance.

Mr. Carpenter: He has been growing wheat for five years.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Then he must be doing so under bad methods. Where proper methods are employed, and mixed farming carried on, namely, that of stock being brought in and utilised, the results are altogether different. By means of mixed farming, if a crop is bad and, particularly in the dry areas, will not grow sufficiently well to harvest or be turned into wheat, it can, by utilising the stock, be turned into mutton or beef and so minimise the loss. I know very successful farmers who in the past have been under the impression that wheat could not be grown in the Eastern districts, and that they were only suitable for the growing of hay. Now it is found that by the introduction of fallowing, the use of early wheats, early sowing, and the use of superphosphates districts which otherwise were suitable only for growing hay can be made eminently adapted for the growing of wheat. Many farmers who have successfully carried on operations in the Eastern belt tell me that they have even in bad years been able to do passably well by, as I say, turning what would otherwise have been a wasted crop into beef or mutton. Certain reports I have before me should be interesting to gentlemen on the other side. These reports give two systems of farming, which are too long to quote. I will, however, briefly summarise what the writers state at the end of their report—

System No. 1 therefore shows that under ordinary circumstances one man can crop, take off, and dispose of the pro-

ceeds of 275 acres with the ordinary implements; and allowing him an average of 11 bushels per acre (which is 1.97 above the general average for the past 10 years) and paying him 3s. 4d. per bushel at the forwarding station (which is also above the average) he only receives 3s. 8½d. per day for his work. This does not allow for any public or private holidays.

I wonder how gentlemen who are in touch with the Trades Hall would like to receive 3s. 8½d. for a day's wage.

This appears quite sufficient to prove that wheat farming is not a payable proposition, and the question arises as to what are the most practical means of making it so, or at least of bringing it to the standard of 9s. per day already mentioned.

Nine shillings per day is the lowest Trades Hall wage, or rather the lowest Arbitration Court rate.

One method would be to pay the farmer the present price for his wheat and to make up the balance by an export duty of 6¾d. per bushel. The following figures show how this is arrived at:—Total acreage cropped 1,714,285, yielding (State average yield 10.53 bushels for 1915), 18,000,000 bushels. Less home consumption, 1,870,500 bushels. Less seed required, 1,714,285 bushels. Balance for export, 14,425,215 bushels. To produce the above quantity of wheat 6,233 farmers would be required, working every day in the year, Sundays excepted, and, to bring their remuneration up to a standard of 9s. per day, a sum of £516,183 6s. is required. The wheat used for home consumption at average price of 3s. 4d. produces £311,456 13s. 4d. Increasing the average price to present price of 4s. 9d. would produce £444,243 15s. Being an increase of £132,789 1s. 8d. An export bonus of 6¾d. on the exportable surplus of 14,415,215 bushels would produce £383,304 4s. 4d. Making a total of £516,183 6s. Which amount would, as already shown, give the farmer an equivalent to the lowest paid union labour. Another method of giving relief would be by lifting the burden of rents, duties, freights, etc. For example: Extension of rents to 40 years would save £9 7s. 4d. per annum. Abolition of duty on cornsacks £3

per annum. Reduction of super. freight to old rates, £4 per annum. Reduction of insurance to 10s. per cent., £5 per annum: Being an annual saving on four items a total of about £21 7s. 6d. The question of the abolition of import duties on agricultural implements is too complicated for the scope of this report, but there is little doubt that this would bring a big reduction in capital cost, and also in annual expenditure for repairs and renewals. The following table shows the import duties on some of the essential agricultural implements and supplies. It should be remembered that the merchant takes his profit upon the duty as well as the price of the implement, and the local manufacturer raises his price to the same level. Consequently the relief would be much more beneficial than appears on a cursory glance. Import duty on—Harvester £14, drill 30 per cent., plough 25 per cent., cultivator 25 per cent., duplicate parts, some 2d. per lb., lubricating oils 3½d. and 8d. per gal., binder twine ¾d. per lb., cornsacks and chaff bags 10 per cent.

MR. SPEAKER: Order! Is the hon. member reading his own remarks or is he quoting from a statement?

MR. GRIFFITHS: This is an extract.

The following facts are illuminating:—

(a) We pay the highest wages in the world for hired labour for the production of wheat. (b) We receive a lower price than any other wheat-exporting country (although quoted above such countries) owing to distance from the markets. (c) Up to the time of the operations of the wheat pool, Western Australian wheat growers received an average of 2d. per bushel less than growers in other parts of Australia, although considerably nearer to the markets than the Eastern States. (d) Western Australian growers have always paid more for their jute goods than growers in the Eastern States. (e) The average price for freight previous to war conditions, for five years ending 1914, in the following countries was:—Russia, 2¾d. per bushel; New York, 2¾d. per bushel; Bombay, 5½d. per bushel; Argentine, 4¼d. per bushel; Australia, 8¾d. per bushel. We believe that the

foregoing tables are in themselves sufficient to establish the fact that there is not a living wage in the wheat-growing industry as it exists to-day.

MR. COLLIER: Who is the authority?

MR. GRIFFITHS: The authorities are Mr. Maitland, Mr. J. J. Mather, Mr. McCabe, and Mr. Stirling Taylor.

MR. COLLIER: Great Scott! The Farmers' and Settlers' Association.

MR. GRIFFITHS: These are responsible farmers, men who have large amounts of capital invested in the industry, men who have been on the land for years. In particular, Mr. McCabe is a man who has lived on the goldfields, a man who has proved himself a successful business man, and is now a successful farmer, though he is not yet receiving from farming anything like the remuneration that he ought to get.

MR. COLLIER: Anyway, you have immortalised him by getting him into *Hansard*.

MR. GRIFFITHS: Never mind about the immortalising. I want to prove to gentlemen opposite that, clearly, wheat growing is not a payable proposition, and that the returns from wheat growing would not be altogether approved of by the Trades Hall.

MR. COLLIER: Why drag in the Trades Hall?

MR. GRIFFITHS: Let it be noted, too, that the miserable pittances quoted are in many cases for a 16-hours working day. In Victoria there is a cry of "Back to the land," and there a Royal Commission has been appointed.

MR. COLLIER: Then you have copied that from Victoria.

MR. GRIFFITHS: Victoria has copied us.

MR. COLLIER: I thought that was your idea. It is not your idea. It is a Victorian idea.

MR. GRIFFITHS: When we find the Capital cities of Australia as a whole absorbing from 38 to 40 per cent. of the total populations of their respective States, surely we must recognise that there is reason and justice in trying to stop such an abnormal drift to the cities.

MR. COLLIER: Now you are on one of Australia's vital problems.

MR. GRIFFITHS: There is no doubt about that. I say it is only reasonable and right that we should do everything we can to make the life on the farm attractive, to

try to get for these men who are opening up the back country reasonably attractive surroundings, to procure for them those medical, social, and general comforts which are of everyday currency in the cities, which in the cities are looked upon as the merest necessities, and which in the country are conspicuous by their absence. I have heard a lot about the pamphlet farmer, the spoon-fed farmer. I should like to take some of those gentlemen who talk in that fashion on a trip I propose making very shortly along the route of the Kondinin-Merredin railway extension. I would take them through Merredin and show them the workers' homes erected there at a cost of something like £30,000, homes with an elaborate sewerage system; and then I would take those gentlemen to the Merredin railway station and show them the accommodation provided for settlers and their wives and children—a mere rabbit hutch in the way of station accommodation for farmers and their wives and children; a mere rabbit hutch at a station where most of the trains arrive in the early hours of the morning. Some of the gentlemen given to talking about pamphlet farmers should compare the lot of the ordinary outback settler with the lot of the workers at North Fremantle, who have adjacent homestead blocks at Cottesloe Beach. Let them compare the lot of the men engaged on the Wyndham Freezing Works with the lot of the outback settler. I recently met a man who had been engaged on the Wyndham freezing works, and I asked him what sort of a job it was. He said it was a good job, and he added that all the men there had good jobs. Let hon. members compare the lot of those men with that of the pioneers who are developing the outback blocks under such hard conditions. As regards the Esperance Northwards railway, it is my opinion that this talk about salt in the soil is a bogey.

Mr. Collier: Hear, hear. An absolute bogey.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I do not believe in it. I know that in various agricultural areas of my electorate there is plenty of salt to be found. Take Greenhills, which is admittedly a good wheat-growing district. Yet in the Greenhills district there is hardly a spot

where fresh water can be obtained. There is salt round about the township particularly. Again, I know of a block owned by a Mr. Perry, to the north of Kellerberrin, which admittedly is a good wheat-growing centre. Some little time ago Mr. Perry showed me where on the creek, all the timber and scrub having been cut down, the salt had been making its appearance and spreading all over the land. He let the scrub grow again, and I suppose the plants are really taking up the salt as part of their food. At all events, the salt is disappearing and the land is returning to its previous condition. It is well known that in semi-dry areas, or areas with a light rainfall, salt makes its appearance owing to the rapid evaporation. There are stretches of salt lake in semi-dry country which, in a country of heavy rainfall, would be watercourses. A profusion of salt is washed down every time rain falls. In connection with the Royal Commission on Esperance lands, objection has been taken to the personnel. Exception is taken, I observe, to Mr. Padbury's name. As regards Mr. Dempster, I think that gentleman should be favourable to the construction of the railway. If I had land about Esperance, with a run some 60 miles away, I should consider that my fortune had been made with the construction of the trailway.

Mr. Collier: But it would make no difference to Mr. Dempster.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: That is my opinion. Mr. Padbury I know well. There apparently is some objection to him because he is related to the miller, but I cannot see that that can detract from the ability of the gentleman who has been appointed to the Commission. Mr. McDonald I know nothing of. I have heard one or two comments about him, some good, some bad, but in regard to Mr. Padbury and Mr. Dempster I think both will serve the State well on the Commission. It is up to us to make suggestions to the Government which may be of assistance in connection with this Commission.

Mr. Walker: Do you not think that there should be someone on it who knows something about mallee land.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Undoubtedly. It has been mentioned to me also that there should be someone on the Commission with a know-

ledge of chemistry, an analytical chemist for instance, but I would point out that the members of the Commission can examine such a person and get all the information they want from him.

Mr. Walker: But there should be someone on the Commission who knows something about it, so as to elicit the information from the witness.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: At any rate, if we have any suggestions to make, we should bring them forward.

Mr. Walker: I have done so but they take no notice of my suggestions.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I would like to appeal to Ministers, in view of the great expenditure that has taken place every year in regard to jutes, to do something in the direction of erecting silos at Fremantle. On going round the country and seeing the great stacks of wheat which are lying about one begins to wonder what is going to happen next harvest, whether the same loss is going to continue or whether an effort is going to be made to get the silos erected. I received a letter to-day from a settler who pointed out to me that merchants and storekeepers are being left, whilst the Industries Assistance Board have taken for rent and accumulated interest a sum amounting to £155. This appears to me to be extortionate. I appeal to the Minister to meet a position like that in some way. The Commission which sat in Victoria in 1914 pointed out that it was useless deferring rents if the State was going to take the whole of the rent, or accumulated back rents, out of the one crop. During my absence from the House I believe there were some references to the Bulgarians of politics, the party which sat over here. Do the hon. members on the other side of the House remember the time when there was a Ministry in power called the James Ministry?

Mr. Taylor: That is a long time ago.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Do they remember a little party of Labourites, the nucleus of the present powerful party? I believe the present member for Mt. Margaret was one of them. Does that hon. member remember on one occasion telling various members who were standing around that they got more out of the James Government than

they have ever been able to get since that time? Do those gentlemen who talk about the Bulgarians of politics remember the quotation from Holy Writ, which says something about taking the beam out of your own eye before attempting to take the mote out of the other fellow's?

Mr. Collier: The only point about it is that it was not anyone on this side of the House who made the observation about the Bulgarians of politics. Why direct your remarks to us?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I would like hon. members opposite to keep the quotation in mind. If being one of that part of Bulgarians means trying to get the minimum rate of wages to 9s. per day, trying to get educational, medical and better social conditions for the farmers, then I shall be proud to remain under the so-called stigma for all time.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. COLLIER (Boulder) [9.6]: I move—
That the debate be adjourned.

Motion negatived.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [9.12]: I am absolutely unprepared to make any remarks on the Address-in-reply, but I desire to give the member for Kanowna an opportunity to speak at a subsequent sitting and therefore will fill the breach for the time being. I realise that the ex-Attorney General has a bundle of material to quote and that his remarks will take possibly a couple of hours, as his electorate is largely affected by the stoppage of the construction of the Esperance railway, and it is hardly fair to expect him to rise at this hour. My remarks will be confined to that portion of the Premier's speech which referred to matters affecting my own particular district. It will be remembered that some long and acrimonious debates have occurred in this House during the past two or three years concerning the wisdom on the part of the Government in establishing so many State concerns, and particularly embarking on such a large expenditure in connection with the timber industry. Representing that portion of the State, I desire to draw attention to the fact that as soon

as the Labour Government left office, and their successors were established on the Treasury bench, a new set of regulations was introduced into the Forestry Department, and simultaneously an order for retrenchment went forth from the Minister for Works affecting the axemen engaged in the South-West.

The Minister for Works: That is not correct.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister will not deny that these men were discharged as soon as he assumed office.

The Minister for Works: No orders were sent out by me to any of the managers to put off any men.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Do I understand the Minister for Works to say that the hewers engaged in the Dwellingup district were not dismissed by his order?

The Minister for Works: No one has been dismissed by my order since I have been Minister for Works.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Was no order issued that simultaneously with the opening of Crown lands the hewers employed by the sawmills should be dismissed?

The Minister for Works: Not by my order and not to my knowledge.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Will the Minister have any objection to placing the papers on the table of the House?

The Minister for Works: Not the slightest.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: These hewers have, nevertheless, received their walking tickets since the present Government came into office. It has been pointed out that the State timber department has a large accumulation of stock. I am not going to deal with that aspect of the question further than to point out to my Bulgarian friend that the stock of timber is an asset equally as valuable as the stacks of wheat standing at the various sidings in the eastern districts. So far as we can gather from the remarks of the Premier he is hostile to the continued carrying on of State sawmills. He stated a few evenings ago that he was not satisfied with the profit of £2,000 made by the State sawmills; but I wish to point out that some 500 men are employed in the State mills, and the employment of those men has resulted in

keeping a spark alive in what was undoubtedly a languishing industry. No industry has been hit so diastrophically by the war as the timber industry; and that is not confined entirely to Western Australia. Here, however, we are depending on the export trade, and in this regard the lack of shipping comes into consideration. Western Australia being the largest timber exporting State, we have naturally felt the pinch harder here than in other parts of the Commonwealth. The Premier when pointing out that he is not satisfied with the profits resulting from the operations of the sawmills, should remember that he was at one time manager of a large timber concern, and I have yet to learn that while in that capacity he was able to show anything like a similar profit. It has to be remembered that after allowing for interest on the paid up capital invested in the State sawmill the profit made represents a dividend at the rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and I have yet to learn of any new company embarking on a large industry and consequently having to face extensive competition which has shown a better return. In view of the fact that the State sawmills under Government control were established in normal times, and that almost immediately afterwards the war occurred, I think it is an exceedingly good result that they have been able to show profits equal to a $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. dividend. It is better than any private company would have done in similar circumstances.

The Minister for Works: Do you say that a profit of £2,000 is equal to a $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. dividend on the capital invested in the State sawmills.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No. I take exception to the Premier's statement that the profit amounts to only £2,000, and I will seek to demonstrate where he is wrong. The mills have been calculated to have a life of 15 years, and I think the Minister for Works will agree that that is a modest estimate of the life of those mills. I believe that for the next three decades at least those mills will be operated, but their life has been calculated as only 15 years, so that it will be seen ample depreciation has been allowed for in the operation of the mills. A balance sheet has been laid

on the Table in accordance with an Act of Parliament, and the figures in that balance sheet disclose that in reality the sawmills have shown a profit of over £12,000 since their inception.

The Minister for Works: You have not shown that.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Premier in his statement is charging interest on Treasury balances, when, as a matter of fact, much of that money is being used for the purpose of carrying on the concern. Apart from that, interest has also been charged on the stock of £90,000 worth of sleepers cut during the dark period just after the outbreak of war. The cutting of those sleepers was undertaken by the State sawmills in order to prevent unemployment, and when they undertook to cut sleepers, paying the men £2 10s. a week, the sawmills department understood that they would not be required to pay interest. Does the hon. Minister for Works consider that a fair charge on the operations of the sawmills, seeing that the money was expended by the late Government to meet a certain purpose?

The Minister for Works: Yes, if you are going to get the true state of affairs, just as if you had borrowed the money from a banker.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I consider it is not a fair charge. Prior to the war some 2,000 hewers were employed in the industry, but owing to the private mills closing down there was considerable danger of serious unemployment, and in order to prevent distress the Government decided upon a certain policy which would enable those men to earn up to £2 10s. per week. It did not matter whether they were capable of earning £5, they were still paid only £2 10s. Their employment built up this huge stock of sleepers, and I claim that the sawmills department should not be asked to carry the burden of interest on that money. There was also another amount of £6,000 which had to be paid by way of compensation to a shipping company. An hon. member in another place will be able to give some information on this. That compensation had to be paid consequent on the cancellation of an agreement entered into between the late Government and the Cook Liberal Govern-

ment, who cancelled it, with the result that the State sawmills have had to pay £6,000.

The Minister for Works: If a concern never had to face bad debts it would always make profits.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: But this is a non-recurring item. Had the hon. member been Minister at the time the agreement was made he would not have anticipated that the agreement would be cancelled.

The Minister for Works: All businesses have always to face contingencies.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister cannot tell me that private businesses, shipping, timber, or any other, have to put up with similar losses under similar circumstances. The class-conscious spirit existing amongst companies would have prevented the cancellation taking place. The Premier has said that he is not satisfied with the profit of £2,000, but when it is considered that the industry has been employing 1,300 men since the war, I venture to say that the return obtained is a magnificent tribute to the State sawmills, to the management, and to the men concerned. The Minister for Works is aware that we have to-day a considerable amount of stock which has already been sold, possibly £50,000 worth, but there are no ships to take it away. All the time the State sawmills are asked to pay interest on the value of that stock, some of which should have been delivered, I understand, so far back as 1913. Owing to the difficulty in obtaining shipping, interest charges are piling up. Surely the hon. Minister will admit that, considering that those mills were established in normal times, that shortly after their inception the war intervened, over which neither he nor anyone else had any control, considering further that sales had been effected but there are no ships to take the stock away, it is a creditable record that the sawmills have been able to show a profit under those circumstances. I regret that I have had to fill the breach this evening, and have not had an opportunity of marshalling all the facts I should have liked. I say, however, that no matter how heavy the indictment be that may be levelled against the trading concerns generally; no matter how heavy may have been the loss on those concerns which it has been decided to close

up, the State sawmill enterprise has been carried on through times which have been far from normal in a manner wonderful to the outside onlooker.

The Minister for Works: They could not have existed if they had not the Treasury behind them.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I want to remind the Minister for Works that it has occurred time after time, and it may occur again during his period in office, that the Treasury have had to make advances without hope of getting a return from the industry helped.

The Attorney General: But that is no reason why we should not state the facts.

Mr. Angwin: But they should not be charged to the trading concerns.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Is not the hon. Minister for Works convinced, after his perusal of the balance sheet, his inspection of the timber areas and the whole position, that the sawmills enterprise is a good one?

The Minister for Works: I will not be drawn into a discussion like that now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If every member of this Chamber could be taken down to Big Brook and shown what are undoubtedly the finest forests in Western Australia, and as fine, I think, as any in any country, they would agree with the policy decided upon by the late Government. We know for a fact that for years and years no settlers could go into that locality. It was too far from a market and from railway facilities to enable settlers to provide homes there. Since the sawmills have been established scores of small holders have built homes and are developing the country. They have got a local market in what is now one of the most prosperous districts in Western Australia. And I want to know whether those settlers are to be allowed to retain that market, or whether the Government prejudice against trading concerns is going to strangle this State enterprise which is showing a profit, or to hand it over to private enterprise.

The Minister for Works: We are not going to scrap them.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That at least is reassuring. I realise that the Minister would not be justified in scrapping an enterprise

which is showing a profit after all charges and every item of expenditure has been debited against the concern.

The Minister for Works: Where would you charge those items? They have to go in somewhere.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I think the interest on the £90,000 should be a direct charge on the Treasury. The sleepers were cut for the purposes of preventing distress being caused by unemployment.

Mr. Nairn: How much better off would the State be if that were done?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The State would be no better off; but the hon. member will appreciate my point. I do not want those charges saddled on the sawmills in order to make it look a less profitable concern. I want to emphasise that the Minister would not be justified in sacrificing the people's money by disposing of that concern or by closing it up. Coming to another aspect of this question: at the time the Government went into the timber industry two years ago there were 2,400 men engaged in that work in the South-West—some of the finest men to be found in any timber industry in the world. To-day, instead of 2,400 men, I venture to say that there are not more than 100 hewers engaged. The State sawmills have been instrumental in keeping the timber workers of the South-West going. They have been enabled to produce timber near their homes and thus to keep their home together. It is true the sawmills department decided to close up Crown lands against sleeper cutting. This was necessary in order to enable them to successfully compete under the extraordinary conditions prevailing. From time to time small orders were dribbling through from the Eastern States. Had the Crown lands remained open to the public the State sawmills department would not have been able to compete, for the reason that private contractors would have been able to go to other localities nearer to the seaboard. They might have gone to Collie district, where the expenses of operation and freight charges are very much less than beyond Bridgetown, and they would then have been in a position to successfully tender against the State saw-

mills and virtually drive them out of the market. It might be asked why could not the State Sawmills Department have concentrated on the same area and beaten the private contractor? They could not do this because, in every little settlement in the South-West, the men have their homes, and they have to stop near to their homes, and so the State Saw Mills could not possibly compete with the private contractor. However, that is all a thing of the past. The Crown lands have now been thrown open, and I have read in the "West Australian" telegrams from Bridgetown, stating that there was a wild rush by sleeper bidders for new licenses. However, on making inquiries, I found that not one new license had been issued up to last week, so there cannot have been a very great rush.

The Minister for Works: There cannot have been many wanting employment.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, there are, but unfortunately no one wants the axeman or his product just now.

The Minister for Works: I wish I did. I would like to give employment to a good many of them.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: A pious sentiment expressed by the Minister is of but little practical use, and, indeed, there are a few who would doubt the Minister's sympathy.

The Minister for Works: I am just as sympathetic as you are.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Then it is extraordinary that in the Dwellingup district a number of men were discharged only last week.

The Minister for Works: If they were discharged, it was because there were no orders coming in.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That may be the case, but the hon. member has just said that there cannot be many men looking for employment. I say there are. What is the use of throwing open the Crown lands if there is no call for their opening? With a great flourish of trumpets we were told that the Crown lands had been thrown open.

The Minister for Works: There was any amount of agitation for the throwing open of them.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: By whom? You cannot find 50 axemen in Western Australia

who have agitated for the throwing open of Crown lands.

The Minister for Works: Then who has done it?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The traders of the South-West, who had a false conception of the position. They did not know what they were agitating for.

Mr. Collier: The tea and sugar merchants.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That is so, but there has been no genuine demand on the part of the men most concerned for the throwing open of Crown lands. Only the other day some of those who had been busy agitating, remarked to me, "The Crown lands are open; where are the sleeper cutters?" Of course the sleeper cutters were not there. No one who knew the real position of affairs could have expected them to be there. Seeing that the Minister for Works has said that he had no hand in dismissing the men at Dwellingup, I hope to go to him to-morrow with a request for the employment of a number of men.

The Minister for Works: I will do it if the orders are there and the Premier sanctions it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: What I want to know is why due credit cannot be given to those who have endeavoured to keep the industry going?

The Minister for Works: You can see my minute on the subject.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If things do not improve there will be a great many more minutes on the subject. Now I come to the question of the new regulations which have been issued, for which the Minister for Mines is responsible. I have not yet had an opportunity of meeting the new Conservator of Forests, the officer appointed by the late Government, but I take it that in putting up those regulations the Conservator of Forests—I am not blaming the Minister, because I do not think he knows sufficient of the import of the regulations to have introduced them.

The Minister for Works: Which is the one you object to?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Those I refer to deal with the stacking of the tree tops and the royalty charges.

The Minister for Works: It is a mistake.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Is it to be withdrawn?

The Minister for Works: It will be considerably altered, if not altogether withdrawn.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If it remains it will not be enforced, for if it is enforced the whole of the industry must close up. I would not object to the regulation, provided the employers would bear the burden, but the tendency in most cases is to make the workers carry the burden.

The Minister for Works: Every consideration has been, and is being, given to so shape that regulation that men can work properly under it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The other regulations are not so very important. There is the matter of the £2—

The Minister for Works: The storekeeper will find that.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: There is too much tendency to put the worker in the hands of the storekeeper. However, apart from that, the regulation dealing with brands cannot be reasonably objected to. The increase of royalty touched on by the member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott) is one of those which the late Minister for Mines may have agreed to, but I am not prepared to agree to it. We are told by the member for Nelson that we are not getting enough for our timber. In normal times I admit that, but to-day timber is a drug in the market, just as wheat is. The trouble is that private and public departments have stocks on hand, and the difficulty is, not in disposing of those stocks, for there are buyers enough in various parts of the world, but in finding bottoms to carry them overseas. The member for Nelson points out that the State should get more. I would not mind that, provided it was made to apply equitably, but right through we find that the concessionaire is exempt, while the sleeper hewer and the sawmill-permit holder have to pay the increased rate, which is superimposed on other disabilities. Take one of those disabilities: In the early days a paternal Government gave those concessionaires their areas along the Darling Range and within easy reach of railway and sea port, but during the last few years small holders have had to go out long distances away from trunk lines, beyond even branch lines, and submit to terminal charges, at three or four times the distance from the

seaboard, with the result that the freight charges have proved a hampering difficulty almost insuperable to the small permit holder. Now it is proposed to bring in increased royalty charges which are not equitable in their incidence.

Mr. Angwin: Revenue must be produced from somewhere.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Let us resort to taxation for it. Let every man in this country pay according to his ability. To strangle a struggling industry by the imposition of charges which cannot be met, owing to the abnormal times, is not a statesmanlike way of dealing with the difficulty. We have these people down there operating on a much smaller scale than do Millars Co. who, admittedly, have found difficulty in meeting their wages claims. Some of these smaller men could not do it at all, and had legitimate claims been enforced against them, many of these small firms would have been closed up. But we realise, just as they do, the difficulty of providing an outlet for the products of the industry, and consequently the claimants have been moderate in their demands, with the result that a number of the firms have been able to struggle along.

The Attorney General: The object of the royalty is, not general revenue, but reafforestation.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It means that the object is to get more money for reafforestation. Which is the better source to get it from, the firms who have for 30 years been exploiting on favoured areas, or the small men who have had to go right out back under hampering difficulties? The best way to get revenue is to put on increased railway charges and so hit them all alike. But you cannot impose a special condition on a concessionaire. The Minister for Works shakes his head.

The Minister for Works: Cannot you see that if you increase the charges, the reflex action will be on the men doing the work?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: How are you to compel Millars Co. to pay an equitable share of this new impost?

The Attorney General: The whole matter is under consideration.

The Minister for Works: I do not know anything about their business at all.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I believe you. But they know all about it, and I guess they are chuckling a little over the way in which they are able to escape.

The Minister for Works: You would not say so if you saw a letter I recently received from them.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Of course if I were in their place I would make the case appear as black as I could. On the question of re-afforestation I have no radical objection to these regulations, provided the industry, and not the employee, will pay it. It is a moot point whether the result of the stacking of the tree tops, which cost 7s. 6d. a load here—

The Minister for Works: Anything from 7s. 6d. to 15s. a load for sawn timber.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Well that is not a fair proposition for the worker, and I am inclined to think the industry cannot stand it. It is a moot point whether the stacking of the tops is going to have the satisfactory results hoped for.

Mr. Collier: In normal times the State is entitled to more revenue for reafforestation, but the time is not opportune now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Is the late Minister for Mines aware that in every State in Australia huge sums are taken year by year for reafforestation, while in Western Australia this department reaps scores of thousands of pounds of which not a solitary penny is put back?

Mr. Collier: But the revenue is not commensurate with the destruction of the forests.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I want a Government in Western Australia to say "we are satisfied with the indirect return of the industry, with the fact that it gives employment to 6,000 men and with the production of railway freights. Let us therefore earmark the whole of the revenue towards the rejuvenation of the forests to bring it back to a re-productive state."

Mr. Heitmann: The State would get nothing.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We realise what the State has been getting since war broke out. The Commissioner of Railways will tell Parliament what he has been getting from the timber industry since then, and the

workers who numbered 6,000 and now only 1,200 could tell Parliament what the South-West was getting when the industry was going in full swing. We know what the State is getting from the industry now, and what it was getting when it was in a buoyant and active condition.

Mr. Collier: Every industry produces a big indirect return, but that does not mean that it is squaring its finances.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am not raising any objection to the imposition of increased charges provided they are put on upon an equitable basis. But I do protest against the small man being hit to the benefit of the men who are best able to bear the burden. I protest against the men who closed up their areas and got out of their concessions and who have been established in the industry for a long time being let off. I am opposed altogether to these men escaping their obligation.

The Attorney General: In the Eastern States the royalties are four or five times greater than they are in this State.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In the Eastern States they have been obliged to close down on the export of timber, and are importing largely from this State. Consequently traders in timber in the other States will cheerfully pay a higher royalty to go into bush which would not be looked at here, because although they do so they can still successfully compete against this State.

The Attorney General: That has been so for many years past.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I admit that. We, in this State, are in a position to export whilst the other States are not. The result has been that we have been carrying trade into the enemy's camp and even our State saw-mill department has a good business connection both in Victoria and South Australia.

Mr. Collier: As a big importing State we ought to be in a better position to pay increased wages.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Before the war the timber industry was in a splendid position and could have stood a far heavier burden than it can stand now. But the industry will come again, I am quite convinced.

The Attorney General: Do you agree with the royalty but for the war?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I do not agree with the methods applied by which we are going to hit some people while some others will escape. In my opinion, the best way to raise revenue from the industry would be by means of railway freights which will hit everybody proportionately the same. If that is not the correct method surely the genius, who is now the principal officer of the Treasury benches, will be able to devise some scheme whereby this revenue can be obtained without its operating harshly upon a certain section of those engaged in the industry. To-day, some of the permit holders have to pay three times the freight which was paid by other favoured companies within easy distance of shipping facilities.

The Attorney General: Not favoured companies.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Favoured by early Governments of the country through getting concessions at a peppercorn rental.

The Attorney General: Because they opened up the industry.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Nevertheless they were favoured and are in a favoured position to-day.

The Attorney General: They were not favoured by any special Government.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Comparatively speaking, they are in a favoured position.

The Attorney General: At the time they were starting the industry.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Of course they started the industry but they got their reward for so doing. Is it fair to ask the State Sawmills Department, which will be hit to the tune of £5,000 or £6,000 in increased charges, to successfully compete against these other people?

The Attorney General: If it is a payable concern £5,000 or £6,000 will not make much difference to it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the Minister thinks it is fair to impose new burdens of this sort upon a new industry and pile on the charges until it ceases to exist, then if that is the policy of the Government, let them wipe it out altogether. Let them put that policy into effect.

The Attorney General: You did not take me rightly.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister says that this is a paying concern. It would appear that he is annoyed that the concern has shown a profit.

The Attorney General: What nonsense.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is not nonsense. I venture to say that the Premier could not show the same results when he managed a timber concern. He managed a timber concern for many years, and did not show the same results as the State sawmills have shown since their inception.

Mr. Hardwick: What market has there been for timber?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: What market has there been for timber during the last two years, and yet the State Sawmills have been carrying on without the assistance of any market outside Australia. They had to fossick about the Commonwealth and get what local and interstate trade they could because the outside markets were cut off owing to the absence of shipping.

Mr. Hardwick: They must have been managed better than the fish stalls were.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Some of the timber has been cut for 18 months, and the Government are paying interest on the amount that is represented in it. If we could only get the timber shipped away we should be able to realise £50,000 or £60,000 upon it, and that money would be free instead of our having to pay interest on it.

The Attorney General: More than that.

Mr. Hardwick: Then all your profits are on paper.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Not at all. This only demonstrates what a magnificent result the State Sawmills Department has shown in spite of all the difficulties which have afflicted this industry.

The Attorney General: How would you get over the stacking question?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It would have stood over until the demand came again for our timber, and then by giving reasonable notice, say three months or so, the tenderers could make provision for the extra burden and it could then be forced upon them. The whole question is one of how to keep the forests from fire. In some parts of our forests the peculiar circumstances existing would enable us to keep the forest clean by

having a fire sweep through it without reaching any great volume. On the other hand, if the stacks were made up and a fire came along it might mean very great heat which would have a detrimental effect upon the young timber surrounding those spots. As I am not an expert, however, I do not like to express a definite opinion upon the subject.

The Attorney General: The experts tell you to stack the heads, while the sawmiller says "No, let the fire go through in the ordinary way."

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I will not challenge the opinion of experts. I know that opinions differ on the matter. My knowledge is limited to the forests in which I was working, and the stacking of tops was not practised there. I am not able to say whether the disastrous effects of bush fires would be more pronounced under the present system than it was under the system when tops were stacked. I do not wish to come into conflict with the Conservator of Forests. Possibly he knows more about the matter than I do, though he may not know enough about the local conditions to warrant him in imposing certain conditions which may harmfully affect the industry.

The Attorney General: In opinions on this subject and for those who make representations in favour of the stacking of tops it is a matter of £ s. d.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It represents a good many pounds. It is a most inopportune time to impose such conditions just now. I suppose that the Minister gave his approval for their being brought into effect. I do not know whether they originated from the department or from him, but no doubt he will take the responsibility.

The Attorney General: I have to take the responsibility. The regulations are under consideration and I am after information.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister will understand, of course, that I had no intention of speaking to-night. I have absolutely no notes to help me. I have pointed out to the Minister that I had intended discussing the matter with the Conservator of Forests, but although I made several attempts I was unable to find him in his office.

The Attorney General: I would be pleased personally to discuss the matter.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: These regulations are impossible at the present juncture. The other day when a big deputation of sawmillers waited on the Minister for Mines the leading timber merchant in this state, Mr. Alex. McNeil, the big gun in the industry, said it was a relief to discuss these technical matters with a Minister who was prepared to view them reasonably. This was a reflection on the late Minister which was not deserved. The future of the industry is rather black, at all events for a period. Seeing that the Minister intends to give the House the exact position in regard to these new regulations and as to how they will affect the industry, and has given an assurance that the employees at any rate will not have to bear the burden, I will await his announcement with a degree of interest.

The Attorney General: I doubt whether the announcement will be made during the course of debate upon the Address-in-reply, but it will be made as soon as possible.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I understand they will not be enforced for the present. I thought that to impose new conditions on an industry which has been so hard hit at a time like this did not demonstrate much sympathy on the part of the Government, side by side with the fact that a large number of employees had been dismissed. I do not know by whose orders these men have been dismissed but will call for the papers. The industry has a fairly black time ahead of it now. I think that the member for Nelson (Mr. Willmott), who claims to be a timber expert of 20 years standing, should have dealt a little more fully with what is one of his pet subjects. He has continually advocated the development of our primary industries, but here is a primary industry right at his door, engaging the services of hundreds of men in the State sawmills, and yet only three months ago he said that the Government were by these mills practically ruining the timber trade. We want to know whether he viewed this matter from the political standpoint, or whether he is prepared to back the Government in any action they may take either to cease operations or reduce the employment of the people in the locality. The leader of the Country party, for

a party leader, did not soar to any great heights in his speech. In exhibiting a dingo skin and dealing for a few minutes with unimportant subjects he did not indicate that the material for statesmanship existed in him. I only want to know where he stands in regard to this particular industry. He said at Balingup, only three months ago, that the Government had ruined the timber industry; and the inference from his remarks was that the Government should cease to operate the State sawmills. The member for Nelson also referred to other matters connected with the South-West, stating that the South-West had to get more attention from Governments of the future. I want to place on record, as a South-Western member, that no Western Australian Government has done as much for the South-West as the last Labour Government has done—no Government ever in existence in this State. If the member for Nelson cares to challenge my contention, I will prove it by figures. During the late Government's period of office, they expended a quarter of a million of money in establishing State sawmills upon a new area of country which was absolutely dormant. There was hardly a man in that country then, whereas to-day there are thousands. The late Labour Government expended that money in opening up a new province, containing, as the Minister for Lands will admit, some of the richest soil in Western Australia. They extended the Bunbury harbour, and they initiated the Harvey irrigation scheme. I contend that the South-West has received more attention from the late Government than from any preceding Government. As a South-Western member, I wish to express the earnest hope that, at any rate, when the present Government finish their term they will show as good results in the South-West as the late Government have to show. The member for Nelson touched on the question of the lime deposits, saying that an agreement is before the House now. I venture to assert that, had it not been for the member for Murray-Wellington, the present Minister for Works, the lime works would have been constructed and the railway in operation to-day.

The Minister for Works: Why?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Because last session, when the matter was discussed on a motion moved by a private member, the then Minister for Works announced that an agreement was all ready. Had it not been for the suspicious attitude of the present Minister for Works, the agreement could have been completed and the works proceeded with.

The Minister for Works: What suspicion?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The present Minister for Works then said that before any agreement was drafted the whole of the facts must be laid on the Table before Parliament.

The Minister for Works: Quite right.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It meant 12 months' delay. I put the question right before the member for Murray-Wellington. I said to him, "You know we shall shortly be in recess, and if the agreement is held back until it can be presented to Parliament the whole scheme will be hung up." *Hansard* will show that I put the position thus to the member for Murray-Wellington.

The Minister for Works: But the railway could not have been built without permission from Parliament. The whole thing running through my mind was that I did not want any suspicion of anything that was not perfectly straight.

Mr. Angwin: I hope you will be as straight; that is all.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I thought at the time that the member for Murray-Wellington could at least have trusted the then Government to negotiate that agreement, and could have permitted expedition to be used, because the company were prepared—

Mr. Smith: After the Nevanas contract?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes; after the Nevanas contract. However, I merely wish to express my opinion that, had it not been for the attitude of the present Minister for Works, but for his being so suspicious at that time—

The Minister for Works: I safeguarded the interests of my constituents. I was re-elected. I do not need to have a feather bed, like you.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The member for Wellington takes good care to stop on his feather bed. I am just as much respected in my district as is the present Minister for Works in his. The hon. gentleman came

to my electorate once to support a candidate against me, and that candidate lost his deposit.

The Minister for Works: I will support another candidate who will make you lose yours.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister is welcome to try any time he likes.

The Minister for Works: Now get on with your speech.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That is really magnificent. The Minister may talk about the respect his electors have for him. Members on either side have pocket boroughs from which it is almost impossible to dislodge them. I recognise that the Minister for Works has a safe seat, and that even if he did delay the establishment of these lime works for 12 months his electors do not mind it. I am quite satisfied.

The Minister for Works: Then why are you belly-aching?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That is a worthy expression to proceed from a Minister of the Crown. If the hon. gentleman is so devoid of phraseology as to be unable to express himself in any other way, it shows want of intelligence. I desire to express the hope that when the present Government go out of office—as they will, for the tide turns against all parties—that the South-West will have reason to be as thankful to them as it has for being thankful to the last Government.

Mr. Smith interjected.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The member for North Perth wants penny fares. That is the burning question with the hon. member.

Mr. Smith: You want the fares kept up in order to keep the implement works running.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Does the member for North Perth want the implement works closed?

Mr. Smith: I will try to get them closed.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That is a frank declaration, at all events. I regret that I have lost the opportunity of dealing with certain questions that I ought to deal with; and I think the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) should be grateful to me for filling

a breach. However, I shall have another opportunity of dealing with those questions on the Estimates. I had intended on this occasion to deal with various matters. I had intended to interview to-morrow the Minister controlling the Forestry Department, and to discuss with him the question of reafforestation. I realise the necessity for reafforestation; but, unfortunately, this is a time in the history of the Western Australian timber industry when it is impossible to embark on innovations without crippling the industry. I do not want to appear to be pleading for help to that industry like some of the farmers in the wheat belt have pleaded for assistance—assistance which has been granted to them and for which they have shown such ingratitude. The timber industry does require help at the present time. Scores and scores of the best residents of the South-West are unable to find employment to-day, owing largely to the action of the Works Department in dispensing with their services. The hewers are unable to proceed with the development of Crown lands, and are consequently out of employment. As is well known, a large proportion of the hewers and other timber workers are doing their share towards the largest issue, at the Front. Undoubtedly the South-West has borne its full share of the burden in that respect. I think I have filled the gap now, and consequently I will desist.

On motion by Mr. Walker, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.10 p.m.