

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.40]: No member regrets more than I the necessity for the motion. My sympathy is with Mr. Colebatch in his illness. I trust he will soon be sufficiently recovered to again take charge. I sympathise with him, too, in the fact that the whole of the responsibility for conducting the business of the Chamber is on his shoulders. For nearly four years I sat beside him, and so I know the arduous nature of his task. In asking one man to take such responsibilities, the Government are asking too much. I know that some of the Ministers are out to practice economy in the direction of saving expenditure, but I am certain there are members of the House quite prepared to act as Honorary Minister without payment. If the business of the House is to be carried on without jeopardising the health of the Leader of the House, the Government ought to appoint somebody to assist him at a time like the present, and again when the full rush of work is on. As the result of my experience as a Minister I can see that the suggestion thrown out by Mr. Lovekin is unworkable. We cannot expect any Minister to reply to criticism, unless he is sitting in his seat to take notes of what is being said.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.43 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 16th August, 1921.

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

QUESTION—CIVIL SERVANTS, LEAVE.

Mr. DAVIES (for Mr. Teesdale) asked the Premier: What was the number of civil servants, and other officials employed by the Government, absent on Wednesday, 10th August, on sick or other leave?

The PREMIER replied: Out of 2,945 officers employed in the metropolitan area, 123 were on extended sick, annual, or long service leave; 403 were given leave for the afternoon or a portion thereof conditionally on the time being made up, or deducted from annual leave, or in lieu of payment for equivalent overtime previously worked; 32 were permitted to absent themselves on condition that their work was kept up to date.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS AND TRAMWAYS DEPARTMENTS.

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Minister for Railways: 1, How many additional administrative positions have been created in the staff of the Railways and Tramways Departments since the appointment of the present Commissioner? 2, What are salaries and all other expenditure attached to the positions so created to date? 3, Does he consider it necessary to further increase the administrative staff while reductions are being made in the total number of employees? 4, What is the total cost, including salaries, expenses, etc., and haulage of inspection car of the economy committee over the railway system? 5, Are the officers in charge of the various departments and districts incompetent or incapable of making recommendations in regard to the economical working of the services mentioned? 6, What are the names, grade, and status of the members of the economy board? 7, Is he aware that a similar board was created some years ago and made many recommendations which were afterwards found absolutely impracticable? 8, Did one of the officers of the previous board make a recommendation in regard to amalgamation of offices and although experienced in that particular position unmistakably failed to perform the duties when these were subsequently allotted to himself?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, One. 2, General Manager, Tramways and Electricity Supply, £1,000, formerly Electrical Superintendent at £800 per annum. 3, No. 4, If the Suggestions and Economics Board is referred to no such expenditure has been incurred. No additional expense was incurred. 5, No. 6, The members of the Suggestions and Economics Board are:—Mr. Maxwell, Chief Draftsman, Way and Works; Mr. Bromfield, Auditor of Disbursements; Mr. Backshall, Officer-in-Charge Operation. 7, No board created some years ago was analogous to that to which this question refers. 8, I am not aware, neither is the Commissioner of Railways aware, whether this is so or not. Addendum.—The questions being somewhat difficult of interpretation the Commissioner of Railways will be pleased to afford the hon. member any information required, should the replies given herewith not deal with the matters the hon. member has in mind.

QUESTION—MIDLAND WORKSHOPS, APPRENTICESHIPS.

Mr. DAVIES asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What was the number of applicants for apprenticeships, in all trades, received in reply to the last advertisements for employment in the Midland Junction Workshops? 2, The number who fulfilled the necessary qualifications? 3, The number accepted?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, 258. 2, 207. 3, 47.

QUESTION — STATE SHIP "KANGAROO."

Mr. DURACK asked the Minister for Mines: What is the total net revenue contributed to this State by the "Kangaroo," since purchase, to the end of the last financial year?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Aggregate net earnings of the s.s. "Kangaroo" to 30th June, 1920—£275,522. The figures for the year ended 30th June, 1921, will not be available until receipt of detailed statements from London.

QUESTION—PRINTING TRADE DISPUTE.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Premier: Has his attention been drawn to an article which appeared in the "West Australian" of the 2nd August, which reported the adoption of a resolution of thanks to the Premier for his action with regard to the delegation from the Master Printers' Association? 2, If so, is he aware that such action is viewed by the Master Printers' Association as likely to lead to disruption in the printing trade? 3, Is it a fact that the employees of the Government Printing Office are using their influence to bring about a strike, as alleged in a letter which appeared in the "West Australian" of the 2nd August?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, No. 3, Not to my knowledge. As both parties have now consented to submit the matter to Arbitration the dispute is practically settled.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Sixth day.

Debate resumed from 11th August.

Mr. MANN (Perth) [4.38]: At the commencement of my election campaign I made it very clear that, if elected, I would support the present administration, and in consequence of the majority by which I was elected, I take it that the electors of Perth desire, for the present at all events, to have a representative supporting the present administration. After having listened to the addresses of the Leader of the Opposition and of the member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) as deputy Leader of the Primary Producers' Party, I might be permitted to

say that the Leader of the Opposition vigorously though fairly criticised the past administration of the Government and the policy for its future administration, and after some three hours over which his very interesting address extended, he stated that the present position of the State was most difficult, so difficult indeed that he was not going to unduly harass the Premier in his leadership of the Government. The member for Katanning delivered an address extending over some three hours, during which he criticised both the Opposition and the Government, and finally ended with this quotation, "Come, let us reason together." If the hon. member two years ago had said, "Come, let us reason together," and if the Leader of the Opposition two years ago had admitted that the position of the State was a most difficult one, both statements in my opinion would have been more applicable than they are to-day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Leader of the Opposition said so four years ago.

Mr. MANN: I intend to compare the position in 1919 with that as we find it to-day. In 1919 there were something like 3,000 unemployed returned soldiers; there were 1,560 odd on the books of the Repatriation Department, that is "A" class men as distinct from incapacitated men; there were about 1,200 men who, in a sense, had been repatriated inasmuch as they had been found temporary employment and put off the books. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) is aware of the industrial position at that time. I doubt whether the position of affairs in this State had ever been so bad, and I trust that we shall never again experience such conditions industrially. In my official capacity at that time, I was able to judge probably better than many members of this House exactly how things stood. The Government came into office at a time when the task was not at all an enviable one, but they grasped the position and grappled with it well. To-day we have scarcely any unemployed returned soldiers, and the industrial position has improved, inasmuch as we do not now hear the threats which were made at that time, and it is not necessary to have a posse of police stationed at Fremantle to control the wharves.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They were never wanted there.

Mr. MANN: Trade, too, has returned to normal channels. For two years strike succeeded strike. Not only were there strikes within the State, but the big shipping strike dislocated all inter-State trade. Various strikes on the goldfields, too, held up our industries there for quite a long time. Remembering all these things, that was the time, I maintain, when we should have been asked to reason together; that was the time when the position was so difficult. It is true that to-day the State owes a fair sum of money, but I would like to point out that,

although the Government have a deficit, the trade of Western Australia from July, 1920, to March, 1921, showed an excess of exports over imports to the extent of about two million pounds. On the other hand, the trade of New South Wales showed an excess of imports over exports of 19 millions, and the trade of the Commonwealth as a whole an excess of imports over exports of 83 million pounds for the same nine months. That condition of financial affairs, following on the previous difficult and stressful times, has been reflected upon this State. The financial institutions, it is clear, decided that importations must cease. The result has been a falling off in trade—not due to the Government of this State, not due to the control of affairs in this State at all; but due to excessive importing in the past, and to the condition of financial affairs in the Eastern States. It was those conditions that induced the financial institutions to make it their fixed policy to put a stop to practically all importing for the time being. That, in turn, meant a cessation of trade, and, necessarily, a falling off in the extent of railway operations, especially as regards goods traffic, which again involved a financial loss on our railway operations between January and June.

Mr. Pickering: Do not you think the tariff had something to do with that?

Mr. MANN: Whatever the tariff may have had to do with it bears no comparison with the effect of the demand made by the financial institutions that importations must cease until our exports approached somewhere near our imports, thus bringing about something like an equilibrium in trade. There are signs of improvement in financial matters, inasmuch as the foreign exchanges are becoming more favourable. I hope, therefore, that in the very near future, with trade becoming more normal, with ampler opportunities for importing goods and exporting our products, we shall find matters more prosperous than they have been latterly. As to industrial matters, I agree with the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum)—and, indeed, I mentioned the subject during my election campaign—that we require some amendment in the constitution of the Arbitration Court. Like that hon. member, I consider that what is needed is something in the nature of a lower court, where employer and employee will meet more on common ground, and without that hostility which is to be observed in the Arbitration Court to-day, when the most gifted advocates are employed by each side to frustrate, as far as may be, the aims of the other side, irrespective of whether or not those aims are equitable and fair. At present, so long as one side can score a point off the other, it is satisfied; and the result is that we find the Arbitration Court frequently delivering an award of which neither side approves. Thereupon the side which has definitely lost is merely awaiting its opportunity to get even, or to score off the other side as speedily as possible. If the parties

met on common ground, so to speak, in a lower court, where they could discuss each other's difficulties, much better results would be achieved. Next, with regard to immigration. Every member who has so far spoken in this debate, from either side of the House, has agreed that an immigration policy is necessary. Personally, I do not think any reasonable person would suggest that it is not, providing, of course, that the policy is on lines tending to the advantage of the State, to the betterment of the immigrants themselves, and also towards the progress of the people who are already settled in Western Australia. I would strongly oppose the introduction of immigrants into this State merely for the purpose of dropping them in the cities and towns and starting them to compete in the already well supplied mechanical and industrial sections of our labour market. There is no doubt, however, that we do urgently need to fill up our vacant spaces; and the only way for us to fill them up is by means of oversea settlers of our own kith and kin, settlers whose sentiments and aspirations are the same as ours. Knowing, as we do, that there are approximately two million ex-service men in England to be repatriated, if I may use that word in this connection, oversea, it is our duty to pave the way for the settlement of as many as possible of those ex-service men in Western Australia and to prepare to welcome them here, where we have room for thousands of them. The Royal Colonial Institute sent an agent through this Commonwealth to inquire into the possibilities of settlement, and that agent reported that two of the Australian States, namely Queensland and Western Australia, were suitable for settlement by ex-service men. The agent in his report gave the following figures: The British Empire and its Dominions have only about 13 million persons getting their living directly from the soil, while Germany, which has only one sixty-fourth of the area of the British Empire and its Dominions, has 20 odd millions getting their living directly from the soil, and France, with only one-seventh of the area of Britain and its Dominions, has 17 millions so engaged. I am of opinion that land settlement and land development must go hand in hand with the establishment of secondary industries. To start secondary industries is useless unless we have a well-defined policy of land settlement, unless we have our back country well opened up and settled with people in comfortable circumstances. Under those conditions our secondary industries will of necessity force themselves along. In this connection I may mention one of the most promising of our secondary industries—the cement industry. It took the promoter something like two years' time, as well as several thousands of pounds of his own money, to get the project as far forward as a flotation. Then the company spent some hundred thousand pounds, and during the first fortnight of the company's operations the leader of one of

the industrial unions concerned in the industry came along with a certain demand. I am not going to say that the demand was right or that it was wrong. In new industries there must always be levelling up and levelling down; there must be many anomalies to be rectified. It is possible that the demand made was right. But what I take exception to is that the leader said to the employers, "Grant this demand, or we will call a stop work meeting." Here was an industry that had taken two years and an expenditure of over £100,000 to get going, and during the first fortnight of its operations a demand was made in this manner, notwithstanding that a court exists to deal with such questions. If that court is not in a position to decide such matters promptly, then we should amend the constitution of the court so that it will be enabled to effect that object. Certainly, we must do our utmost to avoid such occurrences as that which I have described, because the effect must be to make investors very chary of putting their money in here. Such happenings are bound to prove most detrimental to our chances of having secondary industries established in Western Australia. An important matter, and one that closely concerns the electorate I represent, inasmuch as it is a matter indirectly affecting the price of bread, is the wheat pool. In my opinion, the wheat pool has for various reasons been absolutely necessary up to the present; and I think the pool must continue for at least another season. Then we can take stock of the situation, and decide our further course according to circumstances. But, when the conditions of the wheat pool are being considered, the interests of other persons besides the growers must be considered. I refer to the poultry farmer, the pig raiser, and the dairy farmer. I have figures here which, in my opinion, show that the operations of the wheat pool during the last two years have had the effect of absolutely wiping the poultry industry out of existence.

Mr. Latham: Eggs are only 1s. 6d. per dozen to-day; so why growl?

Mr. Pickering: We were told the other day that eggs were 4d. apiece.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MANN: The figures I am about to quote are authentic, having been obtained from the Government departments. At present the poultry industry of this State compares as follows with that industry in other States: New South Wales has some 2,500,000 head of poultry; Victoria has 2,700,000; Queensland 319,000; Tasmania, 300,000; and Western Australia has just 180,000.

Mr. Pickering: But all the States are under the same rate for wheat.

Mr. MANN: They are not by any means under the same rate for wheat, because at the present time the largest pig raising concern in Western Australia, situated at Kalgoorlie, is importing all the produce it requires at its piggery from South Australia, and importing it at a price less than that for

which it can be obtained here. Further, one of the most progressive firms in the bacon curing industry of this State has been importing bran and pollard from the Eastern States for months past, and selling those commodities at cost price to Western Australian pig raisers, just in order to keep the industry going. The firm in question have been able to import South Australian bran and pollard at landed prices far below the prices charged here.

The Minister for Mines: But they charge more for flour in South Australia.

Mr. MANN: Take the pig raising industry. In 1918 Western Australia had 85,000 pigs; this year we are down to 60,000. I attribute that decrease in a large measure to the excessive prices which have been charged here for the offal from wheat. I suggest, therefore, that when the conditions of the next wheat pool are being framed, these subsidiary industries should receive consideration. Then, as to the price of bread, I am of opinion that, irrespective of any London parity, sufficient wheat should be retained in this State to ensure that the price of bread here shall not exceed 6d. per loaf.

Mr. Willcock: Why not fourpence?

Mr. MANN: I do not want to see it over sixpence. I am pleased to know that the Government intend to move in the direction of an improved water supply. Not only in the Perth electorate, but in the surrounding electorates, it is very necessary during the summer months to have an adequate water supply. Many divergent views have been offered regarding tramway extensions. It was suggested that no extensions at all should be made, and that the money thus saved should be spent on the present system. I am in favour of extensions, if there is land available to enable people to come within the scope of the Workers' Homes Act. There are instances in Perth of three families living in a four or five-roomed house because of the high rents and the impossibility of getting other accommodation. If tramway extensions will enable such people to take advantage of the Workers' Homes Act I should favour any extensions irrespective of whether they may be in South Perth or anywhere else.

Capt. Carter: Blocks of land have gone up £25 in a week in South Perth.

Mr. MANN: I know the Government are affording facilities to people in the country to come under the Workers' Homes Act.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: For two years we could not get one worker's home in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Clydesdale: There are four or five families living in one house in Leederville.

The Premier: It must be a big house.

Mr. MANN: Although I am a loyal supporter of the Government, I am not narrow-minded enough to think that good suggestions cannot emanate from the Opposition, or from the Primary Producers' Party. Any suggestion or movement emanating from

either of these two parties that tends to the advancement of this State, I will heartily support.

Mr. J. THOMSON (Claremont) [5.3]: It is my intention to vote against any tramway extensions anywhere in the suburban areas, if they are to be made out of loan moneys. The proposition put forward by the Claremont-Cottesloe district was that the Government land within those areas should be sold, and the money so obtained spent on tramway extensions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That would be selling your assets.

Mr. J. THOMSON: We have reserves in Claremont and Cottesloe which are of no use as such. If they were cut up into building blocks we could get money for them, not only for tramway extensions but for municipal purposes. The money the Minister for Railways intends to spend on tramway extensions to Como should be spent in Bunbury.

The Minister for Mines: Why not in Albany?

Mr. J. THOMSON: I shall show why it should be spent in Bunbury. The most important thing we have to discuss in this House is the question of finance. We must find some way of raising revenue, or else we must have increased taxation. Had the past and present Governments been alive to the situation, we should have had an increased revenue to-day, and very much more later on, coming in from Collie coal.

Lieut.-Col. Denton: What about the Irwin coal?

Mr. J. THOMSON: That could go to Geraldton. There are large seams of coal at Collie. That coal can be shipped at Bunbury, as cheaply, or perhaps cheaper than, coal can be shipped at any port in the Commonwealth. Had it been looked after, there is a market which will take at least two million tons of Collie coal per annum, that is in addition to the supplies already being sent away. At Sourabaya, Batavia, and Singapore there are three of the largest ports in the far East. We should be able to enjoy a monopoly of the entire bunkering trade for these ports, as well as of the smaller surrounding ports.

Mr. Willcock: Would you make it into briquettes?

Mr. J. THOMSON: No. Collie coal can be carried with less risk than Newcastle coal. I know what I am talking about. I know the islands pretty well, and I know something of the coal that is supplied to that part of the world. In calorific value Collie coal is far ahead of that supplied from Japan and India to these markets.

The Minister for Mines: At what price?

Mr. J. THOMSON: During the war it was selling at £7 10s. per ton. I had a lease on one of the islands, and was in expectation of making a good deal of money. I was going to be a profiteer. I was in France at the time. Unfortunately for me the Dutch Government passed an Act that no foreigner could hold land in the islands. My profiteer-

ing, therefore, fell to the ground. Throughout the war coal was selling up there at £7 10s. a ton. To-day the price is £3 per ton. We could enjoy a monopoly of the whole of the coal consumed there. I do not say that the mines or proprietors at Collie should get all the profits. The Government could enter into contracts with the islands and supply the coal, and could get it from the companies with which they now trade. At the present price of £3 per ton a profit of at least £1 per ton could be made.

The Minister for Mines: That would be a State enterprise.

Mr. J. THOMSON: I am in favour of such a State enterprise. If the Government could make £1 per ton, or 5s. per ton, why should they not do it? At Bunbury we ought to have a Newcastle, because we are nearer to the islands than any other port in Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Would the coal stand long enough to reach there?

Mr. J. THOMSON: I hold no brief for any of the Collie coal companies, neither do I hold a share in any coal mine at Collie. Before sending coal overseas, the Government should see that they do not send soft coal. They must send the hard coal and must send screened coal. If it is hard and screened, it will stand the journey much better than Japanese, or Indian, or island coal, and the people up there would be only too glad to get it.

The Minister for Mines: What must we do at Bunbury?

Mr. J. THOMSON: We must extend the harbour there so that ships can go in and pick up the coal. We have Commonwealth ships which could take the coal, or there are ships to be had elsewhere. When I was staying in Sourabaya there were at least 100 German, French, and other ships waiting to take away the sugar output. If some of these ships could have gone to Bunbury and bunkered coal, I think the owners would have been glad to have sent them. At that time coal was selling at £7 10s. per ton. Had we adequate shipping facilities at Bunbury, this could have been done. There are 200 men idle at Collie. We ought to have 5,000 more miners there than we have now. The Premier is always talking about production but he only thinks of wheat or potatoes. Why does he not undertake the production of coal, from which the State can obtain revenue?

Mr. Angelo: He is not a collier.

Mr. J. THOMSON: No, but as Premier he ought to go in for all things. It would be wise if the Government were to send the Minister for Mines to the islands, but it would be better that the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) should accompany him to advise him upon coal matters. There is revenue awaiting the State in this direction, and we ought to see that we get it. There should be no unemployment in Collie. I am in favour of the wheat pool, but on condition that we have the world's parity. The Premier is always talking about people going on the land. To my mind too many people go on the land.

He never thinks of finding a market for the products of those people who go on the land. If the wheatgrowers of Western Australia think they are always going to have a European market and good prices, they are living in a fool's paradise. I have travelled through the vast wheat-growing areas of Siberia, Russia, and Roumania. When Russia and the other wheat-producing countries return to normal conditions, the Western Australian farmers will be unable to compete with them.

The Premier: They did so before.

Mr. J. THOMSON: At 3s. a bushel. Under present conditions of living and wages our farmers could never compete with them. We should endeavour to secure the markets in the Islands for we will not get the European markets. It should be remembered that in the Netherland-Indies and the Malay States we have remarkably fine markets awaiting exploitation. In the Netherlands-Indies and in the Malay States a new race of people is being born. The people are living along the lines of the same civilisation as we are. The Portuguese went there hundreds of years ago and were followed by the Dutch, and there has arisen from the mixture of the races a people who do not look upon Holland as their home, but rather upon the Netherland-Indies. To give an instance to show what I mean; at the hotel where I was staying there was a family sitting at the same table, comprising a husband and his wife, with five daughters. There were different types to be seen in the faces of the children—Mongolian, Portuguese, Dutch and English.

The Minister for Mines: All in the one family?

Mr. J. THOMSON: Yes. That will evidence how the new race of people is being born there. After leaving Wyndham, a journey of only three days in one of the small, slow steamers plying there, takes one to Sourabaya. To give members some idea of the wealth of Sourabaya, the mayor, who is known there as the burgomaster, told me that there were over 4,000 motor cars registered within the municipality of Sourabaya. There were 12,000 gharries, that is, two-horse buggies, registered within the municipality, and, in addition, there are steam tramways which could burn Collie coal. I would suggest that the Government should send a man to investigate the position there. I do not say that a Minister should go, but I do not want a civil servant to be sent. I want a member of Parliament to be sent on this mission.

Mr. Pickering: Suggest your party.

Mr. J. THOMSON: I will not suggest the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering), but rather the young and energetic member for York (Mr. Latham). I would like to see the Government send the member for York right through the Malay States and the Netherlands Indies. I am certain that if that hon. member was despatched on this mission, we would secure a market for Western Australian flour.

The Minister for Mines: I would rather send the member for Sussex.

Mr. J. THOMSON: I have something later on for the member for Sussex.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. J. THOMSON: Leaving Sourabaya, if members proceeded to Batavia, which is a one day's journey distant, they would see restaurants and hotels which rank among the finest in the world. Here, however, the Japanese come to the fore with Indian flour, which is not nearly so good as the Western Australian article. Notwithstanding that fact, the Japanese are able to swamp the market. Yet in Western Australia we are putting people on the land and finding no market for their products!

Mr. Angelo: Some of that Indian flour was sold as Western Australian flour.

Mr. Mann: I saw flour from Thomas & Co.'s mills at Northam on the market there 20 years ago.

Mr. J. THOMSON: With regard to the settlement of the North-West, a Commissioner has been appointed. I do not know why that appointment has been made. At the end of last year I was in Queensland and travelled through various parts of the State with one of the Queensland Ministers. I went through some of the sugar growing districts and I found there a lot of returned soldiers who were doing much better on sugar plantations with less work than are our returned soldiers in Western Australia who have been settled here and are engaged in wheat growing.

Mr. Troy: Not with less work.

Mr. J. THOMSON: Yes, with less work.

Mr. Troy: I have done it, and I do not think there is less work in sugar plantations.

Mr. J. THOMSON: There is less work, particularly as these were on small areas. We have land in the North-West similar to the land I saw in Queensland and in the same latitude. There is a rainfall of about 40 inches in both places.

Mr. Troy: But what about the time the rain falls?

Mr. J. THOMSON: It falls here at the same time as in Queensland. In addition we have rivers where we can irrigate the land as well, so that we do not have to depend only upon the rain. There is nothing to prevent men engaging in sugar growing in the North-West, and we should certainly have men engaged upon that industry. While in Queensland I also inspected banana and pineapple settlements. I saw upwards of 200 returned soldiers, some of whom were maimed, engaged in growing pineapples and bananas. If the Government in Western Australia had spent the £6,000 which was thrown away the other day in London, in putting some of our maimed men on holdings in the North-West where they could grow bananas and pineapples a better result would have been obtained. The Queensland Government have also built a factory for the purpose of canning the pineapples, and altogether, notwithstanding what we hear about the Queensland Government, I say,

without fear of contradiction, that the Queensland Labour Government have done more for the returned soldiers than all the other State Governments put together.

Mr. Troy: Hear, hear!

Mr. J. THOMSON: Regarding our railways, the Government should take into consideration the advisability of using motor traction for the outer lines. I have at present a catalogue giving prices for railway motor tractors. If we had motor traction on some of our railways such as the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway, where last year a loss of £16,000 was incurred, better results would be achieved.

The Minister for Mines: You are wrong in your figures.

Mr. J. THOMSON: I am not wrong because I have the Government figures to quote from. The catalogue shows that a railway motor car can be bought for £750, and it will carry 12 passengers and five tons of goods. I contend that we should adopt the railway motor cars for use on railways such as the Port Hedland-Marble Bar, the Hopetoun line, and on all railways beyond Kalgoorlie.

Mr. McCallum: Did you inspect the Queensland railway motor car?

Mr. J. THOMSON: No.

Hon. P. Collier: The Queensland car carries 40 passengers.

Mr. J. THOMSON: The catalogue shows the type of motor car which is used on the railways in Ceylon, and there it carries 12 passengers and also takes five tons of goods. On the Marble Bar railway instead of running one train a week and losing £16,000 in a year, if the motor car were used, a train could be run every day and thus render much greater service to the people living along that line. Similarly on all the lines beyond Kalgoorlie, these motor cars could be used and the adoption of this proposal would mean that instead of losing thousands of pounds per year, the railways there could be made to pay.

The Minister for Mines: This is not a new matter. The Government have already ordered these cars and we expect them to arrive here any time now.

Mr. J. THOMSON: I mentioned the matter two years ago. There is a firm here who could supply them within three months. Why all this delay? If the Minister for Railways recommends the adoption of such a proposal, it has to go to the Minister for Works, and then to the Premier, then to the Minister for Works, then to the Minister for Education—just as most things have to go—and then it comes back to the Minister for Railways and so it takes years and years to get things done. These cars should have been bought two years ago.

Mr. Underwood: I advised similarly 10 years ago.

The Minister for Mines: I think it was 12 years ago when I mentioned the matter first.

Mr. J. THOMSON: Dealing with the question of loans, the State Government should

have entered a very strong protest before the Federal Government issued the new loan. All the past war loans, with the exception of money that the soldiers received, was spent in the Eastern States, and the Federal Government have drained this State, the effect of which will be seen if the State requires to raise a loan for its own purposes. We cannot stand this financial drain. Had the Federal Government not sought this last loan, we should have endeavoured to raise a local loan for the electrification of our railways from Midland Junction to Fremantle and also for the railway on the south side of the river. The latter line was surveyed 10 or 12 years ago. I believe every workman who has a little money would subscribe to such a loan if he knew that the money would be spent in the way I have indicated. A tremendous amount of saving would be effected if we had a railway on the south side of the river so that all our timber, wheat, and coal could be sent to Fremantle over that route, and the electrification of our railways from Fremantle to Midland Junction could be carried out at the same time to cope with the ordinary passenger traffic. I would like to see the Government take this matter in hand. So far as gold-mining is concerned, if we were living in biblical times, I would say that I would go on the house-tops and proclaim my views on this matter. No Government since the early days of Coolgardie have done more to discourage prospecting than the present Government, and no Government have done more to discourage old companies from putting their reserve funds into new mining transactions than the Mitchell Government. I hope that when Sir James Mitchell goes to the Old Country, and takes over that mansion at Putney—

Mr. McCallum: Now we understand why that expenditure was incurred.

Mr. J. THOMSON: I hope when that happens that we will get a man as Premier who has some sympathy with the mining industry and some sympathy with our second industries as well. Not only should we have a greater population at Bunbury and Collie because of the export trade in coal, but we should have iron works established in Bunbury as well. There are plenty of firms in England and America who would certainly erect iron works there if they were given any encouragement. I remember asking the Minister for Mines to send a telegram to the Premier requesting him to see the representative of Vicker's Company who was in Melbourne inquiring into the question of establishing new iron and steel works in Australia. The Minister for Mines sent that wire and the Premier saw the company's representative in Melbourne. But the Premier knew nothing about Yampi Sound; he did not know anything to assist the representative of that important firm, with the result that no encouragement was given to the firm to investigate matters in Western Australia. There was a gentleman here a few months ago re-

presenting one of the largest iron and steel works in America. He brought a letter to me from the Queensland Government. He had been inspecting Yampi Sound. The Queensland Government at that time were talking about raising money in America to establish iron works. The visitor had only a day or two to spend here and he asked me to introduce him to the Premier. I said, "It is no use going to the Premier. You might, as a distinguished visitor, get a pass over the railways to go down and see the potato-growing lands of the South-West, or you might get a pass to see the wheat belt." He asked me then whether I would take him along to the Minister for Mines. I replied, "Good gracious"—I believe I said "Good heavens" but it would not be parliamentary to repeat that here—"the Minister for Mines is away inspecting some new race of monkeys in Adelaide." Here was a man representing considerable capital held by people who were willing to invest it, endeavouring to get an interview with Ministers of the Crown, and we find those Ministers running all over the country. I wish to say a few words in regard to immigration. The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) declared that he was in favour of the Government's policy of immigration. I am not in favour of the present system of immigration. We are bringing out to this country, men, nine-tenths of whom remain in the city.

Mr. Troy: That is not correct.

Mr. J. THOMSON: It is correct. We have been bringing out war widows, but the Colonial Secretary informs me that a cable has been sent to England instructing the authorities there not to send out any more. I would like to give my experience with regard to war widows. A clergyman rang me up in Claremont and said, "Do you know that there are two war widows here, both of whom are starving; one has six children and the other four"? I replied that I was not aware of the fact. I saw the two families subsequently and found that they were living in one house without any bedding or food except what had been given to them. I got into touch with the Colonial Secretary and I must say that he acted promptly and also that the money I expended was refunded very soon. That is the class of immigrant the Government have been bringing out—widows with small pensions, not nearly enough to keep them. The eldest of the family of six was sixteen years of age, and he was so delicate that he was unable to do the work at a job that I found for him in Perth. The policy which should be adopted by the Government should be that of clearing the land and then we might get out immigrants from England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, and in fact every country in Europe.

The Premier: Germany?

Mr. J. THOMSON: Yes, Germany, and these people would be the class who would know something about work in the country, and they would not drift back into the towns.

We could get a good class from the south of Spain who would be well adapted for the far north of our State.

Mr. Underwood: The north is good enough for the best.

Mr. J. THOMSON: I want to say something about the Civil Service, but not very much. I have been told that the Premier has given instructions that those members of the Service who went to the football match the other day have had to suffer the infliction of a fine for having left their work on that afternoon. If that is the case, the action of the Government was mean and petty.

The Premier: I gave no such instructions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Any person employed by private enterprise would have had to suffer if he had absented himself without permission.

Mr. J. THOMSON: A number of the Ministers were present at the football match; therefore why should not the members of the Civil Service have been there as well? Members of Parliament were also there. I suppose the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) will give back all the salary he drew while he was looking after the London interests of the member from Coolgardie.

Mr. Lambert: On a point of order; if the hon. member states that the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) was looking after my interests while he was in London, he is telling a deliberate lie.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Coolgardie must withdraw that remark.

Mr. Lambert: I merely stated that if the hon. member said the member for Roebourne was looking after my interests in London he is telling a deliberate lie.

Mr. Teesdale: He did say it.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw the remark.

Mr. Lambert: I withdraw.

Mr. Teesdale: He said it, and it is a rotten lie.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw that remark.

Mr. Teesdale: I have much pleasure in withdrawing it.

Mr. J. THOMSON: It does not matter to me whether those remarks are withdrawn. All the same it was a mean and petty thing to ask that question about the civil servants attending the football match. I desire to say a few words about our own Parliament. We have 80 members in Western Australia representing about 350,000 people. These 80 members draw £400 each per annum and for doing nothing.

Mr. Lambert: Speak for yourself.

Mr. Teesdale: I will give you something to go on with soon.

Mr. J. THOMSON: The Government should bring down a Bill to reduce the number of members of this House to at least half, while with regard to the Upper House I would like to see it wiped out altogether.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Troy: You had better come over here now.

Mr. J. THOMSON: If I went over there I would have to obey the commands of some outside body. With regard to the Upper House, if it were not possible to abolish it without an alteration of the Constitution, I would reduce its numbers to about seven.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You would have to alter the Constitution to do that.

Mr. J. THOMSON: Then I would prefer to wipe it out altogether. A few words now with regard to the Governor. I believe we have in the person of the present Governor one of the best men we have ever had in this State, and I would like to see the powers that be renew his term of office. When he leaves these shores, however, he should be the last Governor to be appointed from abroad. We have a retired Chief Justice and if he were not available to fill the position, it could be amalgamated with the office of Chief Justice. I thank hon. members for the patient hearing they have given me. When I rose I did not know whether I was on my head or my heels.

Mr. Teesdale: That was very palpable.

Mr. J. THOMSON: If I have given offence to any hon. member I give my assurance that it was not intended. It is difficult for a new member to speak with so much interruption going on. Therefore I hope that those who have been associated with this Chamber in the past will remember that a new member experiences a trying period when he addresses the House for the first time.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [5.40]: I desire to congratulate the new members. There are more new members in this House than I have ever seen before on the opening of a new Parliament, and in congratulating them may I be permitted to say that I am somewhat gratified because the electors of Pilbara did not desire a new member. I wish to add also with regard to those who were with us in the last Parliament, that they were very good fellows. In this Parliament we have the first woman member of Parliament in Australia. It always seemed to me that women having to obey the laws should have the full rights of citizenship. I do not think with many people, that we are going to have any great alteration. Some people are under the impression that there are going to be great reforms and that we are going to be made much better. As a matter of fact there is really not much the matter with us, not much to be reformed, and I will say for the women of Western Australia that in electing the member for West Perth, they have sent us their best.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I listened to the Leader of the Opposition condemning the Country Party for being controlled by outside influences, and I heard the Deputy Leader of the Country Party condemn the Labour Party for practically the same thing. So far as I am personally concerned, I have no complaints to make. If being controlled from outside suits either the Labour Party or the Country

Party, that will do me. So far as my own conviction goes, I am certain that if we were to entirely abolish party politics Parliamentary Government would be more effective both in regard to legislation and administration.

Hon. T. Walker: How are you to do it?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I stated that I would be bound by no party. I was told that this could not be done and I replied that I would try it. All I have to say now is that I am here with 49 other members, and if all the others tried similarly there would be 50 of us in the position I occupy to-day.

Hon. T. Walker: Then it would be a party of no parties.

Mr. Corboy: In the present Parliament you have spoken as a member of the National Labour Party.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I spoke for those members elected as National laborists, and I feel it an honour to be allowed to speak for them. But let me explain that we have a clear understanding among ourselves that neither outside nor inside influences shall interfere with an individual member's judgment. There are many things upon which we agree—there are many things also about which I agree with members on the Opposition side of the House—but we have clearly laid it down that if there be anything to which I disagree, there is to be no expulsion; I use my own judgment. Let me repeat that I believe we could do better work if all members followed those lines. The hon. member who has just sat down told the House of the great possibilities of Collie coal. I agree with him. But there is room for discretion in regard to that coal. I have the evidence of the chief engineer of the "Kwinana," which was burnt by Collie coal, a man who has used more Collie coal than any other chief engineer alive. He assures me that there are three mines at Collie, the coal from which he would take all over the world, while there are other mines down there whose product is positively dangerous. His trouble was that he could not get the Collie coal he wanted. That evidence can be secured at any time from Mr. Foster, the chief engineer of the "Kwinana." When considering Collie coal, we have to remember that there are two classes of Collie coal, one a good, perfectly safe coal, and the other dangerous in use aboard a ship. I was pleased to hear the Premier say he intended to make an alteration in the naming of certain Government utilities, for long past referred to as "trading concerns" and "business undertakings." When the Scaddan Government were in office we had to withstand the criticism of the Press and the Opposition in regard to the deficit we were compiling, which it was said was owing to the State enterprises we had established. We really went out of office on those grounds.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Monger said the same to-day, before the farmers' conference.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes. I am now of the impression that the Premier has a lot more sense than has Monger.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I thought that a long while ago.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We find this position: We had a pretty considerable deficit, and the Opposition said it was owing to the new State enterprises entered into by the Scaddan Government. And when the new Ministry came in and had a look at those enterprises, they found that they were really the only bright spot in the financial position. And the enterprises entered into by the Scaddan Government constitute the only bright spot in the finances to-day. The Premier duly recognises that. It is another case of those who came to scoff remaining to pray.

Hon. T. Walker. How do you spell that word,—p-r-e-y?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The hon. member can spell it as he likes. I think it would be applicable both ways: They prey for office, and they are praying for the success of those enterprises. I desire to protest against the method by which the State enterprises are officially put before the public. What we read in the "West Australian" every month is the official report. The "Sunday Times" published an article showing that on three trading concerns, the Wyndham Meat Works, the State Steamship Service, and the State Implement Works, there was a deficit of half a million last year.

The Premier: That is nonsense, of course.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If that is nonsense, why publish it?

The Premier: We did not publish it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There was nothing in the "Sunday Times" article to show that it was nonsense. It consisted largely of debits and credits, and the average person would take it seriously, and as being correct. I am quite sure that a number of members of Parliament accepted it in all seriousness—and I always claim that members of Parliament have considerably more knowledge than have pressmen. The Premier tells us it was nonsense. I do not know how the trading concerns stand.

The Premier: Most of the balance-sheets are here.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Anyhow, if the Government publish anything at all, it is up to them to publish it in such a way that the ordinary public can read and understand it. Some time ago there was appointed a camouflager of figures. Apparently this was his work. I read the figures relating to the Wyndham Meat Works, I read them vertically, I read them horizontally, I turned them upside down, I read them diagonally and obliquely.

Mr. Pickering: And acutely.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I went round the back of the paper and looked at them from behind. If those figures were not deliberately misleading, they were undoubtedly most stupid.

The Premier: Who put them up?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The official camouflager of figures.

The Premier: What did he get out of it?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not know what he is paid. I am glad to know that the Premier intends to alter this sort of thing. We have given considerable concessions to the Press on the understanding that it was an educational medium. So to publish anything in the Press which is misleading, at least reacts on the educational quality of the Press. Apart from that, the great trouble we have is the deficit. Many inquiries are made as to the cause of that deficit. The Leader of the Opposition stated the case correctly when he said it was chiefly due to the over construction of railways, and other public utilities. As to whose fault it was, I think it began about 1906, when the present Premier first became a Minister, and when Newton Moore was Premier. It started with the light agricultural railways. I had to contest a couple of elections, fighting against excessive borrowing, and endeavouring to prevent the construction of railways ahead of settlement. At that time a popular slogan was "railways ahead of settlement."

Mr. O'Loughlin: "A thousand miles a year, and a thousand pounds a mile."

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Our railways are still ahead of settlement. At that time the Labour Party had in its platform a plank for restricted borrowing except for reproductive work returning interest and sinking fund. We fought the 1911 elections practically on that policy. But, when I arrived here, I found that plank did not mean what it said. Our leader passed a loan authorisation of five million pounds in five minutes.

Hon. T. Walker: That was to meet old debts.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was said that we had to do it in order to honour the obligations of a previous Government. But that is not correct. If we had not liked to spend the money, we need not have done so. I remind the hon. member that the Scaddan Government approved of the Esperance railway, but their successors did not build it. We were no more bound than they to honour the obligations of our predecessors.

Hon. T. Walker: They were morally bound to build that line. It was political trickery that prevented it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is owing to that "being morally bound" that we are in considerable financial trouble now. It is of no use our going into the question of whose fault it was. What we have to try to do, is to get out of the difficulty. The first proposition that strikes everybody, the Premier, the late Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, all who speak on the subject, is increased production. If we could get sufficient production to keep our public utilities fully supplied, our financial troubles would be at an end. But that cannot be brought about by merely being optimistic, or by the waving of a wand. In the meantime we have to do something and that something must be economy in administration. The Scaddan Government were accused of extravagance.

Since their successors took office expenditure has been increased in every department. There are one or two members of the present Government who, I am convinced, have no knowledge whatever of the meaning of true economy. The Minister for Education has not the slightest idea of what economy in administration means, and I am not too sure about the Premier himself. Let us consider some of the things that have been done. When I speak of economy, I am referring to those things which we can deny ourselves without affecting production or the capacity of our services. If we examine the administration of the Government during the last three or four years, we find that hundreds of things have been done without which we could have well pulled through. For 20 odd years we pulled through without a London residence for our Agent General.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That should not be a cost to the State at all; it should be a saving.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: But it is a cost. We could well have pulled through in that respect until we got out of the present financial bog.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Or until the weather broke.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Quite so. Some members appear to have the fever, too. For 16 years the accommodation of this House has sufficed and yet we find members asking for more rooms, and even for a couch for a room. The Minister for Education told us we must have educational facilities in the country districts, but that does not account for building a gymnasium at the Perth Modern School. We have pulled through for 15 or 16 years without a gymnasium, and yet a couple of thousand pounds is now being expended for this purpose.

Hon. P. Collier: A couple of thousand pounds! It must be very elaborate.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, it is a modern one. Having done without that gymnasium for 15 years, we could have deferred it until we had balanced the State ledger. Our duty is to balance the ledger.

Hon. P. Collier: We could have done without the consolidated school for a year or two.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, and without the Education Commission which came here to whitewash the Director of Education and to glorify the Minister.

Mr. Teesdale: Members asked for a Commission.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We asked for a commission of inquiry, but we did not ask that there should be brought from New South Wales a man whose methods we were following and who, had he given any other decision, would have been condemning his own administration. To bring Peter Board here to support his own administration in New South Wales must have cost this State a thousand or two. These are only little circumstances in the methods of the Government. Again, there is the Civil Service. During the last

four or five years it has been stated in this House that we require an alteration of the Public Service Act, and close administration in the service. The Premier said that Ministers could not manage trading concerns and could not look after the details of departments.

The Premier: I did not say that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I agree with the Premier to a limited extent. Ministers cannot possibly have technical knowledge of all the activities of their departments.

The Premier: I said of trading concerns.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: But it is the duty of a Minister to see that he has men on whom he can depend. The secret of success in all great undertakings and in all business lies in the choosing of men to do the work.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You know that the Minister has not power to do that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I know the Government have not that power. Will this Parliament give them that power?

Hon. P. Collier: They have never asked for it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: On the first occasion I spoke in this House I said the Civil Service system was wrong. The appointment of a Public Service Commissioner might be all right in its way, but over and above the Public Service Commissioner should be the Ministers. I think I expressed it in these words, "We do not mind the Public Service Commissioner being underground boss, but the Minister should be general manager." Ever since we have continued to run on the same old lines. It is not sufficient to sit down and say, "We cannot do this or that because we have an Act and must obey that Act." The Government know that they have the power to amend the Public Service Act.

Hon. T. Walker: Then the Civil Service would object to a man.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I wish to reiterate my statement that we should have power to dismiss civil servants. If that power is denied us, we shall not get an efficient civil service. Even under the existing Act we might do better than we have been doing. Considerably better results might be obtained by close administration on the part of Ministers remaining in their offices, instead of travelling all over the place. I do not object to Ministers travelling on business, but I agree with the member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson) that the Minister for Mines might have been doing infinitely better work in his office than judging monkeys in Adelaide.

The Premier: You know that Ministers have always travelled.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I know they are always travelling, and in this respect I think the present Ministers are worse than their predecessors.

The Premier interjected.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I hope the Premier does not intend to go to London too soon; that residence in Putney is not available.

The Premier said that Ministers could not control the trading concerns. Let us consider the case of Mr. Bennett, a man who had never been to sea except as a passenger, but who was sent to England at a cost of £900 odd to advise the naval architects on the construction or in regard to the purchase of ships for the State Steamship Service.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What was done with the money? It did not cost that much.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He took a new wife.

Hon. T. Walker: Had he an old one?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, he left his old one in Fremantle. It is not necessary for the Minister to know the details of running ships, but it is necessary for him to see that a man, sent to England to consult with naval architects on the building or purchasing of ships, possesses some sea-going qualifications. When he requires a man to advise in connection with the difficulties of navigation on the North-West coast, he should send a man who has been on the North-West coast. The Government, however, sent to England to consult with naval architects a man who had never been to sea except as a passenger, and who scarcely knows which end of a ship the rudder is on. When the Government do such things as this, we cannot wonder that we are slipping back. We have been told that Mr. Bennett advised with regard to the alterations to the motor ship "Kangaroo." All I can say regarding the "Kangaroo" is that the Government have wasted good money and spoilt a good ship.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What is his profession? What has he been doing in late years?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He was originally working in a brick-making machinery works in England, and for the last 15 or 20 years he has been an engineer in the employ of the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Works manager.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, under Mr. Carver. He holds no ticket, not even a journeyman fitter and turner's ticket. The "Kangaroo" is a first class ship. If the Government who bought the "Kangaroo" had been in office when the war terminated, they would have sold her at a price which would have been highly profitable to this State.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And got another one in her place.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: They could have got two.

Hon. P. Collier: It was a mistake not to accept the high price offered.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Having missed that opportunity, we have to consider what we are going to do with the "Kangaroo." She is one of the finest cargo boats which has entered the port of Fremantle, but to attempt to make a passenger ship of her is only messing with her and courting failure. A draught horse is one of the most useful animals that man employs—

Mr. O'Loughlen: But he could not win a second class plate.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He could not win a third class plate.* I was about to say it would be useless to enter such an animal for the Melbourne cup. The "Kangaroo" is a first class vessel as a trading ship but utterly useless as a passenger boat.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Before tea I was speaking with regard to the motor ship "Kangaroo." The State Steamship Service will make a very serious mistake if they attempt to run that ship on the North-West coast. I do not intend to go further into the matter now, but I should be glad to see the Minister controlling the State Steamship Service and to give him my reasons for making that statement. I say without hesitation that if we attempt to work that ship on the North-West coast, there will be nothing but trouble and anxiety while she is in those waters. Turning now to the finances, I am reminded that the Supply Bill was opposed in this Chamber. I did not vote to decrease supplies; but I desire to make this clear, that if the Government will not cut down their expenditure, then Parliament must do it. If the Leader of the Opposition comes along again with a proposal to cut down expenditure, I will support him unless the Government give me an assurance that they themselves will cut it down. I go further, and say that if I support the Opposition in cutting down expenditure and that means a change of Government, then, so long as the Opposition will try to exercise strict economy, I shall give them my solid support.

The Premier: Cut down right or wrong, I suppose?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I will support any Government making a serious attempt to cut down the State's expenditure, endeavouring to bring our expenditure somewhat near to our receipts. Any Government in power will have to try to do that, or they cannot keep my vote.

The Premier: We have tried to do it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: But Ministers have made such a bad job of it.

The Premier: No.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The hon. gentleman has a larger deficit than anybody else has had.

The Premier: No, I have not.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I have only one other complaint to make regarding the Government. It seems to me that there is no policy, no decision—that we are just drifting. The State Steamship Service is one of the concerns which emphasise that fact. For the last two or three years I have said that we ought either to make it a good service, or else get rid of the service—one way or the other. As things are to-day, the service is not good. I do not think the Government are ever likely to get boats cheaper than they can get them to-day.

The Premier: You are wrong there.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: A month or two back ships were selling at about £10 per ton.

Mr. Pickering: But you would not suggest buying another ship that has not been built for the requirements of the trade?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I would not suggest buying another ship that is not suitable for the trade. However, I repeat my suggestion that we either make that a good service, or turn it up.

The Premier: I entirely agree with you, but boats are far too dear at present. It would cost £450,000 to buy a ship suitable for that trade.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Why did the Premier send Mr. Bennett to England?

The Premier: To advise our people there. Why did not you try to do something yourself?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I tried. Did I not leave office? Did I not resign? I shall take another opportunity of speaking on the State Steamship Service and saying what is required. Now I would like to have a word or two regarding the wheat pool. In my opinion, it is not worth while in ordinary circumstances to discuss pending legislation on the Address-in-reply; but as this is a most important question, and one that must be settled in the course of the next few weeks one way or the other, possibly it would be well for the Government to know the opinions of members before bringing down their Bill. I think almost every member of the House is in favour of a wheat pool of some description; but it is a question of control, and it is also a question of the consumers of wheat getting a fair deal.

Mr. Mann: Hear, hear!

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) pointed out that the State gave very considerable concessions to wheat growers and agriculturists; but among the concessions that he did not mention is the fact that we have about three million pounds of loan money invested in the development of agriculture. We keep up a fairly large Department of Agriculture.

Hon. P. Collier: There are 2½ millions of money in the I.A.B. alone.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am leaving out the Industries Assistance Board. We maintain a fairly large Agricultural Department and pay many experts to assist those of our people who are pursuing agriculture.

Mr. Latham: You mean the State does, do you not?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The State, the people of Western Australia as a whole. In doing so we are not, in my opinion, paying any compliment to the wheat grower. The provision made in this respect is a natural one, because it is most desirable that we as a people should produce wheat at least sufficient in quantity for our own consumption. It is most desirable that we should not be dependent on other countries to supply us with the staff of life. So that whatever we have done in the way of developing agriculture and the pro-

duction of wheat has not been merely for the benefit of the growers, but has been a protection for ourselves, for our community as a whole. Having said so much, let me add that the community expect a fair deal from the wheat growers. When we come to speak of the wheat pool, we want to know what sort of a pool it is to be. The New South Wales wheat growers carried by a large majority a vote in favour of a compulsory wheat pool controlled by the wheat growers. I am prepared to give our growers that, providing that we have not to guarantee any advance. Allowing that the wheat growers are going to finance themselves, I am prepared to give them a pool and let them have the whole management of it. I was in Cabinet for some time during the existence of a wheat pool, and I can well understand the position of the Premiers of Victoria and South Australia, who turned down a wheat pool. I can state that the greatest trouble the Cabinet of which I was a member ever had consisted in the complaints of the Primary Producers' Association, in the attempts of the executive of that association to get absolute control of the pool whilst we, on behalf of the people, were guaranteeing the money. Our Minister controlling the Wheat Pool, Mr. Baxter, was called up again and again by the Primary Producers' Association. His presence was demanded at a conference of primary producers; his presence was demanded at the meetings of the executive of the Primary Producers' Association.

Hon. P. Collier: His scalp was demanded eventually.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not know whether it was demanded, but they got it eventually. If we are guaranteeing any money at all, then we are going to have a full share in the control of the pool. I care not for those university professors who warn us against "slithering down the slippery slope of political supervision." It seems to me sound economically and logically that if we, the representatives of the people, put in the people's money, we should see that that money is properly spent. That may not be political economy as taught at the universities, but it will do for an ordinary bushman. If, on the other hand, the growers get no guarantee, there is only one thing we want to guard against, and that is the wheat growers charging unduly the Western Australian consumers. On behalf of the consumers I have to say that the last wheat pool has given us a very bad deal. I am getting old, and I do not like to refer to bushranging or burglary or anything like that; but I will say that the last wheat pool, in charging us 9s. per bushel while wheat was being sold in Europe for 7s., gave the consumers of this country a very rotten deal.

Mr. Latham: Will you tell us about prices in the previous year?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am not worried about the previous year. We have spent a lot of money—and wisely—in order to pro-

duce wheat in this country; but, having produced it, we, the people of Western Australia, are entitled to get it at a reasonable price. We have been paying 9s. a bushel for wheat.

Mr. Johnston: The price has been 14s. per bushel in Italy.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I say that if the price in Europe was £9 per bushel, we are not called upon to pay 9s. per bushel for it here. If there happens to be a shortage in Russia, or a shortage in Canada, or a shortage in the Argentine, that is no reason why we in Western Australia, who have a surplus of wheat, should suffer for the shortage in some other country.

The Minister for Agriculture: But suppose we had a shortage here.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Then we should have to suffer, and do the best we could to get wheat from where we could. But when we have a surplus of wheat here, we are entitled to obtain our wheat requirements at a fair price. We should put into the Bill a clause, which I believe would be carried, allowing for world's parity, with a maximum for local consumption. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) spoke of the cost of production. We can get over that in an easier way.

Hon. P. Collier: By fixing the price ourselves.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, and putting it into the Bill that we will have the world's parity with a maximum limit of somewhere about 7s. a bushel. I would also be prepared to put in the minimum price.

Hon. P. Collier: Why not make it a fixed price?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, and pay that right through. Seven shillings a bushel is too high.

The Minister for Agriculture: Why not have your own way altogether?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am going to have some of my way. I represent the people of Pilbara.

Mr. Pickering: The beef buccaneers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. UNDERWOOD: My electors do not intend to pay more for wheat in Western Australia than it is sold for in Europe.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The British Government fix the price not to exceed so much a bushel.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We could do that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The overseas rates are not to exceed 95s. a quarter.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We can deal with the Bill when it comes down. It is perhaps advisable that members should give some idea of what they do want. The Bill I want would place a minimum limit on what could be charged for wheat to the Western Australian consumer. We have heard a good deal about communism and the abolition of capitalism, both private and State, and the management of industries for the benefit of those who are working in them. It would

be advisable to postpone the consideration of anything of that description until we see how Russia gets on in the trial. If Russia makes a success of it no doubt Australia will follow. If Russia fails we will not follow.

Mr. Davies: She has admitted her failure.

Mr. Lambert: According to some of the papers which support you she has.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not care whether it is a success or a failure. If it is a success I should be pleased for not only Russia but this country to follow. If it is a failure we will avoid it.

Hon. P. Collier: Very cautious!

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Notwithstanding the small difficulties we appear to have here, such as the five million deficit, and high taxation, the greatest problem facing Australia, not only Western Australia, is the peopling of the North. I am compelled to admit that the last two years or so have been a disappointment so far as the development of the North is concerned. We have a great many advisers regarding that portion of the State.

Hon. P. Collier: We have a Minister and a Commissioner for the North-West.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is so. We have Mr. Miles advocating a 20-million railway, a Minister engaged in a publicity campaign, and we have the Federal Government putting on an air mail service. Again, we have the Minister speaking of opening up new provinces. That is all very fine and spectacular. It would be much better to develop the provinces we have already opened up before engaging in the opening up of new ones. We can let the publicity campaign go. It will not do any harm. The flying service, at a cost of £25,000 a year, will, it is said, relieve the isolation and bring people nearer to civilisation.

Hon. P. Collier: And pay the interest on a couple of ships.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Two good ships would do infinitely better work than could be done by the expenditure of £50,000 a year in an air service. We are not troubled much along the coast, where those ships would go, in regard to mail communication. We have the wires and the wireless. We get a daily bulletin of what is happening throughout the world in all these towns. What we most require, and what would save much property and often human life, are telephones inland from the ports. If the Federal Government have £25,000 a year to spare, my advice to them on behalf of the North-Westerns, would be to devote the money to a telephone service. That would bring these isolated places nearer to civilisation. They are always giving us something we have not asked for. No one in the North-West has asked for an air mail service, but for the last 10 years we have been begging the Federal Government to relieve those people, who are prepared to put their own money in to getting a telephone service, of the extraordinary expense and restrictions to which they have been subjected.

Mr. Lambert: That would not suit the brass hats in Melbourne.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That is not sufficiently spectacular, whereas an airship is good for platform purposes. The most important thing I know of is the peopling of the North-West. I thought when we established meat works at Port Darwin and Wyndham we were getting on. We find that both of these works are now closed down. We have been told that they were closed down because of the lack of shipping. That has been said again and again. Even the Minister in charge of the State steamship service said it by way of interjection the other night. It is a fallacy. The reason why the works are closed down is that they cannot continue under the present wages and working conditions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Premier said he had stocks there now for sale.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I will give the House a few figures I have obtained from the State steamship service. The service runs a boat occasionally to Darwin. I asked for the cost of taking the cargo out of the ship. The figures I have are for stevedoring only; they do not take into account the keeping of steam on the winches. They concern only the men in the hold. As soon as the cargo is over the rail of the ship the charges become a wharfage matter. In February, 1919, we took up 580 tons of freight and received £950; the stevedoring cost £602, and the cost per ton for stevedoring was £1 0s. 9d. On the 25th May we took up 235 tons, the freight came to £429, the cost of stevedoring to £236, and the cost per ton was £1 0s. 2d. In October we took up 225 tons, the freight was £530, the stevedoring £405, and the rate per ton £1 16s. In December we took up 185 tons, the freight was £448, the stevedoring charges £274, and the cost per ton £1 9s. 7d. In March, 1920, we took up 210 tons, the freight was £534, the stevedoring £302, and the cost per ton £1 8s. 9d. In June we took up 92 tons, the freight was £245, the stevedoring £184, and the rate per ton £2. In August we took up 115 tons, the freight was £287, the stevedoring £245, and the rate per ton £2 2s. 6d. In January, 1921—the latest figures I have—we took up 112 tons, the freight was £276, the stevedoring £265, and the rate per ton £2 7s. It has been said that we cannot get ships to go to Darwin. It was stated that Vestey Bros. could not get a ship to take 6,500 tons of coal to Darwin. I can easily understand that. There were plenty of ships, but no ship owner with a grain of sense would attempt to send a ship to Darwin containing 6,000 tons of coal. He would not know when he would get his ship unloaded. On the present rates it would cost something like £16,000 to take that coal out of the hold of the ship. Then there are the men on the wharf in the trucks receiving the coal, and it is then unloaded from the trucks into the goods sheds. On these figures one could not get a ton of stuff into Darwin or ship it out of Darwin under about £5 a ton.

Mr. Wilson: It would not cost so much to unload coal.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If the hon. member would go up there he would think it would cost a great deal more. The member for South-Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) says they never slow down. If there is more than a certain quantity of goods in a sling, the men on shore stop work and have an argument. At Darwin it has occurred that ten fifties of flour have been put into a sling—a sling will carry that quantity—although the regulations there provide for eight fifties. The sling was duly passed out over the truck and an attempt made to unload it into the truck. The men in the truck said there were too many bags in the sling and sent it back. The men in the hold, when the sling was returned to them, said they would not fill it up again. They sent it up once more, and then someone went off for the inspector to settle the matter. The agent came down and one of the officers worked the winch. The agent took the surplus off and the men were then willing to go on again. It must be borne in mind that the men were on full wages while the argument was going on.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is not peculiar to Darwin.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am coming South later on. Under these conditions it is impossible to work Darwin. When I was there the works were in full swing. The lowest wage for an ordinary rouseabout was £20 and the wages went up to £22 a fortnight. Why should anyone pretend that the trouble lies with the lack of ships? There seems to be a system whereby 33 per cent. higher wages are paid at Wyndham and Darwin than the highest Queensland rates in meat works there. It seems to be the regular thing to grant these differential rates. Even in the railway award which was recently delivered, we find that at Port Hedland, where the living is as cheap, if not cheaper, than in Perth, the men are to receive 35s. a week more than the men in Perth. In addition to that, the men at Port Hedland are allowed 12 days extra per year for holiday leave. I desire to put this point clearly because the Government, so they say, intend to start a forward developmental policy in the North; but rich as the North undoubtedly is, it cannot possibly pay 33 per cent. higher wages than the rest of Australia. As a matter of fact, it is essential that the wages in the North should approximate closely the wages in the South. If that is not so, the North cannot go ahead. Regarding the Wyndham Meat Works, we have had some inquiries and we have had a select committee to consider matters in connection with those works. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) has announced his intention of moving for a select committee to go into the question again. I hope he will do so and in view of his expressed intention, I will not speak at so great a length on this matter as I would otherwise do. It is certain, however, that not only can we not pay the rates demanded for work at the Meat Works this

year, but if we are to carry on those works in the future, we cannot pay the 1920 rates. There must be a considerable reduction in those rates or the works cannot go on. There must also be some better understanding regarding the work that is to be given for wages received. Let me give hon. members an instance to show what goes on at Wyndham. While I was at that port, I noted the incident I am about to relate. The stevedores or lumpers were in the ship's holds. There were three holds working and there were six men in each hold. The captain of the ship came along and in a hold saw one of the men who was drunk. The man was so drunk as to be a serious danger not only to himself but to those working with him. The captain ordered the man out of the hold. There was immediately a stop-work meeting. The three gangs came up from the holds and discussed the matter. After half an hour had been spent in considering the matter, for which period they received full pay, they decided that they would let the man go away and sleep off his drink, that they would work the hold with five men, and that "the drunk" was to get full pay while he was asleep. These are conditions as they obtain at Wyndham.

Mr. Lambert: That is not peculiar to lumpers.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is not peculiar to anyone, but it is certain that the works cannot be run under such conditions. There is no doubt that we must populate the northern parts of Australia or take the risk of it being populated by someone else. If white men cannot work there, we must modify the White Australia policy. It seems absurd to me to contend that we are going to have a White Australia and yet claim that almost half of our area is not fit for white men to live in. We will not allow anyone else to live in it. So far as the Trades Hall is concerned, and the workers too, they must understand three things. We can populate the North with white people but such a task must be on wages, hours, and working conditions that closely approximate to those in the southern parts of the State. We can develop the far North with indentured coloured labour or we can take the risk of leaving it empty. Those who claim they require 33 per cent. more wages to work in the North than in the South must, if they desire to achieve that result, modify their White Australia policy, and they must consider the matter from a white Australian point of view. There are many misunderstandings in regard to the North. We complain at times of how the people in England do not understand anything about Australia, but the ignorance of Australian matters in England is not nearly so great as the ignorance of people in Perth, who should know better, regarding the northern parts of Western Australia. We have the Commissioner of Public Health, for instance, talking about sending Dr. Baldwin, who is inquiring into the hook-worm disease, up

North to investigate disease there and to examine mosquitoes. If we desire to examine mosquitoes why pass East Perth? I will give the Commissioner my word that he will find infinitely more mosquitoes in East Perth than in the North. Furthermore, if we are to look for the disease-carrying mosquito, why not look also for that type of mosquito down here? What disease does the Commissioner of Public Health know has ever come from the North? As a matter of fact, we have no diseases there. I was quarantined when coming down from the North by steamer because there was a case of dengue fever on board. At the same time there were hundreds who died of pneumonic influenza, which disease never went North. Mr. Speaker will well remember that in the early days when the Coolgardie goldfields opened up for some time there were thousands and tens of thousands of men of the finest physique who ever came west, who died from typhoid fever. Even the smallest camp had the best possible sanitary arrangements to prevent the occurrence of typhoid fever. On the other hand, I have known a camp of 600 or 700 men running for two years in the North without the first suggestion of sanitary arrangements and typhoid fever was never known there. Yet the Commissioner of Public Health says he will send Dr. Baldwin up North to look for mosquitoes and diseases. If he desires to search for mosquitoes and diseases he has a far better chance of discovering both in Perth than he will have in the North. I understand that Dr. Baldwin is expected to reach Darwin in January, but I guarantee that he will not find a mosquito up North between now and December.

Mr. Lambert: They come south in the hot weather.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) was up North a little while ago and I will guarantee that he never saw a mosquito there. The fact remains, however, that under present conditions the industries of Darwin and Wyndham cannot be continued. There are other difficulties besides wages and working conditions. There is one aspect regarding labour conditions which has become absolutely dominant in the North and that is, that officers in charge of these Works cannot possibly dismiss anyone. That is the system which has been adopted and the Manager of the Wyndham Meat Works (Mr. McGhie) is always desirous of doing nothing that will antagonise or create dissension among the workers. The workers can do anything at all; they can work or they can leave off. The outstanding feature is that a worker cannot be dismissed or there will be a strike. That is a somewhat similar condition to that existing in connection with the Esplanade Hotel. It does not matter how flagrant the breach is, the organisation declares that the manager of the concern cannot dismiss anyone. Australia, neither in the north of Western Australia nor elsewhere, cannot continue under such conditions. I

claim that the North can be developed with white labour and possibly I am the only Parliamentary representative of the northern areas who claims that this is possible. All my colleagues favour development with indentured coloured labour. I adhere to my contention that the northern parts of Australia can be developed by white labour, and that being so, we must endeavour to get people settled in those parts. The practice of taking people from the South to do a job in the North and to then take them back South, is no good. There is no doubt in my mind that intense culture is possible in the North, but it will require some irrigation in order to secure the best results. There are fine possibilities ahead for anyone who is prepared to embark upon these activities. A man can have his holding and work on it. For part of his time he may earn big money at shearing or at the Meat Works, and when the work there is finished, he can go back to his holding and continue to develop it. It is utterly useless to talk about close settlement or intense culture unless we find a market for the resultant produce and the means of taking that produce to the market. If the Government intend to go ahead with their proposition and settle the North, they will have to consider this aspect. As soon as they attempt to put men and women in the North and ask them to produce, they must find markets for their produce and ships to convey their produce to those markets. Unless that problem is solved the Government will only be wasting money by appointing secretaries and commissioners. Apart from closer settlement, even if we were to leave the North with but little improvement on its present conditions, we require, not to open up new provinces, but to develop those already opened up, to construct harbours, to provide water supplies, and to build short spur electric railways driven by energy generated by the tides. But if it is to be only a question of giving limelight lectures and appointing a Commissioner and a secretary to the Commissioner, and letting it go at that, well it means wasted effort and a wasting of the State's money. I feel pretty serious on this question. I know that we can settle the North, and that those who go to the North will do well. It is the best part of Australia I have ever been in. When the new classification of pastoral leases comes into force, we shall receive something like £100,000 per annum in land rents from pastoral leases. The leaseholders are improving the land; they are not taking out the minerals, nor in other ways impoverishing it. It would be only reasonable if half the money derived from pastoral leases were earmarked for developmental work on that country, just as a certain amount of money received from timber areas should be reserved for the development of those lands. I repeat that, unless the Government intend to go into this matter thoroughly, and are prepared to spend money judiciously, they had better leave well

alone. In conclusion, I would like to say a word in regard to Wyndham. The position there is that many of the pastoralists—I am not speaking now of the big pastoralists—have for years worked like horses and lived like dingoes in their endeavours to build stations. They have denied themselves all of what the normal young man regards as pleasure. Unless something is done those men, after years of toil, will have to carry their swags out of there. There are 30,000 bullocks in the vicinity of Wyndham which cannot be treated. They are left in the bush to die.

Mr. Teesdale: To die?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Of course.

Mr. Latham: When?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In two or three years. The hon. member should know that if you do not get rid of your surplus stock, you become overstocked, and not only those you do not sell will die, but some others also. Here again the Government are drifting. They do not know, they cannot tell the people of Wyndham, what they are going to do. The Government should decide within a week or two whether they are going to run those works next year, or whether they are going to try to get a market and find ships for those 30,000 or 40,000 bullocks.

The Minister for Agriculture: We are endeavouring to do that now.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I should be pleased to know whether you intend to run the works, or run ships.

The Minister for Agriculture: I said nothing about the works.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: You cannot run the works and run ships, too. If you run the works, the bullocks will be treated at the works. You have to decide first, before you start to do anything else, whether you are going to run those works. Once you decide not to run the works, you can send your Commissioner to Java to see whether he can sell bullocks. But you send him there without knowing whether you will have any bullocks to sell. It is the duty of the Government to decide as soon as possible whether they are going to run the Wyndham Meat Works next year, and, if not, to endeavour to get markets, and ships to carry the surplus stock to those markets.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. K. Maley—Greenough) [8.21]: First let me throw around a few bouquets. I might be permitted to pay my personal respects to the member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan). I congratulate her, as a fellow Western Australian and a product of my own district, on the very high honour she enjoys in being the first representative of her sex in an Australian Parliament. I should like to extend to you, Sir, my congratulations on your re-election to the high office you occupy, and also on the fact that, unlike many of us, you had an uncontested election in your constituency. I wish to tender my thanks to the

Leader of the Opposition for the very kindly references he made to my promotion. The capable and interesting address of the hon. member, taken in conjunction with the very practical views of the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) and the well reasoned and sound address of the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) are indicative of the general desire of the community that party faction shall not separate us altogether in confronting the many grave issues awaiting our consideration. I do not pretend that I have made myself *au fait* with the ramifications of the various wheat pools, or with many phases of administration in connection with the Department of Agriculture. I am endeavouring to acquaint myself with those things which concern my administration. The generous expression of opinion voiced by the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) encourages me in the belief that my experience in meeting for the first time the cares and responsibilities of office is not altogether dissimilar from his own. I hope that my endeavours in the administering of the Department of Agriculture will be fruitful of results. I am not going to say anything to-night in regard to that department because, when the annual Estimates come down, I shall be able to deal fully with some of the various phases of its administration. I have already taken the earliest opportunity to give the shareholders in the wheat pool some information in regard to their affairs. I attended the last meeting of the Australian Wheat Board, and on my return to this State I gave the shareholders of the pool some idea of their equity in the 1920-21 pool. When my statement appeared in the Press, the chairman of the Australian Wheat Board, Senator Russell, said the figures were not official, and denied any responsibility in connection with them. At the meeting of the board which I attended, it was agreed that any statements made by individual members would be made on their own responsibility. It was on that understanding I made that statement. In my opinion the whole community is concerned in the operations of the wheat pool. Knowing that considerable responsibility rests on the community in connection with the initial payments to the farmers on delivery at sidings, and that through the Agricultural Bank, the Associated Banks and the Industries Assistance Board, considerable relief has been afforded the farmers from time to time, while the funds necessary for the development of the agricultural industry have been readily furnished, I frankly admit that the producers cannot claim that they, and they alone, are concerned in the pool. I wish to refer to the vexed question of the price of wheat for local consumption, and to make this declaration that I personally have never been in favour of fixing the price of wheat for local consumption for a 12 monthly period.

Hon. P. Collier: It was done with only one object.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The only outcome of fixing the price for 12 monthly periods has been that the consumer has had the better of the deal. There can be no question on that point.

Hon. P. Collier: Not during this year; over many years perhaps.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Even over this last year. When the price of wheat for local consumption was fixed in January, 1920, for the first 12 monthly period at 7s. 8d. a bushel, it was ascertained that the then overseas parity was equivalent to 8s. 4d. a bushel, but immediately after that price was fixed, the market price of wheat rose, and within two or three months we were receiving for parcels of wheat 16s. a bushel f.o.b. Fremantle.

Hon. P. Collier: For a few isolated small parcels.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Perhaps so, but that was indicative of the price at the time.

Hon. P. Collier: It represented a very small proportion of the whole.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: These are official figures. The overseas realisations for the 1919-20 pool have averaged 10s. a bushel f.o.b., and the price of 7s. 8d. fixed for local consumption gave the consumer an advantage of 2s. 4d. a bushel for the whole of that 12 monthly period. When the price for local consumption was fixed in January of this year, the overseas parity was 10s. 6d. a bushel. The Leader of the Opposition will realise that, during the whole of the previous 12 months and in January of this year, the overseas parity for wheat was 10s. a bushel.

Hon. P. Collier: I have never contended that on the whole we have not had wheat at lower than the overseas parity during the war, but we should not have been called upon to pay that parity.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am referring to the period since the war.

Hon. P. Collier: The same argument applies.

Mr. Troy: Why sell to Germany at 7s. a bushel and charge our people 9s.?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will come to that. Bearing in mind the fact that the overseas parity was 10s. 6d. a bushel when the price was fixed in January last at 9s. a bushel, the overseas realisations for the whole period of the 1920-21 pool to date in respect of the 66½ million bushels exported have averaged over 9s. a bushel. Although at the moment we have a considerable quantity of wheat still on hand, some 25 million bushels,—there is practically no movement at the moment—I want to assure members that the quotes for cargo options received here weekly tend to show that the futures are again slightly on the increase. Our next harvest comes in in December, and futures and options are showing some three cents a bushel above the quotes for November and October.

Hon. P. Collier: I hope that will be so.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is so. The figures supplied to me go to show that our net realisations on the 1920-21 pool, allowing for the fact that we still have 25 million bushels in hand, will amount to approximately 7s. 8d. net, and those figures are conservative. We have exported 66½ million bushels, which have averaged over 9s. a bushel. In face of those figures I certainly cannot follow the argument that the consumer is suffering to anything like the degree represented by the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues. The consumer during the previous 12 monthly period had the benefit of a margin of 2s. 4d. in his favour, and for the period of the present pool to date he has had a margin of 2d. a bushel in his favour on the export basis. On more than one occasion the Leader of the Opposition has stated, and the remark was repeated by the member for South Fremantle the other night, that the price of wheat for local consumption ought to be fixed at the cost of production plus a reasonable and generous profit to the producer. The cost of production, I presume, would be based upon the Rural Workers' Union demand or the trade union demand for the rural industry.

Hon. P. Collier: Not on their demands; on the existing rate of wages.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Leader of the Opposition also favoured a reasonable wage for the producer's family.

Mr. Pickering: A generous margin of profit.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Quite so. I do not know how members intend to arrive at the cost of production, but it seems almost impossible to compute what the cost of wheat for local consumption would be.

Hon. P. Collier: An estimate has been made in Victoria and New South Wales, and a very close one too. They can compute it to within one penny.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: All I have seen during the last two years regarding the rural industry has been the demand by the Rural Workers' Union of New South Wales for a wage of £4 a week and keep for children under 18 and £6 a week and keep for harvest hands.

Hon. P. Collier: Tribunals every week fix the cost for commodities which are much more intricate.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: These demands are based on a working week of 44 hours. I wish to give my own experience. I have worked during the harvesting, delivering, seeding, and fallowing periods from 5 o'clock in the morning to 8 o'clock at night, without intermission except for meals. If it is intended to apply a system of 44 hours work a week to an industry which is absolutely controlled by seasonal and climatic conditions, and base the cost of production on that, all I can say is that consumers will have to pay a thundering sight more for wheat than they have ever dreamt of paying.

Hon. P. Collier: I did not say anything about a 44-hour week. I said the price should be based on the cost of production.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This is one of the demands of the hon. member's organisation.

Hon. P. Collier: But the cost of producing is governed by the wages paid and the hours worked at the time the article is produced.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Leader of the Opposition and the member for South Fremantle raised their hands in holy horror at the thought of us selling wheat to Germany.

Mr. Corboy: No, for selling it to Germany below the price charged here.

Hon. P. Collier: I have not objected to you selling wheat to Germany.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The only function we have to perform is that of selling the wheat. I do not care whether it is sold to yellow, black, brown or brindle—

Mr. Corboy: Neither do we.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Provided they can put up the necessary money or provided they are prepared to pay for any accommodation they might require. Our sole duty is to sell wheat, and there is no sentiment about the business.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not your duty to sell it at a cheaper rate to those people than to your own people.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But I ask the Leader of the Opposition to consider what it has cost the Germans.

Hon. P. Collier: That is beside the question.

Mr. Pickering: It is not our concern.

Mr. Wilson: You did not say that during the war.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The normal value of the mark was about 20.4 to the pound sterling.

Mr. Corboy: It is a question of what we are getting out of it, not what they are paying.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: On the day of the sale the mark had depreciated to 243 to the pound sterling, and today it is down to 283. That is to say, the rate of exchange against Germany amounts to thirteen times the original basis of sale, and members can compute for themselves what Germany is paying for this wheat. It would be roughly thirteen times 7s. a bushel in addition to the freight, so that this wheat must have cost the consumer in Germany £4 or £5 a bushel.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not the point. Tell us what the producer here received from the sale of this wheat to Germany.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member said the producer; surely he means the consumer.

Hon. P. Collier: No, was not the producer here getting 7s. 7d. a bushel?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member has drifted from the consumer to the producer.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the point.

Mr. Corboy: The Minister has become very considerate as regards the Germans all of a sudden.

Hon. P. Collier: The producer received 7s. 7d. a bushel and you were selling wheat to our own people at 9s. a bushel.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have heard no complaints from the grower in consequence of that. The only complaints have emanated from the hon. member.

Hon. P. Collier: You go out among the consumers a little and you will hear complaints.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I was among 300 or 400 of them this afternoon and heard none.

Hon. P. Collier: You might have heard them from your own side of the House this afternoon.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not hear them. I think it is time some information was accorded not only to shareholders of the pool, but to the community in general with regard to the anticipated realisations of the various wheat pools. On the 24th of this month, when the next meeting of the Australian Wheat Board will be held, it is definitely expected that the first pool, 1915-16, will be wound up. I have a set of figures which will show the House and the public just what the approximate estimate of the realisations of the various pools is. I want hon. members to understand that these figures are on a conservative basis, and that they are only approximate: we do not at the present moment know just where the cut-off in the various pools is, or what the distribution or separation is going to be. I desire to give these figures not only for the benefit of the House, but generally for the benefit of producers, who are interested in the pool. For the 1915-16 pool the payments made, less freight, amounted to 4s. 4¼d. per bushel; and there is a possible further payment on that pool of ¼d. per bushel. For the 1916-17 pool the payments made, less freight, amount to 4s. 1½d. per bushel, with a possible further payment of 1d. For the 1917-8 pool the payments amount to 4s. 9d., with a possible further payment of 2d. For 1918-19 the payments are 5s. 2d., with a possible further payment of 2d. For 1919-20 the payments are 8s. 6d. with a possible further payment of 5d. As regards the 1920-21 pool, the total of payments to date has been 6s. 3d. net, and there is a possibility of a further realisation of 1s. 5d. In the consideration of these pools, which will probably be finalised within the next two or three months, when the payments will be made, account has to be taken of the allocation to this State of its proportion of wheat supplied to New South Wales, Queensland, and Tasmania. Last week I took the opportunity of laying upon the Table of the House all papers connected with what is known as the sale of wheat to New South Wales. In this respect the separation of the 1919-20 pool will be

materially affected. The supply of wheat to New South Wales was drawn from more than one pool; but if only a proportion of it had been taken out of the 1919-20 pool, the net realisation from that pool would be considerably more. I do not know whether hon. members will be at the pains of reading through the voluminous files laid on the Table in connection with the sale of wheat to New South Wales, but I may say that my opinion, after an exhaustive examination of everything connected with the matter, is honestly and candidly that this State is in honour bound and committed to supply the wheat to New South Wales on that basis.

Hon. P. Collier: We said that at the time.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no question whatever about it.

Mr. Troy: You humbugged the people by saying that it was not so.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Who said it was not so?

Mr. Troy: Your Government.

Hon. P. Collier: I told you last year that we were in honour bound to make the supply. And Colebatch made the contract.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Colebatch, when he was in Melbourne, said it naturally followed that we must supply New South Wales if the rest of the States did so.

Hon. P. Collier: It is quite clear that we were committed to supply New South Wales.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Not exactly committed to supply New South Wales, but only to get the best possible price. When Mr. Colebatch attended the conference of January, 1920, the only objection raised to the supply of wheat to New South Wales was that, while we were quite prepared to supply that State with its own legitimate requirements for local consumption, we were not prepared to supply the State with wheat to maintain its export flour business at our expense. Are hon. members prepared to admit—leaving New South Wales out of the question altogether—that we would supply anybody with wheat at a price?

Mr. Pickering: Yes, at a price.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, at a price. That was the intention of the pool.

Mr. Troy: We objected to the humbugging. For months the Government of this State carried on a useless correspondence over the matter.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The only humbugging was as regards the Minister controlling the Wheat Scheme. That Minister's colleagues certainly gave him a fair and reasonable opportunity to make good his assertions. I think the hon. member interjecting is prepared to admit that.

Mr. Troy: Admit what?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot keep on repeating what I have said.

Mr. Troy: I say you humbugged the farmer.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: When the price was fixed for the sale of wheat to New South Wales, it had been definitely ascertained, as the result of exhaustive inquiries, that the London parity was 8s. 3d. per bushel. In December, 1920, it was thought a fair thing to fix the price of wheat for local consumption as near as possible to the London parity, and it was fixed at 7s. 8d. If we could have sold at that time the whole of the Australian crop at that price, the whole of the Australian crop would have been sold.

Mr. Troy: That is not the point.

Hon. P. Collier: The Australian Wheat Board met in December, just before the Federal elections, and Hughes absolutely objected to any increase in price then. The board met again in January, and the price went up.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I shall postpone the further discussion of the matter until the Bill is submitted to the House. I want to make a full and frank recognition that as regards the return to normal trade when conditions permit it, the farmers' organisations ought to have no fear of private competition, having regard to the generous treatment they have received from the various Governments of this State in the matter of assistance towards the establishment of co-operative companies. In spite of everything that has been said and is being said, the farmers are grateful for the assistance which has been given them. We all believe in co-operative enterprise, and I consider that in this respect the various Governments have performed what is only a legitimate function of administration. When the conditions of shipping and finance permit of a return to an open market in wheat, the farmers' co-operative companies will be in a position, thanks to the Government assistance which they have received, to compete with their rivals. Now I desire to reply to the member for Leederville (Capt. Carter). That hon. member said here on Thursday evening that he had been reliably informed by the farmers of some country centre or other—the hon. member being the representative of a metropolitan constituency—that they were tired of the wheat pool because of the excessive handling costs, excessive as compared with what the work could be done for by private operators. The hon. member stated that pool management was costing 12d. per bushel as compared with 5d. by the private operator.

Capt. Carter: You are misquoting me.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member can look up his words in "Hansard."

Capt. Carter: The Minister is misapplying the source of my information. He knows the source, and therefore I am not repeating it.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not care what the source of the information may be.

Capt. Carter: The information has been awaiting contradiction since the 19th June last. It has not been contradicted since by the Minister.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know when the matter was made public.

Capt. Carter: On the 18th June.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: By virtue of publication through the Press, I presume.

Capt. Carter: Yes.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member asked last Thursday—why, if the charges were not right, they were not refuted?

Capt. Carter: You promised to refute them three weeks ago.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member has been privately contradicted, and after that he brings his charges into the House and still maintains them.

Capt. Carter: The Minister's private contradiction was accompanied by a promise of public contradiction. That is why I brought the matter up in the House.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am taking the first opportunity of making a public contradiction. I am not going to keep on every five minutes announcing that the member for Leederville has said something that wants contradiction. The hon. member stated that the cost of handling wheat through the pool was over 1s. per bushel, whereas under private operators the cost would not exceed 5d. For a start, the average cost of freight from siding to port means 4d. per bushel. If the private operator can do for one penny per bushel all the rest that the State does, I shall certainly say, "Let us go back to a free market and open conditions." Let me give the figures: rail freight from siding to port, 4d. per bushel; port charges, tallying, re-conditioning, storage at Fremantle, and other charges, 1d. per bushel. Those charges will have to be met by the private operator as well.

Mr. Pickering: There is the 5d.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Interest amounts to another 1d. per bushel. We have to finance, and so has the private operator. We pay our country agents one penny per bushel, and the private operator will have to pay his country agents 1d. per bushel; the work cannot be done for less. For the issuing of wheat certificates, and all the work therein involved, the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., get ½d. per bushel. I understand that the issuing of the certificates is practically the basis of the pool. The overhead charges for administration and all other expenses, including audit fees and proportion of the Australian Wheat Board's expenditure, amounts to 2d. per bushel. The total cost of administration under the existing system thus amounts to 7½d. per bushel. Private operators could only do it for 7d. per bushel. In addition, let me say that under pool control we receive at the sidings wheat of every description—smutty, dirty,

or otherwise. We bring it up to a reasonable condition for the farmer through our re-conditioning plant. The private operator would only receive wheat of one description if he was operating at the siding, that is, wheat of fair average quality standard. Anything below that he would reject.

Capt. Carter: Do you infer that there would be no sale for that?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not say that, but it would not be accepted at the siding.

Capt. Carter: There is such a thing as the open market.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We have to handle it separately from the other wheat entrusted to our care. We have to stack and rail, and recondition the inferior and smutty wheat altogether apart from the f.a.q. wheat. These charges compare more than favourably, together with the additional work involved in the Scheme management, with the cost that would have to be paid in the case of private operators acquiring wheat. The pool has been an insurance to the whole community against a prospective harvest failure. It has insured the individual wheat being kept in the country not only for local consumption but for seed for the ensuing year. The pool has ensured that whenever the consumer wanted his wheat it was there. He might have it at whatever date he wanted it in f.a.q. condition, stored at the risk and expense of the producer. These are very material advantages which should be taken into consideration when looking into the system of the pooling of wheat.

Mr. Pickering: Were not the millers financed by the pool?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There are so many factors in the matter that the hon. member may supplement my remarks when the opportunity arises. I am not going to touch upon the question of the finances. That is the province of my leader, the Treasurer, who has given a capable explanation of the position in which we find ourselves. We are a small community and have entrusted to our administration a territory comprising practically one-third of the continent. We as a small population have done some fine and courageous things. We produce and consumed more per capita than any other State or nation in the globe. We cannot do more without more population. We have run railways here, there, and everywhere within the State. We have made harbour improvements, established water works, and so forth. I should say that we could attract more population to this State very readily by an active propaganda in the Eastern States in regard to a comparative basis of land values between Western Australia and the Eastern States. The removal of population from one part of Australia to another, however, will not get us much further ahead.

Mr. Willcock: It will help us to go ahead.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Government are insisting on the fulfilment of the improvement conditions upon land in process of alienation.

Hon. P. Collier: How long since?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Possibly that has only been done of late, but we are causing those conditions to be fulfilled now. The crux of the position is not alone in respect to land in process of alienation, but to land already alienated. I am speaking as an agriculturist. One cannot help noticing—it is only too painfully apparent—that throughout the older settled districts there is an insistent demand for land for cultivation purposes. In our safe rainfall belt within the South-West division, and in our own districts, there is an altogether disproportionate amount of land not being used for those purposes which will give an adequate return by way of freight to the railways, which in turn have been the means of giving to that land its enhanced value.

Mr. Latham: That is true.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In South Australia one finds in going through from Riverton to Adelaide that wheat growing land is bringing £14 per acre. I do not think their first class land is any more productive than ours.

Mr. Mann: It is not.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Owing perhaps to the industry being longer established the South Australians farm well. Our methods here are perhaps more crude owing to our young development. At Baccus Marsh, near Melbourne, land is bringing up to £120 and £130 per acre. In New South Wales grazing land, which is not used for cultivation, is bringing from £3 to £4 per acre. In other places land reaches the almost fabulous price of £160 per acre. Our remuneration comes perhaps from the surplus we have for export. From that point of view alone there is a distinct scope for the producer in Western Australia as compared with his fellow man in the Eastern States. Our land values are absurdly low, and by virtue of that fact we are possibly allowed to follow the line of least resistance in regard to production. My opinion is that something ought to be done to force into its proper use those lands which are being used for sheep farming but are suitable for cultivation.

Mr. Troy: You have changed your mind three times.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have not changed my mind on this matter. Land which is only carrying sheep will not support many people. I am not going to talk about the ethics of land values taxation for the forcing into occupation of idle land.

Mr. Willcock: Is there any other method?

Mr. Troy: You ought to give us something now.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I may take a shorter and more direct course to get what we want. We want to make these lands in our older agricultural areas,

which are not providing freight for our railways, produce something more. The easiest method of accomplishing that, is, not by moving motions in the House on the ethical side of the question, but by amending the Land Tax and Income Tax Assessment Act and increasing the rates for land which is not improved within the meaning of the Act. If we increase the present rates by twopence or threepence in the pound we take a short cut towards bringing into effect that which we want, namely, to make the people holding so much land to-day bring it into full use. A large proportion of our agricultural land is being used for pastoral pursuits, gives very little employment to people, and but little freight for the railways. When there is this insistent demand for land for cultivation purposes we ought to endeavour to supply that demand. We can only do this by the means I propose. The Government are doing their utmost to-day to enforce the provisions appertaining to land in process of alienation.

Mr. Troy: What are you doing in the case of land already alienated?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have shown how that position can be remedied.

Mr. Willcock: If it is cleared and fenced and has water on it, it is fully improved, and the people can run stock upon it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The world seems to be full of paradoxes. We see our National Parliament struggling and striving to create an artificial tariff to promote the secondary industries of this country, and this tariff can only operate against primary production. Nature and opportunity—the opportunity of war devastation in regard to the supply of raw materials—have given us our chance, and now we are getting this tariff which, as I say, operates against our primary production.

Mr. J. Thomson: Question?

Hon. P. Collier: There is no question about it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It seems to be nothing short of suicidal. In addition to the tariff there is a further imposition, in that our primary products to-day and henceforth will have to pay double freights to the markets of the world by virtue of the fact that we shall want nothing back in return. A community only lives on the exchange of its commodities for the commodities of other countries. During the past four years every tin-pot place on the Continent and in America has been converted into a factory for destructive elements. These are now being gradually reconverted into factories for various commodities. During this time we have had an opportunity of supplying raw materials to the fullest possible extent. In Australia, owing to our climatic conditions, we can get a maximum effort per man power compared with any other country in the world. There is an apparent paradox in this plan of bolstering

up the secondary industries at the expense of our primary industries. We produce the finest class of wool in the world, and also the best wheat in the world.

Mr. Pickering: And the best iron.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

Although we produce the best merino hose in the world, we have a community that demands nothing but silken goods. On top of this tendency we have had to resort in this young and undeveloped country to the most scientific methods of taxation, getting down to fine actuarial bases, at the instigation of the Commonwealth Commissioner of Taxation, with the result that it is absolutely crippling our mining industry. I am sure that if the member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson) were interested he would agree that our main primary industry is being crippled.

Mr. J. Thomson: You have spent too much time with the Premier.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

The member for Claremont does not know what I am speaking about. When we look at the position to-day, we wonder why we ever entered Federation. New Zealand kept out of Federation and when we compare the position of New Zealand to-day with that of Western Australia, the question naturally arises as to why we ever entered into the Federal compact.

Mr. Pickering: Yet we want to hand over other things to the Commonwealth.

Mr. Lambert: It was your Government who handed over the Taxation Department to them.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

We did nothing of the sort. I would like to hand the hon. member over to the Commonwealth.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, we could hand over all our non-essentials.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am a little bit diffident in agreeing with the Leader of the Opposition because, in common with himself, I might be included among the non-essentials.

Mr. Lambert: You can take that for granted.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

Notwithstanding the position as we find it to-day, however, I do not despair. We often have it held up against Western Australia that its finances are in an awful condition, and that its overdraft is a big one. I have been up against an overdraft myself practically all my life and I am looking pretty well on it. I have maintained my position against it. If we as a State face our position courageously, the trivial deficit is as nothing compared with the prospects ahead of us. Within the last few days we know that we have not only struck oil but also, I hope, a decent coal seam at last.

Mr. J. Thomson: At last?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

I will leave the member for Irwin (Mr. C. C. Maley) to proclaim the virtues of the Irwin coal seam. I do not know what the quality of the coal will prove to be, but if we can

believe the member for East Perth (Mr. Simons), we have also struck oil. If we strike a decent flow of oil, or a decent coal seam, in Western Australia, we need have no fear of the deficit of five million pounds.

Mr. J. T. DAVIES (Guildford) [9.20]: I endorse the sentiments expressed by the older members of the House regarding the new members who have entered Parliament this session, including, of course, the member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan). I would like to refer briefly to the offer made by the Leader of the Opposition the other night, when he stated he would be prepared to assist the Government out of its financial difficulties. The Leader of the Opposition made a similar offer some years ago. On that occasion the offer was not made inside the Chamber, but it was made after the 1917 election. I recollect the occasion well, because I made reference to the offer during the Address-in-reply when Parliament met. On that occasion the Leader of the Opposition said—

All possible assistance would be given to the Government in the difficult and trying times ahead.

As one of those members who were returned pledged to no particular party, I want to know in what way the Government intend to avail themselves of the offer I have referred to. I appreciate the position occupied by the Leader of the Opposition who, irrespective of what may be said in the House or outside, has made his offer and, whether it is accepted or not, it will stand to his credit that he offered every possible assistance to the Government. Look where we will throughout the whole of the British Empire, we will see almost the same thing is taking place everywhere. If there is one man more than another in the British Empire who is held in high esteem by all sections of the community, that man is the Premier of South Africa, General Smuts. He has been lately on a delicate mission to the United Kingdom and he has played there a very honourable part. He faced a general election in South Africa some months ago and when he led his party during the elections, he said—

They were up against the time when a change must come and a strong Government be constituted. The co-operation of all the moderate elements was the real solution of their political troubles and he was confident that it was coming. A new spirit was growing. He hoped it would be possible to make an appeal to the people to regroup themselves politically along new lines and have a party large, strong, sane, and moderate, to carry the country through any difficulties. . . . He wanted to see a new political spirit developed, abandoning old grooves. If the people would help in that policy he was their man. If they were to go back to the old party cries, he would rather go farming. He was sick of party politics.

That is an utterance that may well be taken to heart by every hon. member, because Gen-

eral Smuts is a man who, though he owns allegiance to the British Empire to-day, and has done so ever since the South African war, is not a Britisher by birth. For all that, he has proved himself to be one of the staunchest men, and one of the three foremost men in the British Empire to-day. In common with other members of this Chamber, I want to know in what way the Premier intends to avail himself of the offer of the Leader of the Opposition. The House wants to know, and the country wants to know. The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) said that he spoke to-night on behalf of certain members of this Chamber. That is quite correct. I was returned at the last election, and also at the previous election, on the understanding that members should be able to speak quite freely. I believe in representative government, free discussion on the part of members in Parliament, with responsibility only to the electors of the State. If that be so, we want to know why any man returned to this Chamber should not occupy the same position. Once returned to the House, a member should have freedom, within the House and should be accountable for his actions to no one other than his own electors. If we believe in that principle, then I think action should be taken to give effect to it. I remember the then member for Bunbury, during the 1917 Parliament, making a similar suggestion. No action has been taken up to now, and, for that reason, I want to know what are the intentions of the Government in the present instance. People may say, "How can you do without parties?" The member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) said something to that effect the other evening. I have been in this Chamber for 3½ years, but I would like to ask the older members if there has not been a different feeling in the House during the last three years, than ever existed previously. Formerly such a feeling was unknown. I know that that is so from my reading of "Hansard" and from a perusal of the daily Press. It was unknown for members sitting behind the Government, no matter what party happened to be in power, to criticise legislation irrespective of whether they liked it or disagreed with it. They always supported the Government. During the last Parliament members on this side of the House often voted against the Government, when measures, or clauses, were brought forward with which they did not agree. Such a thing was unknown in the past so far as I can ascertain.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It has been a common practice ever since I have been in this House for members to cross the floor and vote against their party.

Mr. DAVIES: I will refer to a taxation measure later on to illustrate what I mean.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not say it happened on second readings, but it certainly happened when clauses were being discussed.

Mr. DAVIES: That is an important distinction. I want to sketch the position to-day as I view it. Here we have in a country like Western Australia, with a mere handful of people occupying our vast spaces, thousands of miles of railway to convenience some 330,000 people. We heard the member for Claremont (Mr. J. Thomson) referring to his trip to the Far East, with its teeming millions. Has that hon. member, however, ever known a country that was so rich in resources, and had so small a population, as Western Australia, which was doing as well as we are at the present time? To me it is a matter for wonder that we should be doing as well as we are, particularly when we consider the conveniences at our disposal. When I came to Western Australia, some 20 years ago, I was astounded to find palatial ships coming to Fremantle to trade with a handful of people. I have heard that Glasgow is one of the richest cities in the world. Glasgow owns its own tramways, its town hall, its markets, and so on.

Mr. J. Thomson: They are not run by the Minister for Mines.

Mr. DAVIES: Compare that with Western Australia with its 40 millions of money sunk in public utilities, on which we have to pay interest. I can liken this State to a family occupying a house of 20 or 30 rooms, and using only two or three. They have to maintain that house. We have to maintain our various utilities. Yet we have neither the population nor the means. It is unreasonable to expect that we can maintain the utilities we have been used to. A change is coming, and unless a change takes place in this House, what will happen in Western Australia is what has happened in the older countries of the world. For some reason or other, there is an economic or industrial paralysis creeping over the world. The Independent Labour Party of Great Britain some time ago appealed to Lloyd George to call an international conference for the purpose of avoiding, if possible, the economic paralysis which is setting in in Europe. I do not know whether deaf ears were turned to that appeal, but we do know the conditions in Europe to-day. Some reference has been made to the coal strike in the Old Country. I was bred and born in that valley of discontent whence the coal comes. During the latter period of the war, father and son were earning £18 per week. To-day, under the new system of pooling, they are not getting £7 per week. That is the position in the Old Country, in South Wales. No fewer than 3,000 seamen are out of work in Cardiff, where at one time 60 million tons of coal were exported annually. The output of the United Kingdom is now overtaking the output of 1914. But the markets of the world have been destroyed, with the result that men are thrown out of employment. The same thing is setting in in Australia. There are large numbers of unemployed in Queensland, in New South Wales, and in Victoria, although I notice

that Mr. Lawson, in his pre-election speech, declared there were fewer unemployed in Victoria than in any other State. I want to know why our Premier does not contradict that.

The Premier: I will.

Mr. J. Thomson: You cannot contradict it, not in proportion to population.

Mr. DAVIES: There are fewer unemployed in Western Australia than in Victoria.

Mr. Corboy interjected.

Mr. DAVIES: Never mind what was said three years ago. Let us show a little toleration and try to put before the country something which will assist us out of the difficulty. For, to use a phrase of the Leader of the Opposition, if we do not hang together, we shall hang separately. If we do not hang together now, we are going to starve separately if that economic paralysis creeps over Australia. We require to avoid that, if possible. I will make reference later to statements, not by employers, nor profiteers, nor capitalists, but by reputed Labour leaders, by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, by Mr. Arthur Henderson, by Mr. Robert Sexton. All those men have made statements to the working classes in Great Britain which are just as applicable to the working classes in Australia. Although in a separate wing of the Labour movement, I stand to-day firm in my advocacy of the interests of the working classes, and we are to-day gaining power for the working classes. This was the position in the Old Country when I left there: It is true that the capitalistic class had the whole say as to wages and hours of duty, and in many respects as to what sort of houses we had to live in. From the day I was born till the day I left for Australia, I lived in a house owned by the coal proprietary for which we worked. The water we used was sent by the company, everything we had, food, clothes, stores, all came from the company. The only thing we had not to pay the company for was the air we breathed. Conditions are very different in Australia. No Australian can say he has had to live under those conditions in Australia. Yet conditions are bad enough in Australia. When I visited Melbourne two years ago, during the seamen's strike, I saw there thousands of people who were literally starving. One could see it by their wan faces. But that was owing to their own action, and not to the action of the capitalistic class. Some will say that the capitalists had forced them out of employment. I took up the stand then, as I do to-day, that if the seamen had struck against the profits made by the capitalists, instead of for a share of those profits, they would have had the whole of the people behind them. The Leader of the Opposition, during his election campaign, declared that he stood for economic reform. So do I. The recent All-Australian Conference changed the phrase "nationalisation of industry" to "socialisation of industry." The member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum), a

delegate to that conference, on his return to this State was interviewed by the "West Australian." When asked his opinion on the conference he said—

Since its foundation, the Labour movement has stood for the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. This latest conference has expressed itself in favour of socialisation, which in principle means the same, and is merely an alteration in the terms of expression.

What do they mean by the change from "nationalisation of industry" to "socialisation of industry"? The member for South Fremantle claimed that there was no difference between the two. I say there is a vast difference, and he who says there is no difference either knows not what he is talking about, or does not understand how socialisation is practised in other parts of the world. Mention has been made of Russia. The member for South Fremantle had something to say in that regard, and was reported as follows—

As one who had tried to study and understand the conditions of Russia, he had read works by writers of almost all nationalities, these going to show that it was of no use trying to form a judgment regarding the condition of affairs in Russia.

Has he not followed his own leader, Mr. Theodore, on his return from Europe? Mr. Theodore went from Australia, and was met by the socialist party in America and hailed as one of the greatest of working class leaders. Mr. Theodore visited the United Kingdom, and on his return to Australia had something to say about Russia. Although he never lived there, he was in close contact with the men who had been sent to Russia by the working classes of Great Britain. On his return to Australia he had no fear about expressing his views. If hon. members hold views in regard to Russia, I cannot understand why they do not give expression to them, or why they try to hide them by saying that Russia is as a closed door. To a large extent she is. But let us penetrate that closed door, and what do we find? Mr. Theodore was reported as follows—

He referred to his late overseas visit and commented on the position in Russia as seen by British Labour representatives. Mr. Theodore said he was told there was no such thing as democracy in Russia to-day. The Soviet system was not founded on democracy. If the question of the continuance of Lenin's regime were put to the people, Lenin and his Government would not get 30 per cent. of the votes. According to the views of English Socialist delegates the Bolsheviks were keeping themselves in office as the result of intimidation and disfranchisement and the manipulation of the machinery under which the Soviet Government was formed. Mr. George Lansbury told him—

Who was Mr. George Lansbury? He was the editor of the "Daily Herald"—the only Labour daily newspaper in the United Kingdom. Mr. Theodore said—

Mr. George Lansbury told him it was no use denying the fact that in Russia the people were starving, miserable, down-trodden and oppressed. Mr. Lansbury did not blame the former Government, but considered that it had degenerated into an autocracy.

Let me quote from the "Manchester Guardian," a paper continually referred to in the "Westralian Worker" as one of the best democratic papers in the United Kingdom. This is what the "Manchester Guardian" said—

The Soviets control most of the factories and the forests, and for a time the Bolshevik leaders gave to the local Soviets the control of the local sections over the railways. But the scheme soon failed, and complete disorganisation followed, national control being resumed.

There is a difference between the nationalisation of industry and the socialisation of industry. "There is not much difference between the two," said the member for South Fremantle, "only a difference in the expression of terms." There is as much difference between the two as there is between chalk and cheese, and I am going to warn the workers of Australia. As a member of the Nationalist wing of Labour I claim that we have as much right to warn the workers as has the other side. I claim it, not only as a politician but as a citizen, as a man who has endeavoured to do, not only his duty to the State, but also to his race. We in Australia are a mere handful of people, and we stand on a continent surrounded, so to speak, by one thousand million coloured people. One thousand million coloured people are around Australia, and yet we say "Hands off Australia!" Let us see how much further we can go. Mr. Arthur Henderson, the Leader of the Independent Labour Party of Great Britain and Leader of that party in the House of Commons, issued a manifesto, and this is what he said—

The committee issued a manifesto urging the workers to fight for the ideals of democratic socialism against the slavery of capitalism, and against the tyrannical dictatorship of Bolshevism. The manifesto accuses the Third Internationale of moving in the direction of establishing an armed dictatorship, seeking to impose its will upon socialists and labourites throughout the world, robbing the workers of their freedom, and trying to prevent the creation of an economic democracy.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That does not strike the point of nationalisation and socialisation.

Mr. DAVIES: Here is a comment from the paper "Forward" edited by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald.

Mr. Troy: Do you think they would stand you there?

Mr. A. Thomson: His electors stand him here, anyhow.

Mr. DAVIES: The member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) was not in the House the other evening when the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) made reference to this matter. If the member for South Fremantle had not made that reference, I would not be speaking on these lines to-night. During the recent railway strike reference was made to the Italian workers. It was stated in the daily Press, for the purpose of misleading the workers of Western Australia, that the Italian socialists had always the control of the Italian railways. The Italian Consul had to deny this statement through the Press, and point out that the railways in Italy were run exactly as our railways are run. The Government of the day appointed a commissioner or manager to manage them and they were run similarly to ours. Notwithstanding that fact, the statement had been made that the workers of Italy controlled the railways. The point I want to make is this: if I understand what the socialisation of industry means, and this view has been endorsed by the ex-member for Fremantle, it is that the workers be given complete control of industry. There is a certain socialisation practised and it is done by the primary producers in the matter of the control of the wheat pool. I am not blaming the workers of the State for desiring this. If this is their desire, let them bring it into operation if they can, but it is my duty and the duty of those who know something of the socialisation of industry to warn the workers that, if they tread that path, they must expect what they get.

Mr. Willcock: You yourself have advocated socialisation here.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is very little difference between socialisation and nationalisation.

The Minister for Mines: But socialisation was proposed during the time of the railway strike.

Mr. DAVIES: I have never advocated the socialisation of industry, and I never will do so if it means that the workers in a particular industry are to obtain full control of the industry.

Mr. Willcock: You advocated that they should get partial control.

Mr. DAVIES: And I do so to-night. That would be an economic reform. Let me remind the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) that, when there was an opportunity to give the workers on the railways a share in the management, not a member on his side of the House spoke in support of it.

Mr. Willcock: Yes they did.

Mr. DAVIES: Not at all. The records of the House show that the Lefroy Government brought down a Bill to provide for three Commissioners of Railways. I supported the proposal only on condition that one of the commissioners was appointed by the workers.

Hon. P. Collier: Because we did not back up your kite flying to the Midland workshops.

Mr. DAVIES: I have given the Leader of the Opposition credit for better sense than he has displayed by that remark.

Hon. P. Collier: Did you move that amendment?

Mr. Willcock: Of course not.

Mr. DAVIES: I have given the Leader of the Opposition credit for honesty of intention. I did not suggest this on the eve of an election. I did it regardless of the opinions held by members of this House and regardless of the attitude which my constituents might adopt.

Mr. Willcock: You made a suggestion for kite flying purposes and the Government would not accept it.

Mr. DAVIES: I made the suggestion because I believed in it, and regardless of what opinions might be expressed on either side of this House, I will stick to that opinion. I am satisfied that one has only to appeal to the workers of this country in a common-sense and reasonable way, and it matters not what his brand of politics may be, whether National Labour, National, or Labour, the bulk of the workers care not, so long as one delivers the goods. And they are going to see that the goods are delivered.

Mr. Willcock: They did not get the goods from you.

Mr. DAVIES: At the last election Midland Junction, one of the largest industrial centres of the State, returned a National Labourite by a majority over the candidate of the official Labour Party, notwithstanding that there are thousands of electors in that constituency who are trade unionists affiliated with the Trades Hall.

Mr. Willcock: You call delivering the goods lowering the men's wages when there is an industrial dispute.

Mr. DAVIES: These workers have returned me.

Mr. Troy: Look at all the Conservatives in Guildford.

Mr. DAVIES: I would inform the member for Mt. Magnet that in so-called conservative Guildford, the official Labour Party increased its vote while its vote in the working class town of Midland Junction decreased.

Hon. P. Collier: The hon. member is including West Guildford which is entirely a working class district.

Mr. DAVIES: I am not including West Guildford; its returns were entirely separate.

Hon. P. Collier: That is where Johnson increased his vote.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes by 12 in a working class district.

Hon. P. Collier: More than that.

Mr. DAVIES: If the hon. member refers to the returns he will find that I am right.

Mr. Troy: Was not there something else which beat Johnson and which you are not game to mention?

Mr. DAVIES: It was said that Mr. Johnson would never be able to regain

that seat. Let me return to the statement made by Ramsay Macdonald. He said—

The argument in the Moscow reply is perfectly clear and there is no further excuse for the independent Labour Party playing with words. It must now settle once and for all where it stands. The Moscow reply tells how to do this. The critical point is not Parliamentary power, but an effective movement for revolution. We can have victory only by a heavy civil war. If we come to the Moscow conclusions regarding the Labour Party, we ought to have nothing to do with that party. Our affiliation to it is dishonest. No honest and intelligent supporter of the Third Internationale can be a Labour Party candidate. Therefore, before the Independent Labour Party can join the Third Internationale, it must not only pass the resolution, but must drastically reform its structure. It must cease to be an Independent Labour Party. The issue is this:—Are we to agree that the seizure of power by a few men who are the leaders of a political party is to be the socialist method? We may dress up that bald issue in what robes we like, but it is upon that that we have to decide, now that Moscow has officially spoken.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What has that to do with us?

Mr. Willcock: Yes, what is it all about?

Mr. McCallum: Do you know any branch of the Australian labour movement that has anything to do with the Third Internationale?

Mr. DAVIES: No.

Mr. McCallum: Then why quote it? Why not go there and see for yourself?

Mr. DAVIES: The member for South Fremantle said he had read all sorts of opinions regarding Russia. He had not read that opinion.

Mr. McCallum: I read it months ago.

Mr. DAVIES: Had the hon. member read Arthur Henderson on that question?

Mr. McCallum: Yes.

Mr. DAVIES: And Philip Snowden?

Mr. McCallum: Yes, and his wife too.

Mr. DAVIES: Then whom does the hon. member believe?

Mr. McCallum: I shall believe when I see it for myself.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The member for South Fremantle also said that such a thing was not necessary in Australia.

Mr. McCallum interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for South Fremantle must keep order.

Mr. DAVIES: I object to this continual repudiation regarding these conferences.

Mr. McCallum: We were never represented at those conferences.

Mr. DAVIES: The Labour movement was represented at the conference in the East the other day, and the hon. member said the decisions were not binding on the movement.

Mr. McCallum: Neither they are. We knew that when we went there.

Mr. DAVIES: Then we agree so far. What is the next step? In the next breath the hon. member said that the same resolutions would go on to the Brisbane Congress.

Mr. McCallum: After having been discussed by the organisations.

Mr. DAVIES: And then, if passed, they will become binding on the Australian Labour movement.

Mr. McCallum: Yes.

Mr. DAVIES: It will be useless to speak against these resolutions after they have been passed. I am entering my protest before they are passed.

Mr. McCallum: What can this House do? This House has no say in them.

Mr. DAVIES: But I am justified in registering my protest against them.

Mr. McCallum: You have to do that in an organisation, not here.

Mr. DAVIES: We are denied entry to the Trades Hall by the likes of the member for South Fremantle.

Mr. McCallum: You would not get in if I had my way. I would take you up by the scruff of the neck and have you out every time I saw you in the building.

Mr. DAVIES: Such resolutions would not be carried much further.

Mr. McCallum: I would carry you a good distance.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Pickering: These personalities do not carry us much further.

Mr. DAVIES: Daily we are creeping towards this goal. Yet it is being denied by those in authority.

Mr. Troy: You are well on your stomach.

Mr. DAVIES: A witness giving evidence before the Coal Commission in New South Wales was asked his opinion. I have already quoted Mr. Willis's opinion.

Mr. McCallum: Have you not an opinion of your own?

Mr. DAVIES: I have already given it, and I intend to give the hon. member a little more. Mr. Hamilton, President of the Western branch of the Federation, was referring to the matter of control in industry when the President asked him: "That is a matter of aspiration?" The answer was as follows:—

Yes, the miners have reason to believe that control by the workers is necessary—joint control by a committee, 50 per cent. workers, 25 per cent. owners, and 25 per cent. Government nominees.

Mr. Willcock: That is not bad, is it?

Mr. DAVIES: Not from his point of view.

Mr. McCallum: You are opposed to the worker having control?

Mr. Willcock: What is your idea of it?

Mr. DAVIES: I have already stated in this House that I believe economic reform must come about, that I believe the workers must get a share in the control of industry.

Mr. McCallum: The share would be a very slight one if you had your way.

Mr. DAVIES: That is what hurts the hon. member.

Mr. McCallum: Yes, that is what hurts.

Mr. DAVIES: If we stood here and did nothing for the workers, there would be something in the hon. member's complaint.

Mr. McCallum: All you have done for the workers, or are likely to do, is harmless.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for South Fremantle has had his opportunity of addressing the House on this subject.

Mr. DAVIES: That is Mr. Hamilton's opinion, 50 per cent. Let me again remind hon. members that the coal miners of Great Britain made a demand for the nationalisation of the coal mines. Before the Royal Commission was appointed, Mr. Lloyd George stated that whatever report the Royal Commission might bring in he would adopt.

Mr. McCallum: And did he?

Mr. DAVIES: The Royal Commission brought in a report in favour of the nationalisation of the mines of Great Britain. Mr. Bonar Law, speaking as Leader of the House of Commons, on behalf of Mr. Lloyd George repudiated that undertaking which had been given by Mr. Lloyd George.

Mr. Wilson: Why did Lloyd George allow him to do it?

Mr. Troy: Because that type sat in Parliament.

Mr. DAVIES: But Lloyd George is Prime Minister.

Mr. DAVIES: That is so; but his promise was repudiated. When Mr. Lloyd George came back to the House of Commons he was questioned regarding that repudiation and he said, "I will tell you why I repudiated my promise. I will tell it to the men's leaders. The men's leaders are not desirous of nationalising the mines; they want control of them."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Royal Commission did not say that.

Mr. DAVIES: "This," said Mr. Lloyd George, "is syndicalism in its worst and least intelligent form. If you want the control of the mines, go out into the country and convince the electorates of the fact that it is in their interests."

Mr. McCallum: Did not Lloyd George say that they wanted to give control of the mines to the Pope?

Mr. DAVIES: Now let us go back to Mr. Hamilton's statement. Let us take the coal miners of Newcastle, New South Wales. Assume that here are ten thousand of those miners, or twenty thousand, or thirty thousand. Mr. Hamilton says that there are ten thousand men wanting 50 per cent. of the control of those coal mines, and yet those coal miners are serving five millions of people in Australia. Those five millions of consumers are to get only 25 per cent. of the representation.

Mr. McCallum: Has that ever been asked for by any organised Labour body in Australia? It has been repudiated by every representative Labour organisation that has ever discussed the matter, every representative Labour organisation in the Commonwealth.

Mr. DAVIES: I am prepared to admit that.

Mr. McCallum: Then why do you argue about it?

Mr. DAVIES: If there is no truth in it—

The Minister for Mines: The member for South Fremantle wanted to take over the railways of this State, for the men to run them.

Mr. DAVIES: It is too late to protest after the thing has been done. We can look from now to next October.

Mr. McCallum: We have looked past all that. It is about time you caught up to us.

Mr. Pickering: You do not give him a chance.

Mr. DAVIES: We want to look past a good many things, but I am not going to look past this until I have had my say on it. These people are going from the nationalisation of industry to the socialisation of industry. I am not charging the A.L.P. with having adopted the socialisation of industry.

Mr. McCallum: They will adopt it.

Mr. Pickering: Now we know! But you said they would not.

Mr. McCallum: I did not say anything of the kind.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. DAVIES: All I have to say is that that day will be a sorry day.

Mr. McCallum: You submitted to that for a good many years.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for South Fremantle must keep order.

Mr. DAVIES: It is due to the hon. member's ignorance that he is objecting.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not be offensive.

Mr. DAVIES: I did not intend to be offensive.

Mr. McCallum: I will accept all your offensiveness as a compliment.

Mr. DAVIES: I repeat, I did not intend to be offensive; but let me explain.

Mr. McCallum: You do not know the difference between syndicalism and socialism. You do not know the distinction between the two.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. DAVIES: I do not take second place to the member for South Fremantle.

Mr. McCallum: It is about time you took hundred-and-second place to me in the matter of knowledge of industrialism.

Mr. DAVIES: I do not want to be like the hon. member, anyhow.

Mr. McCallum: No, thank God!

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member is part on one side and part on the other side, as stated the other day in the Press, so that he may adopt whichever side he thinks the most profitable from the standpoint of the workers.

Mr. McCallum: That is what I am always after.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes, regardless of the economic position, regardless of what effect his action will have on the country, and regard-

less of what the effect is going to be on the workers of the State.

Mr. McCallum: Whatever is best for the workers is best for the State.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for South Fremantle must keep order.

Mr. McCallum: The member for Guildford is misrepresenting me.

Mr. SPEAKER: In that case the hon. member can rise to a point of order; but the hon. member must keep order, or I shall be compelled to do something drastic.

Mr. DAVIES: I have already stated in this House times out of number that I believe the workers should have a share in the control of industry. If the member for South Fremantle wishes to do me justice, he will look up in the 1917 "Hansard" where, in the course of my first speech here, I said to the Lefroy Government that if they were wise they would immediately hold a conference of representatives of all the workers engaged in the various industries of this State, including railways, water supply, and all other Government activities, because without the co-operation of the workers, without giving them their fair share of control, it was not possible for this or any other English speaking country to carry on during the period of reconstruction. I made that statement in 1917, and I am not repudiating it to-night when I say that I strongly object to those men who declare, "We want control because we have the power." I have already endeavoured to sketch the conditions which obtained when the capitalists had the whole of the say. I saw the fight in this State when we said that capital should not have all the say in the matter of wages to be paid, and when we pleaded with the public to give us a share in the control.

Mr. Troy: We demanded it.

Mr. DAVIES: At that particular time we pleaded. To-day we are in a position to demand, because our numbers are great.

Mr. McCallum: For whom are you talking?

Mr. DAVIES: For as good a class of men as you speak for.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Guildford must address the Chair.

Mr. DAVIES: For as good a class of men as any hon. member speaks for, and—what is more—for my electorate. That is what I am here for.

Mr. McCallum: Do not class yourself with us as talking for organised labour.

Mr. DAVIES: I do not class myself with the hon. member interjecting.

Mr. McCallum: We do not want to be classed with you.

Mr. Underwood: You are in a class of your own.

Mr. DAVIES: If socialisation of industry is adopted in Australia, exactly the same thing will take place here as the "Manchester Guardian" says has taken place in Russia; we shall go back from the socialisation of industry to the nationalisa-

tion of industry. Reference was made on a recent evening to what is taking place in Italy. If I may give the exact statement made by the member for South Fremantle on that occasion, it was that the workers of Italy had seized the factories, that they were now in occupation of them, and that they controlled them.

Mr. McCallum: Some of the factories.

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member's words were to that effect. Now, what has taken place in Italy?

Mr. McCallum: You are not going to say that I supported what took place in Italy?

Mr. DAVIES: No. I will do the member for South Fremantle this credit, whether he will regard it as a slander or as a bouquet—

Mr. McCallum: I do not want any bouquets from you. A compliment coming from you I would regard as offensive.

Mr. DAVIES: I will say all the same what I intended to say, that the Labour movement is poorer, that the Official Labour Party is poorer, for the fact that the member for South Fremantle is not to-day secretary of the Trades Hall.

Mr. McCallum: I want no compliments from you.

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member regards that as a slander, because he contends that anything of the kind coming from those who have left the Labour Party damns him in the eyes of his following. Now let me throw something else at the hon. member. He stated the other evening that the workers were in control of some of the industries in Italy. Now, the Prime Minister of Italy, Signor Giolitti, is a socialist. It is true that the workmen of the "Fiat" motor car works seized the company's factory. They turned the capitalists out of that factory, and the capitalists went to the Italian Prime Minister and said, "Our workers have turned us out of the factory. Will you kindly eject them from that factory by force?" Signor Giolitti replied, "Are you mad? I am going to use force, if I use it at all, by putting the artillery in the streets, and it is probably you people that I shall be blowing to pieces. But I will tell you what I will do now. I will go to those workers and I will disarm them, and I will say to them that I will give them three months to carry on that factory, and that if they can carry it on satisfactorily, they can remain in possession." And before the three months were up the workers in that particular factory had let it be known that they had sent a message to their employers, "Come back; we are prepared to take a fair share of control of this industry, and it is only a fair share of control we want, and not the entire control." That is the position so far as we are able to learn from the best Labour sources in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Willecock: Those workers had not the necessary training in management.

Mr. DAVIES: Of course not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DAVIES: The point that I want to make is that the workers, whether they have

got that training or not, and however capable they may be, are not entitled to assume the full control of any industry to the exclusion of the people consuming the products of that industry.

Mr. Willcock: Does socialisation mean that? You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. DAVIES: Let me go on with regard to that particular matter.

Mr. Willcock: That is syndicalism.

Mr. DAVIES: The last quotation I have, and it is only about nine months old, concerning the position in Italy reads as follows:—

The industrial crisis in Italy continues to be very serious. Seizures of property are going on. Workers have occupied cotton mills in Lombardy and wool factories in Beilla (north-east of Turin) and Piedmont. These mills and factories employed many thousands of hands.

And under the headings "Italian Metal Industry," "Joint Control to be established," the following was published—

The Prime Minister of Italy (Signor Giolitti) presided over a conference of the masters and men engaged in the metal industry. He urged a conciliatory discussion of the problems affecting the industry. The masters and men conferred separately. The masters later informed Signor Giolitti that they were unable to accept the system of joint control, but were willing to submit to it if it were imposed. Signor Giolitti said that he was prepared to accept responsibility in connection with the matter. The Prime Minister then issued a decree appointing a joint committee of masters and men to draft a Bill to reorganise the metal industry on the basis of the men's participation in the technical, financial, and administrative control of the industry. The decree points out that the workmen declare that such participation will result in an increased output and improved relations between masters and men.

Many of the industries there have been nationalised, and managers have been appointed by the Government just as they are in Western Australia. If the Minister will go into the office of the superintendent of the local running department of the railways, he will find three officers who, 10 years ago, were on the foot-plate. To-day they are assisting in the management of the industry, not however as the direct representatives of the men.

Mr. Willcock: Nor for the benefit of the men, either.

Mr. DAVIES: I cannot dispute that.

Mr. Willcock: They are on the side of the bosses.

Mr. DAVIES: I think such suspicions are groundless, and that often the system is of benefit to the men.

Mr. Willcock: We have had a bitter experience regarding such men.

Mr. DAVIES: I have here a manifesto which is alleged to have been issued by Lenin.

Hon. P. Collier: Get back to Australia.

Mr. DAVIES: It will appeal to the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Lenin is reported to have said—

"What the Bolsheviks have done so far was the easiest part. It was the destructive part. It required only force and decrees. The hardest part is still before them. Bolshevism will fail unless it can rebuild Russian industry and get maximum production." Lenin then explains that this cannot be done under the original plan of Bolshevism for the reason that the workers are not yet willing to work for the same rate of pay for different kinds of work. "The machine worker still wants more money than the man with a pick; and the brain worker still wants more than the machine worker. Russia will not have communism until human nature is changed."

I consider that the greatest enemy the worker has to-day is the worker himself. We have the building industry, reference to which was made the other night. I have made inquiries into the matter as representing the Building Trades Union. The average wage of the bricklayers, plasterers, carpenters, and stone-masons is about 15s. a day all the year round, after serving five years of their time. The demand is made that the least competent worker should receive £5 13s. 11d. per week, regardless of whether it can be paid or not.

Mr. Willcock: Mr. Hughes promised that. Like Mr. Lloyd George he promises things and then repudiates the promise.

Mr. DAVIES: Mr. Justice Higgins, who recently resigned the position of President of the Arbitration Court, and was regarded by the working classes as one of the best advocates they had ever had, said—

Mr. Willcock: He was a judge, not an advocate.

Mr. DAVIES: He advocated the interests of the working classes.

Mr. Willcock: Not at all.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must keep order.

Mr. DAVIES: These are the remarks of the judge—

I hope that the parties will understand that I have considered the finding of the Basic Wage Commission, and will at some time have to speak about it, but I am satisfied that the basic wage referred to is not the basic wage as accurately understood at all. Owing to a mistake, I think not by the Commission, but by the person, whoever he was, who drafted Clause 1, what has been found by the Commission is not the basic wage. Basic means the base, and here in place of confining the finding to the base they have taken in the first, second, and third stories. The basement is different from the first, second, and third stories. It will help all the parties to know the attitude in which I approach the matter.

Mr. Theodore, the Premier of Queensland, speaking in the Trades Hall in Brisbane on the 3rd February last had this to say—

The question of Basic Wage was giving rise to a considerable amount of controversy in Australia at the present time. They all know him well enough to realise that he would not contemplate or think of the frustration of any matter formulated or designed to improve or benefit the condition of the workers. He had given a considerable amount of attention to the Piddington proposal that the basic wage should be £3 10s. in Melbourne, £5 17s. in Sydney, and £5 6s. 6d. in Brisbane. These amounts would mean an increase in nominal wages, but not in effective wage to workers. They would have to find some means of getting away from the old shibboleths, the old futile process of the dog chasing its own tail, and while higher wages were forcing up the cost of living the never ending chase after effective wages which the worker never got. . . He admitted that it was not an easy problem, and that energy and brains would have to be applied to the solution of it if they were to have the power of regulating these matters. They had to see that the workers themselves recognised their obligations to the community. There were some workers who were prepared to loaf on their job, some who carried on active propaganda of the slow down doctrine that had never been countenanced by the Labour movement, and that could never be consistent with any ideal of progress. The men who resorted to that kind of sabotage never had and never would accomplish salutary reform for this or any other country.

If these statements had been made by a National Labour man, he would have been called a rat. They were made by the Premier of Queensland in the Trades Hall in Brisbane on Eight Hours' Day. They were not made by a capitalist or a profiteer, but one of the foremost advocates of the working classes in Australia regarding the basic wage. To-day people who are suffering in this State and in Australia are suffering more keenly owing to the fact that others are clamouring for a basic wage regardless of the domestic obligations of the particular worker. According to Mr. Justice Higgins the term basic means the base. There ought to be an endowment given in accordance with the family a man has. At the recent elections in Queensland, nine or 10 months ago, Mr. Theodore, in his pre-election speech, said—

Regarding wages, Mr. Theodore said the Government was of the opinion that the basic wage should be determined for Queensland for a man and his wife, and that the wife of each worker who had a family should receive from a central fund a subsidy with respect to each child. It was hoped to submit a Bill on those lines to Parliament at an early date. In conclusion, Mr. Theodore said the Labour

Party had not hesitated to adopt a bold policy in the legislative and administrative spheres, and had done at all times what they conceived to be their duty to the people, and were not afraid to leave their political faith in the people's hands.

It is a bold thing for any Labour Premier to say that he would make a basic wage for a man and his wife when the leaders of the movements are clamouring for a basic wage for a man, his wife and three children, and no provision is being made for the man with five or six children. The single man may receive the basic wage that a married man with three children is getting. That is the economic justice dealt out to the worker by the alleged leaders of the working classes. A change is coming. The workers are beginning to realise that there are others in Australia besides those who claim to be the leaders of the working class movement. These men say that their chief concern is the welfare of the worker. Continually they are making matters harder for the worker, particularly those who are endeavouring to raise a family in Australia and keep themselves going. The day will come, and probably it is on the way, when this position will be remedied. I will give to Mr. Storey this credit, that his Government attempted to bring into operation a bonus for motherhood. They are faced with a difficulty in that State. They are talking about bringing in a lottery to provide the funds for a bonus for motherhood.

Mr. Corboy: Quite right, too.

Mr. DAVIES: It is right to give a bonus for motherhood. Mr. Storey has been assailed on all hands because he has been unable to bring in this bonus. When he was on the hustings last year, I understand from reports in the Trades Hall, one of the first Bills promised was one providing for the endowment of motherhood. The Government have been in power for 12 months but they have not yet brought down that measure. They now realise that there is a difficulty in the way and they cannot give this bonus unless there is money to provide for it. They will never be able to pay the endowment out of the funds of the State unless they readjust the basis on which wages are now fixed. If it is going to be said that an industry will provide a basic wage on the principle of the wage for a man his wife and three children, or more, it can only be done at the expense of those who have no children. Only by that method can we adjust conditions in Australia and make them more reasonable for a man with a family to maintain. It is of some moment to the State that a man with a family shall be kept going. We talk about immigration, and this and that, but unless a man with a family is maintained in reasonable comfort, the position will become more acute than it is to-day and we shall have childless marriages. It is noticeable in all English-speaking countries in the world that generally speaking the birth-rate has declined. I believe this is due to the fact that no provision

is made for the family as it comes along. Why should not every child have a place? We must take care of the children and make ample provision for their existence. If we wish to keep our heads above water we must have efficient administration, industrial peace, and a larger population. Regarding the former point, Ministers must keep in personal touch with their departments and responsible heads. They must take personal notice of everything and of those working under them. They must apply themselves now, as they have never done before, to their work. I am glad that reference was made from the other side of the House to the fact that they do not believe our compulsory industrial arbitration has failed. I do not think it has. I know what strikes mean not only to those immediately involved but to hundreds, and often thousands, of those removed from the scene of the strike. If we are to have the strikes during the next two or three years that we have had in the past, we shall never get out of our difficulties.

Mr. Clydesdale: Are you a pessimist?

Mr. DAVIES: Not altogether, but unless we face the position squarely and honestly, and try to find a way out of our difficulties, there is no possible chance for us at all. I believe in the good sense of the Britisher, and that when it comes to the absolute limit, he will say to himself and his fellows, "This will not carry us much further." We have to alter our tactics." We see what is taking place in the Official Labour Party to-day. There is a change in tactics and I hope this will be for the benefit not only of the workers but of the State as a whole.

On motion by Mr. Corboy, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.

QUESTION—ESPERANCE LANDS, CLEARING.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (for Hon. T. Walker) asked the Premier: 1, Has any provision been made for a steam traction engine for the purpose of assisting the Esperance district settlers in the mallee district on similar terms to like assistance rendered elsewhere? 2, If so, when can the settlers expect that the steam traction engine will be in commission? 3, If no steps have been taken to assist the mallee settlers to roll down the scrub, will he consider the advisability of rendering this assistance as early as possible?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, Inquiries by the General Manager, Agricultural Bank, go to show that horses will be more economical than an engine. If it can be shown that the engine is cheaper, he is prepared to send one down.

QUESTION—RAILWAY BUFFET CARS.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Minister for Railways: 1, How many buffet cars has the Railway Department? 2, How many are in operation? 3, What sections are they operating on? 4, What have been the financial results during the period of running?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Railways) replied: 1, Three. 2, Two. 3, Perth-Wyalcatchem, Caron-Yalgoo. 4, Perth-Wyalcatchem car, 21st March to 31st July, profit £30 17s. 10d.; Perth-Kellerberrin car, 21st March to 31st July, loss £152 11s. 1d.; Caron-Yalgoo car, 16th May to 31st July, loss £49 12s. 11d. The Perth-Kellerberrin car was discontinued with the time table alterations operating from 8th August. The Caron-Yalgoo car is the only means of satisfactorily meeting refreshment requirements of passengers between Perth and Murchison District.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [4.36]: In common with others who have spoken on the Address-in-reply, and especially as the baby of the House, I desire to welcome the mother of the House amongst us. I hope that during my tenure in this Chamber I will not give Ministers, or others, cause to complain that, like most babies, I am always howling for a rattle. I will endeavour to bring forward for the consideration of the Government only those things that I think are reasonable, or that I consider should be granted. With regard to the Address-in-reply, there has been an almost total absence from the speeches delivered by members sitting on the Ministerial side of the House, of any proposal or policy, either on the part of Ministers or private members, indicating any definite ideas as to how the financial drift is to be remedied. In the Governor's Speech we

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