

with a population of eight million people there are four million people on the land in Canada, whereas in Australia with a population of five million, there are only 800,000 people on the land. It is the duty of the Government to do everything possible to assist our primary industries and to get people into the back country, and make the conditions there as good as possible for them. We cannot go on living in a fool's paradise, and we shall have to live on our primary products sooner or later. So far as our essential secondary industries are concerned, these should be run in conjunction with the primary industries, but in my opinion the secondary industries should be left to private enterprise and should not be tinkered with as has been the case in the past. At the opportune time private enterprise will come along and establish the necessary secondary industries, without the State squandering any more money in assisting them. If this sort of thing goes on, sooner or later every man will be leaning up against the Government for some form of assistance. I hope the Government will desist from assisting secondary industries, as has been foreshadowed by some of the statements which have appeared in the Press from the Minister for Industries during the last few months. Mr. Allen referred to the shipbuilding at Fremantle. While it is necessary to build ships in the State, I think that private enterprise could well do the work. I am pleased to see that a company has been formed. I am not complaining that, so long as they put up their cash, the Government should assist them in some measure. The statement which has been made in regard to 13 acres at Preston Point was contradicted in this morning's paper, and it now appears that the Government are going to lease instead of sell that land. If the Minister had given that company a seven years lease of that land with the option of purchase at £250 an acre I do not think he would have had the interests of the country at heart. This apparently has been altered now at the request of the Engineer-in-Chief, who says that it will be required later on, but the fact remains that Cabinet passed that lease. It is time that that sort of thing came to an end. I understand that the lease could have been ratified without coming before Parliament to be discussed. If it had not been brought up in another place in all probability the situation would not have been altered now.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Apparently the Engineer-in-Chief did not spot it.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: I do not know about that, but a few others did spot it. I do not want to weary the House with my views on repatriation. This question is now being discussed in another place. I say, as I said before, that we cannot do too much for our soldiers to assist them in every way. It has just come under my notice the treatment accorded to certain returned soldiers in this State. Some returned soldiers landed in Sydney and were brought by rail to Perth. In Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide they were given first class carriages, but when they reached Kalgoorlie they were put into second class carriages. These were wounded men. I do not know whether the military authorities or the

State Government were to blame, but this is something which should not have been allowed, and which should not be allowed to occur again. What I have said in criticism of the Government I have not said in any unfriendly spirit, but do want to see them do something to straighten out the finances of the country. In my opinion the Wyndham freezing works should be either leased or sold. If we are going to run them, I for one congratulate the Honorary Minister upon appointing the man he has appointed to manage them. I understand that he is one of the best men in his line in Australia, and it is a good thing to give him something like a decent salary instead of the miserable pitances which are usually given to public servants. By giving this man £1,500 a year we are not paying him a penny less than he is entitled to have, if he is the right man. I would even give a higher salary if necessary in order to get the best brains and ability to run any works. With regard to the question of the appointment of three commissioners to manage the railways, I think if one commissioner was appointed, a strong man and an able man, and if he was given a decent salary and not interfered with in any political manner, that he should be able to run the railways better than they have been run in the past. We are going through abnormal times, and we have not the freights that we could depend upon in pre-war times in the matter of timber, wheat and other commodities. I hope that some of the suggestions I have made will appeal to the Government, and will be adopted.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

On motion by Hon. J. Cunningham debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.31 p.m.

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## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 3rd September, 1918.*

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

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

### QUESTION—FREMANTLE PUBLIC HOSPITAL.

Mr. ROCKE (without notice) asked the Premier: Is the report ready which on the 17th April last he promised should be laid on the Table? I refer to the report in connection with the treatment at the Fremantle Public Hospital of James McGowan, since deceased.

The PREMIER replied: I have not yet got the report. I will have inquiries made, and will let the hon. member know.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Amendment—No-confidence.

Debate resumed from the 29th August.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [4.48]: I understand that I cannot speak again on the Address-in-reply, and that anything I desire to say on subjects apart from the work of repatriation must be said to-day.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It may not be necessary for you to speak again.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question before the Chair is the Address-in-reply, and the hon. member can address himself to that subject.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I should have preferred to deal with the one question only. However, I do wish to say to the Minister for Industries certain things on the subject of freezing works. For some time we have thought that we ought to have freezing works at Fremantle. The Treasurer is hard up for money; he has told us that it will not be possible to borrow for, at any rate, some time to come. That being so, we must do something to get cash into this State if we are to find employment for the people. The producers have been urging the Government for a long time past to erect freezing works at Fremantle. The Governor's Speech says that freezing works are to be erected there; the Premier says so; and Mr. Colebatch says so. As we understand, they are to be erected by the Government. The Minister for Industries, however, in his speech said that the Government were willing to allow these works to be erected by some private persons. If the Government have for some time been willing to allow the works to be so erected, why have they not made the matter public in order that delay might be avoided? I have no objection, so long as the private owners of the works will agree to conditions which will be fair to everybody, providing opportunity to all producers; but I should object most strongly to the erection of private works on any Government land except under those conditions. To my mind, these works afford facilities which should be owned by the State for the use of all who care to indulge in the export of meat, whether as producers of or as dealers in meat. I have no desire to deal at any length with the subject, but I confess that I am profoundly disappointed at the contradictory nature of the statements made on this matter by Ministers. It would be well if the Government said all the time the same thing, whether it was the right thing or even the wrong thing. It would be well, because then we should know exactly where we stand. In point of fact, on almost every subject, even on subjects of minor importance, we find that diversity of opinion in the Government—Ministers sometimes voting on either side of the House. Such a position is at any rate very confusing. It is very wrong that there should be this conflict of opinion between Ministers.

Hon. P. Collier: But that is what is laid down in their platform—independence and freedom of action.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think Ministers are the only members of the National party who exercise that independence and that freedom of action.

Hon. P. Collier: The God-help-us party.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I hope, too, that in connection with the wheat scheme the Government will see that the Advisory Board are composed of men outside the service. I mentioned this matter some time ago, when the Minister for Works was acting leader of the House; and I believe he made a note of it at the time. It is not fair to the producers that the Government should have officials on the board, because with two officials on the board, one being in the chair, and only two laymen, it becomes merely a Minister's board.

Mr. Smith: Did not you yourself appoint officials?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: To the board?

Mr. Smith: Yes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No.

Member: Mr. Sibbald.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I did not appoint Mr. Sibbald to the Board. He was not a member of the Board. I got rid of the officials who were on the board. I did what I am now asking the Government to do, not because the officials are not good men—probably they are good men—but because I think the board should be a board standing between the farmers and the Government. In connection with the receiving of wheat this year, I think that if it is possible to build sheds at the larger receiving stations, the sheds should be built there. We have seen this year the result of the Government's endeavour to take the Wheat to Spencer's Brook. I confess that was my scheme, and I believe it would have been satisfactorily managed this year if the wheat had been received at the proper time; that is, when first stripped. But the Government determined that the wheat should not be received until some time in January, and the result was that a good deal of wheat remained for five or six months at country stations absolutely unprotected from the weather, and, as the House knows, we have had a very wet season. I hope that next year's arrangements for receiving the wheat will include proper care to house the wheat before the winter rains set in. It must be remembered that the people are responsible to the extent of the guarantee of the price of wheat, and it is not altogether the farmers' loss if the wheat is destroyed. If we are to have freezing works, we shall want more stock; and it has been suggested that our farmers should grow more stock and less wheat. I think they had better produce more wheat, and more stock too. I believe that if the Government cared to do so, they could finance the purchase of a good many sheep for farmers who have been assisted. I believe that without putting up any money whatever it would be possible to buy 250,000 sheep for farmers under the Industries Assistance Board or on the Agricultural Bank. I believe the sheep owners would gladly provide ewes for the Government to distribute amongst the farmers, and that the

sheep owners would be perfectly willing to accept payment spread over two or three years. They could sell at a very low price, and still do better in this way than if they placed the sheep on the market. This is the first time since the Agricultural Bank has been in operation that the Government have been in a position to acquire sheep cheaply, and the opportunity ought not to be lost. Having said so much, may I add that I did propose to-day to touch upon the financial position of the country; but I do not know that that is so very necessary. I know that the deficit has got up to three millions now, and that this year we are bound to have an additional deficit of nearly three quarters of a million. The one thing that troubles me is that there is nothing being done, even in view of the daily increase of the deficit, to provide increased revenue, in the years that are to come. We talk production, but we do not attend to it. Nothing is being done by the Government to develop the country. In fact, I believe that representatives of the farming districts could tell us that men are being driven off the land to-day by the treatment they are receiving.

Mr. Maley: Some of them should never have been put there.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There are some men in Parliament who should never have been put there. One does not get suitable men everywhere, but every man who went on the land had a perfect right to go. It was for him to judge whether he should go on the land. It was not his business to come to members of Parliament to tell him whether he was suitable for the land. Such a man says to himself, "I want to be a farmer," and he goes on the land. As a matter of fact, there are in this State remaining on the land a greater percentage of the people placed there than in any other State. Again, we in this State are always imagining that we do for the farmer far more than is being done anywhere else. But that is not so. We fall short of our duty very often indeed. The farmer is developing the national estate; he is the public hack that carries a good deal of the rest of the community in this State. If one turns to the work of Venezuela, one finds that not only has he been a highly successful administrator otherwise, but that he is a most enthusiastic agriculturist, and that his great work in Greece was the settlement of the people on the land, getting the people back on the land, and encouraging production. We know what has been possible in England in the course of a few years by Government aid and proper assistance. Let us observe what has been done in Ireland, and at the other end of the world, in New Zealand, and, indeed, the world over. If one considers other countries one must acknowledge that Western Australia has not much to boast over. Therefore, it would be well for certain hon. members to look into the question before they speak of the assistance given to our farmers in the way they do. At any rate, this is pertinent. Whether it was right or whether it was wrong to put the men on the land, we have put them there, and so we have a responsibility to them. I believe someone has said that my land settlement scheme should

be criticised. I shall be perfectly pleased to have it dealt with in any way members like. Hon. members have a perfect right to criticise all that I have done.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I did not know you had a land settlement scheme.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The member for Northam did something. That is one thing.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Had I not put the men on the land, there would have been very little work in the State to-day.

Mr. Maley: And very little misery.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There is misery in every walk of life. I shall not be deterred from doing my duty in this House by any threat, no matter who suggests it. I have observed in the Press some suggestions that Parliament ought to be a place of work and not of words. I shall be happy to know how a newspaper would get on without words; it would not, without words, be the interesting thing it is to us just now. Now I am going to deal with the question of land settlement for soldiers. Hon. members know full well that the Commonwealth Government have reserved to themselves the whole of the activities in this respect outside land settlement. But it has to be remembered that when we made a solemn promise to the Federal authorities that we would do our part—and they made our part the land settlement, relieving us of all other work—we made a solemn contract that we would keep faith with them and with the soldiers. I am going to show to-day by quotations from statements made from time to time, what we promised to do. I hope the House will agree, when I show what we have agreed to do and the little we have done, that we are not keeping faith, not keeping our word. I think the Premier has broken nearly every promise that Western Australia made to the Commonwealth, and by the way, I shall show that the Premier sent over the material on which our promises were founded. I shall have to deal with two Ministers principally, the Premier and the Minister for Industries. I do hope that the Premier will not regard this as a personal matter. I have no feeling whatever against the hon. gentleman personally. If there is anything to forgive for the attitude which the present Premier adopted when Mr. Wilson left office, I am sure Mr. Wilson has forgiven him. I merely desire to do my duty. I wish to convince this House, and in order that I may do so thoroughly I will endeavour to prove my case out of the mouth of the Premier. Only the other day he said that nearly the whole of the land in the South-West was surveyed. I do not know why he said that. Of course, there is a considerable area of land surveyed, but it was surveyed long before he became Minister for Lands. It is said that it is unwise for the Government to go in for clearing land and erecting houses until we are certain that men want the farms, that it is unwise to do this work which we solemnly agreed to do. According to a statement which has been made 3,266 men returned cards notifying that it was their intention to take up land. That was

before I took control of the Industries Department. I am speaking now of the time when Mr. Johnson was Minister for Lands. These cards were sent out by men who were in the trenches. The cards had been sent by us to those men to fill in so that we might know what their wishes were in regard to their future occupations in this country. I believe that there are hundreds of men wanting land and at the same time there are a great many men who are idle. We should make our scheme attractive; we should make it popular. It is not fair to offer to one man something which we are going to deny to another because of the want of publicity. All should have an equal opportunity. If there is any advantage, that advantage should be for everyone so long as the people who want to go on the land are physically fit. There is great dissatisfaction to-day. Men are being buffeted from pillar to post, and are being rushed here and there. There seems to be no system and there is no land available which can be guaranteed. I had 12 months of this work and I know what the Lands Department are doing. We should endeavour to make it easy for every man to get land. Our organisation should be as perfect as possible, and when a man expresses a wish to have land, every facility should be given him to avail himself of the liberal conditions which we offer. His requests should be attended to and granted if it is at all possible to grant them. There is no use of humbugging soldiers. The House should remember also that if the returned soldiers cannot get work they must be paid. That is an arrangement which has been made by the Commonwealth Government, and it is a perfectly fair one, too, but we should be in the position to offer work to these men as soon as possible. Returned soldiers do not want to draw money unless they earn it. It must be remembered, too, that to-day when men return from the Front they are given preference of employment. That is quite right, and often a man who has not been to the war is displaced so that room might be made for a returned soldier. That is right, too, but it is unfortunate, and the man who is displaced should be found some other employment. When soldiers return in numbers from the Front, they will refuse to take the jobs of men who could not go to the war. Then what will the Government do? I am moving my amendment to-day because common sense says that we must prepare for the home-coming of our soldiers. Two years ago the State agreed to do it and again 18 months ago and 12 months ago similar promises were made.

Hon. P. Collier: It has been the theme of much frothy oratory.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I dare say it has. We know that repatriation in times of prosperity would be an easy matter. In America millions of men were re-established in their occupations at the termination of the civil war, but here these men have to face the return to civil life in times of adversity. But we must overcome all difficulties, because we have to remember that repatriation means production,

and if we can get settlement we shall have production. The soldier must be given the opportunity to work. I have no desire to make this a party question; I wish it could be decided on its merits.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Which party question do you want to make it?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier has had his party meeting and he has cracked his whip. If this question had to be decided on its merits, there would be no doubt whatever about the issue. I will show from statements made by the Premier and the Minister for Industries that they are not doing what they promised to do. How different it was when Mr. Wilson was Premier. Mr. Wilson thought that repatriation was the State's opportunity. There was no humbugging about him. He said what he meant, he meant what he said and did what he said. Mr. Wilson recognised what was his duty and set out to do it. He agreed to settle Australian and British soldiers on the land. We know, of course, that a soldier cannot be forced to go on the land. Mr. Wilson's policy was to make Crown lands available in every centre, and it was also intended that soldiers should go back to the districts whence they came. Then, again, a man was to be a free agent; the land was not to be selected for him. We thought that in the South-West partly improved lands might be purchased cheaply. Mr. Wilson thought that at last the South-West was to have its chance. He gloried in the fact that we had the opportunity to develop in a big way that great stretch of country starting in the electorate of Nelson and finishing at Albany. The question was not too big for Mr. Wilson. He welcomed big things, knowing that we could not have too many people established on the land under satisfactory conditions. Mr. Wilson and his Cabinet decided that surveys should be made in the South-West, and the Minister for Works prepared to start with promptitude, but I believe the surveys were soon afterwards stopped. Mr. Wilson decided that land must be improved before returned men were asked to occupy it. It was intended that a small area should be cleared, that a small house should be erected, that the land should be fenced and the place made as comfortable as possible by the time the occupant was prepared to go on it. It was not the desire to send men into the wilds. Two years ago we started to prepare for the home-coming of the soldiers. Mr. Wilson decided, too, that the assistance given must be adequate, that a man must be allowed to draw each day a fair amount upon which to live, and that payments would continue so long as the man did his work honestly and fairly. The scheme propounded then was a sufficient and a perfectly correct one, but it has never been given effect to. Mr. Wilson would have kept faith with the promises he gave had he remained in power. After Mr. Wilson's retirement the opportunity fell upon the shoulders of the present Premier, and it is because he is not doing the work that I am moving the amendment to the Address-in-reply to-day. When Mr. Wilson

decided that this work was to be done, he did not expect that he would have any opposition within the Cabinet. As a matter of fact, the then Minister for Lands, now the present Premier, never during my year of office surveyed a block of land. At any rate, if he did, I was not aware of it. The Attorney General, who is also Minister for Industries and Woods and Forests, has shown his hand in this matter. He managed to drag the Premier away from the South-West, away from anywhere in the vicinity of the timber he is so proud of. I will read the Minister's statement directly and show that records are sometimes troublesome things. The Minister for Industries seems to have influenced the present Premier and the result is that we are debating the matter to-day. I will show that some blame is attachable to the Minister for Industries, because he would not allow the Premier to touch the timber areas of the South-West, though he allowed him to take 2,000 acres near the Warren. So far as I know that is all the Minister for Industries would agree to release. I do not mind the opposition of the present Premier, but he should have been open about it when he was Minister for Lands so that Mr. Wilson might have known.

The Attorney General: All I have said has appeared in the Press.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: And it is rather unfortunate, too.

The Attorney General: You wanted to settle them at Nornalup without railways and without any kind of communication.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I just expected that interjection. I had not the right to survey a foot of land in this State.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It was your scheme.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Honorary Minister who sat in opposition then and who was not so tired as he is now, tells the House that it was my scheme. It was not my scheme at all. The Minister for Industries would not allow any portion of that country go except 2,000 acres near the Warren.

The Attorney General: Nonsense.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is not nonsense.

The Attorney General: My objection was that you desired to pull up every karri tree in the country and settle men down there.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am inclined to agree with the statement of the Premier when he was Minister for Lands. I will read it to the House in a few minutes.

Member: There must have been some lively Cabinet meetings.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If there had been there would have been no need for this discussion to-day. In my opinion Nornalup is the best site in the South-West for returned soldiers.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): You would not put returned soldiers there to-day?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Not under this Government.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Or under any Government, I hope.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Of course I would.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Then God help them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I would build a line from Manjimup to Nornalup.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): I suppose you would build that first?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not know that that would be necessary, but of course there must be a railway line built there. I do not think that we should be able to undertake a big railway policy in the near future, but we should certainly be able to face 50 miles of railway a year when the war is over. If the Forestry Department were reasonable we could start our settlement at Manjimup and work outwards. If there is a Minister on the Treasury benches who will say the country is too big for him, and especially the South-West portion of the country, he is not capable of making use of his opportunities and settling people on that area between Denmark and Manjimup, which, after all, is not a twentieth part of that area which has been settled in other countries in a short time. If 100 miles of railway are to stagger members of the Government, then they had better throw up the sponge altogether.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): That is not the point.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That is the point. The Government are not doing anything anywhere, and the Premier says he will not do anything anywhere.

The Premier: Oh, no.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier said that in his speech.

The Premier: No.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Here it is. The Premier says now he did not mean it, but it is here all the same. The Honorary Minister (Hon. F. E. S. Willmott), who represents an electorate in the South-West, shakes his head at the task of opening up 100 miles of country, a great deal of which, of course, carries timber. There are to be no railway surveys, and no land is to be improved. There is to be no policy, and the soldiers are to go as they please. I now come to the question which was dealt with at the Premiers' conference in Melbourne. I have pointed out before that Mr. Johnson, the late Minister for Lands, attended the conference in Melbourne early in 1916, and stated that Western Australia would take 14,000 men. The South-West, apparently, was not too big for him, and he was perfectly right. The Hon. Frank Wilson also attended the conference, and said at the end of December, 1916, and again early in January, 1917, that we could provide for 4,000 men and 10,000 more later on if they were available for settlement.

The Premier: Four thousand at once?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, but certainly 4,000 within a reasonable time and as quickly as the land could be surveyed. There was no need to settle them all at once, because the war was not over.

The Premier: We could take many more than that, I hope, in Western Australia if the country was ready for them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They never will be taken at the present rate of progress. The Premier knows that we promised the British

Government that we would take their people. The Premier proposed to chastise the Agent General, Mr. Connolly, for mentioning in London that we would take 25,000 of the British people in the first year.

The Premier: Not now?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, now. The Premier will find a signed statement in the office. The British Government cannot send them now, but they wish us to be ready for the time when they can send them out, and we agreed to this.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And a larger number afterwards.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes. The Premier was a member of the conference which I attended, which the Colonial Secretary attended, and Mr. Connolly attended, and which agreed to the reply sent to the British people. I think the British people should be told that nothing has been done, because it was part of the arrangement that we should prepare for them. Mr. Johnson made this promise on the 24th August, 1916.

Hon. P. Collier: Did you say Mr. Johnson made a promise?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: He surely never did so?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: A month after I wrote to the Minister for Lands, and said I thought we ought to get to work. Cabinet also thought so. Mr. Wilson asked that the work of providing land should be attended to, and that preparation for the home coming soldiers should be made. Mr. Wilson went over to the conference. We met the Ministers there and the Prime Minister said, "Will you put up your scheme, each one of you, in order that conference may consider the matter fully?" Mr. Wilson wired to the Premier, the then Minister for Lands, to prepare a scheme, which he did. That scheme was to be submitted to me. On my return I found the scheme, and subsequently the scheme I now have in my hand was sent. The details are very full. We told the Federal Government what the improvements would be and how they would be made, how the money would be repaid, what the Agricultural Bank would do, that we would have inspectors to watch these farmers, and we said they were experienced men and that they could be safely trusted to do justice to the settlers and see that they got value for their money. We told the Federal Government what the land was capable of producing, and we also said what we were prepared to advance and what the area of the farms would be. We also said we wanted to settle some virgin land under certain conditions. This is what the Premier sent to Mr. Wilson to submit as the Western Australian scheme at the conference. The Premier did not prepare it, but he approved of it and sent it over, and allowed Mr. Wilson to pledge the State to the Federal Government to the extent of this scheme.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are you going to tell us what the scheme is?

The Premier: What is the scheme?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am going to tell the House. Has not the Premier heard of it?

The Premier: You have not told us what the scheme is.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I have told the House how we propose to work it. The money required during 1917, the Premier then thought, would be £460,000.

The Premier: Oh, no!

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier sent it over under cover in his own letter. This is what the Premier did himself, when acting Premier in Mr. Wilson's absence. We asked for £250,000 for improvements, and £35,000 for survey fees, which I suppose the Minister for Lands would fix, for no one else would do so. We asked for £25,000 for drainage and irrigation, £50,000 for roads, and £100,000 for railways, or £460,000 in all during that year. I assume that we were dealing with 4,000 blocks.

The Premier: And assume that you had the men. You could not put men on the land if you had not got them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Certainly not, if the Premier did not desire to put them there.

The Premier: You could not do so if you had not got the men.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We have the men. There are hundreds of men who want to go on the land, but cannot get any.

The Premier: Where are they?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier knows very well where they are. Let me show what we asked for and what we proposed to do for 1918. We proposed to spend £1,500,000 altogether including railways, irrigation, roads, etc., and in 1919 we proposed to spend £950,000.

The Premier: That is not my statement.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, the Premier sent it over.

The Premier: No, not to spend all that money.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Irrigation was to cost £25,000, roads £50,000, and railways £20,000. It was explained that this amount would be spent if labour was available. A good deal of labour, of course, has not been available. In 1920 the amount dropped to £275,000. The total for settling 4,000 men, including railways, drainage, roads, etc., came to £3,947,000. The Minister for Lands, who is the present Premier, thought we could spend some of this money. Surely it was his intention to go on with the work of preparing the land? This money was available from the Federal Government. It ought to have been spent. I supposed that we were putting our scheme in in competition with the other five schemes submitted from the rest of the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Works: Was there any provision for these millions?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This was the proposal submitted to the Federal people.

The Minister for Works: We could do with some of that money now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Does not the Minister understand that we were asked to submit our requirements for the settlement of so many people, and this is the amount we considered would be necessary to spend on the scheme.

Mr. O'Loghlen: If the people were there we would want the money. The Premier agreed to that scheme being sent?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I suppose so. This scheme went to the Commonwealth Government, and of the money they had available we were to get our share.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): How much?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We were to get our share.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): We did not get any; that was our share.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That is no excuse at all.

Hon. P. Collier: It is no defence.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): It is not meant for a defence; it is only a statement of fact.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Commonwealth Government said that we might spend £250,000 in the first six months on clearing land and erecting houses, and so on. If we had done the work we would have got the money, but we have not done the work. We have some responsibility towards the soldiers. When it is said that the Commonwealth must do all the work outside land settlement, that is not true. It is the duty of this Parliament to do all it can to assist in the repatriation of our returned soldiers, and if the money had been spent it goes without saying that we would have had it returned to us. How can Queensland spend money as she is spending it, and how can Victoria spend hundreds of thousands of pounds; how can New South Wales and South Australia spend so much money as they are spending? Why should all the other States except Western Australia be able to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds?

Mr. Munzie: Because they are prepared to do something.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, that is the case. The leader of the Opposition said the other night that our men were going to Queensland rather than be messed about here.

Mr. Green: So they are.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This money is money found by the Commonwealth to be expended for the development of this, and the other States. Every sane man at that conference thought there would be competition over the matter.

Hon. P. Collier: Have not the Commonwealth Government agreed to grant £500 to each man to settle on the land?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes. Every man at that conference thought there would be competition for this money. The statement made at the conference was this: "You people in Western Australia and Queensland can settle far more men than we can because you have the land." We have not put up any competition at all. Western Australia would have benefited by that expenditure. Our policy, we are told, is one of production, and production means expenditure. Is it not better to spend money supplied by the Commonwealth at a cheap rate than to mess along in the way we are going at the present time? Did the State Government enter into competition for this money? This

money is available to-day, I suppose, if the Government like to become active and endeavour to get a share of it. This scheme of ours was put forward showing what we required in connection with the work of repatriation. I do not propose to read anything further from the scheme. Anyone who wishes can have the file. This scheme was sent in all seriousness, and believed in, to Mr. Wilson to present to the Federal people.

Hon. P. Collier: Was it agreed to by the Wilson Government?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Mr. Wilson wired for the scheme which it was proposed to lay before the conference. Shall I read to the House the present Minister's scheme?

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Yes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, I will not. The hon. member would not hold up his head again if I did. When I came back I said, "I do not think this will meet the case," and I prepared the scheme which went to the Premier. The preparation of the scheme was not for me. Mr. Wilson wired the Minister to prepare it, but I prepared every word of that scheme, but I did not send it to Mr. Wilson. Now members say it is my scheme.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Who was the Minister for Lands at the time?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Mr. Lefroy.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): The Commonwealth Government flattened it out.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I happen to have the conference reports and any member can see them. The Commonwealth Government said that we were to have 14,000. In the report of the proceedings the numbers are set down. Queensland was to send 6,500 men, South Australia 2,700, Victoria 2,800, Tasmania 1,000, and Western Australia 14,000. This is what appeared on the 5th January: "The schemes were submitted, a general discussion took place, and Mr. Hughes explained in detail the proposals of the Commonwealth for raising money, and he asked the Premiers not to adjourn until they had agreed to a definite scheme of land settlement." On the 8th January they met again and consented to the scheme. Mr. Hughes on the 11th day of January made the statement after the scheme had been submitted and approved and said this—

Accordingly it was agreed that members of the Australian and British naval and military forces who have served in the present war should be eligible as land settlers, that the maximum advance on improvements should be £500, up to 100 per cent. thereon, the improvements to include fencing, clearing, or cultivation, erection of house, general improvements, implements and stock, the rate of interest to be charged being 3½ per cent. for the first year and rising by ½ per cent. each year up to the cost price of the money.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): When did he say that?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: On the 11th January, 1917.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): When did it come into force?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This is what Mr. Hughes said, and any sane Ministry could put the whole thing into operation in five minutes: The report goes on to say—

After a lengthy discussion the Prime Minister undertook that the Commonwealth would finance the scheme of advancing and make available to the States the amount necessary for the calendar year 1917. This money to be used exclusively for advances against improvements to be effected by or for the soldier settler.

There was our opportunity.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): How could you open up Nornalup when you could not spend money on railways or roads.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: As a matter of fact Nornalup might have been served from Albany. The Honorary Minister will see nothing else but Nornalup.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Anyone who saw Nornalup would approve of it if it had connection with the rest of the State.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It only means the construction of 100 miles of railway to open up this magnificent estate, and if it will carry 300 people anyone would build 100 miles of railway for that purpose. Mr. Hughes on the 11th January, said—

I am very pleased indeed with the results of the Conference. Matters of first importance have been grappled and dealt with in a most satisfactory way. The economies in State expenditure which have been agreed to are very considerable and together with those of the Commonwealth will appreciably lighten the ever increasing burdens imposed by this war.

The only hope for our boys who have given up so much and made such sacrifices is to go on the land. They cannot go to any profession or trade. They must work for wages or go on the land and Mr. Hughes recognised that and we agreed solemnly to do our part and endeavour to provide for the home-coming of these soldiers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You thought the Commonwealth Government realised that we would do something.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They have realised by this time we are not doing anything. In a statement made by Mr. Hughes, the Prime Minister said—

It is also satisfactory to note that the conference unanimously approved of preference of employment of returned soldiers in all public departments. This of course applied to the Commonwealth and the States.

The Federal Cabinet endorsed these proposals submitted to them by the conference of Ministers for the settlement of soldiers, on the 14th January. The important part to us was the money to be spent, and I think the money is the basis of the whole work. When Mr. Wilson returned he said that two million pounds had been set aside, £500,000 for Western Australia, £250,000 of which was required before the end of June.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): That was no good to us to open up the

country by railways and roads, because £500 per man could only be used for actual improvement.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The only practical honest, and decent thing to do is to write to the Commonwealth Government and say that we cannot use the £500 per man. We have only a few surveyors out. Mr. Wilson on his return, said the surveyors were already looking out for suitable areas of Crown lands and Mr. Wilson, believing all was well said, "We will get on now; we shall have something done in the South-West." Mr. Lefroy went to Manjimup to attend a show. He did not have the Minister for Industries with him on this occasion to keep him in check and the Minister for Lands on his return said this—

On Friday I was taken by motor to attend the show at Manjimup, 23 miles from Bridgetown, on the railway line which at present has its terminus at Jardanup. There were present about 300 well dressed men and women and healthy children, bearing evidence that there is something in this primeval forest which will prove more lasting and more advantageous to Western Australia and to the Empire than to noble trees of jarrah and karri, the trunks of which run up without a branch straight as a pole for 80, 100, and in some instances 200 feet.

When the straight timber has been removed the land will be available. Then he went on to say he had been with Mr. Ewing and Mr. Willmott, both optimists, to Big Brook and Bridgetown, and he said—

I have returned more than ever impressed with the great future there must be in the South-West of this State as the experimental stage is now passed and evidence is given in all directions of what the land is capable of producing. I am very fully alive to the fact that the country is patchy, but the fertile soil is so extensive along the network of valleys and on the hillsides that these are destined to become the homes of many thousands of people in the years to come.

It is our duty to work to the end and know what can be done to develop the country in the direction of horticulture; and mixed farming generally should be undertaken to the fullest of our power. That was stated in April, 1917. Now it is April, 1918.

Mr. Munsie: And not "two bob" has been spent.

Mr. Lambert: We will take the rest as read.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Then he goes on to say—

It is our duty to work for that end and anything that can be done to develop the country in the direction of horticulture, dairying, and mixed farming generally for which by nature it is so admirably adapted, should be undertaken to the fullest of our power.

I think I will come now to the visit of the Premier and the Minister for Industries and this is a most interesting thing. I can imagine seeing the Minister for Industries just pushing Mr. Lefroy with one finger and pulling him back with another; pushing him here and there, and dragging him away from the South-West. He approved of Nornalup. I feel that



this is the Attorney General's portion of the statement.

The Attorney General: Read the Press statement.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No. I want you to grasp the point. They said—

It is a new province, so rich that we cannot form any idea of its value. We are satisfied that the South-West is rich enough to maintain a population larger than that existing in the whole of the State at the present time.

The Premier: It is quite true.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yet it is not worth 160 miles of railway.

The Premier: But we want the market.

Hon. P. Collier: I thought we had the market, seeing that we send out of the State £900,000 a year for dairy produce.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They say, too, in this report, that railways will have to be built, but that this cannot be done in one or two years. That is all for the South-West. Now here is my friend, the Attorney General, pulling the Premier away—

The clearing is very difficult. In the old days, when labour was cheap, in the days of 40 years ago, it was much simpler than now. The cost will be from £25 to £40 per acre.

He forgot to mention the mechanical appliances, blasting, etc., that we have to-day.

The Attorney General: Given all that in, you cannot do it for less.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, it can be done for less. The Attorney General does not know this subject.

Mr. Pickering: The member for Northam said that it could be done for £4 10s. per acre.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): If the member for Northam said that, he was very far wide of the mark.

Hon. P. Collier: What does it cost per acre to root up orchards?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There are in the South-West a good few acres that have been cleared for £4 10s. per acre, and there are many acres that have never required clearing at all, because already cleared. Some acres have cost up to £40, but that is not general.

Mr. Hickmott: What would it cost to clear the particular land referred to?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They were referring to the whole of the South-West. I cannot say what the average would be, but the officials said it would cost from £8 to £20 per acre to clear. It is in the report.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): That is right. A fair average would be £15.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am obliged to the Honorary Minister for contradicting the statement made by his colleague. They said that it was impossible to get any land ready for a year or two. This is a point that tickled me. You can see in it the Attorney General taking the Premier away from the South-West—

There is no need to worry about the South-West land for our soldiers in the immediate present, as the Government have on their hands some of the best lands in the State, repurchased. Numerous blocks can be made

available alongside of railways. Every available block near the railways should be taken up before we ask the soldiers to go pioneering in our back country.

Hon. T. Walker: Who said that?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier and the Attorney General in a joint statement when they visited the South-West. They said the South-West will carry 300,000 people. I cannot say who contributed the various portions of the statement, but I should say that the Attorney General contributed this one which I have just read. Just imagine saying that we have lands available near to towns or near to settlements or near to the railways! They complained that the whole of the country has been surveyed in chess-board fashion. I admit that certain blocks were cut up which contained timber, but surveyors were sent down to survey the land apart from the timber, and I think the Honorary Minister had something to do with the district at that time. The Attorney General in this statement says that the land is cut up in chess-board fashion, in rectangular blocks, without any regard for the timber.

The Attorney General: Quite true.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is not true, and I lay this map on the Table to show that it is not true.

The Attorney General: Thousands of blocks which you cut up have been cut up in that fashion.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: How can you say? If you were there for months you could not see thousands of blocks. At any rate, here is the map showing the surveys, and showing how the timber was cut out.

The Minister for Works: You cannot have a block down there without some timber.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But when the Attorney General came back he wanted to make the public understand that we had thoughtlessly cut up the country in wrong fashion.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): It may not have been the instructions, but it was the result.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Unfortunately the officers did not carry out instructions. But the land which they wrongly cut up was not sold. Before my time land was sold without waiting for the survey. My policy was not to sell timber, and when I found that the surveyors sent down were not capable of dealing with the matter I ordered that the land should be properly inspected before being sold. This is a very interesting statement. On the 26th April, 1917, we were told that our land should be settled. Of course they merely repeated what had been said before. Notwithstanding what the leader said, he made another statement on the 28th May. I think I can see Mr. Mercer, of the "Daily News," going along for the statement. In that statement the Minister reverses his opinion of the South-West, and declares that we must deal with the land there.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You do not take any notice of what is in the "Daily News"!

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, sometimes. The Minister for Industries announced that he was finalising a scheme which ultimately would be

laid before the House. On the 16th of the seventh this is what the Attorney General said to the Press—

The assistance offered 'towards land settlement to returned soldiers is so attractive that many men may apply for farms who have not followed up an agricultural career, and who perhaps are not suited to the life. He was very anxious that those men should not get land unless they had had some training on State farms. The assistance is referred to as being attractive. It was always contended that we should make the calling attractive, that the assistance to be offered should be such as would induce capable men to go on the land. That is what we agreed to do. However, the Minister for Industries does not like that. The next move was the appointment of a board consisting of Mr. Brockman Mr. Morrison, and another to select land. I do not think they ever did anything. They disappeared without any notification through the Press. They were appointed with a great flourish of trumpets, did nothing, and went. A second board was appointed to deal with the qualification of soldiers.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): You agree that we must have that qualification board?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But I do not agree with the appointment of boards one day to be disbanded the next. Everything that was done or agreed to be done by me was approved by Cabinet. When I saw the crash coming, when Mr. Wilson lost office—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: When he was being sold.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We knew for days before what was coming. I submitted this scheme of assistance to soldiers to Cabinet, and it was duly approved. Notwithstanding that Cabinet had approved on the 28th June, 1917, of a scheme of assistance which the Attorney General called attractive, and which provided that a man could work his land for 9s. per day—notwithstanding that, and that men had been settled by me under this scheme, the 9s. has been withdrawn and is not now offered to soldier settlers.

The Premier: Oh, yes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Cabinet knew what was being done, and the public knew it. I want the House to understand that everything which Mr. Wilson proposed was agreed to. The railway was agreed to, although now denounced by Ministers as impossible. Survey of land was agreed to. The qualification of soldiers was agreed to. Every detail of the scheme was agreed to. Mr. Wilson was never told that the proposals that came from him as Premier were not to be carried out. He was told that they ought to be carried out. The Government have broken faith, and that is why I am moving here to-day. We saw what was being done in connection with the British Government. I know that what we promised to do there has not been done. It is for the Parliament to see that the Government do give effect to the promises made on behalf of the people of the State. It does not matter which Government made those promises, which gave the undertaking to the Federal authorities. But it does happen that four of the pre-

sent Ministers were in the Wilson Cabinet when the undertaking was given. That undertaking has not been honoured. We must keep faith, and do our part. We must reward those men who are fighting for us. It is of no use dwelling on the awfulness of war. But to-night we have an opportunity of doing our duty by the bravest and best, by the very flower of this country. Should we do it? Is it worth while doing anything for men who are bleeding and dying for us? Is it worth while doing anything for the widows and orphans of the soldiers who have laid down their lives for us? Is it worth while keeping our word to the people, to whom we have pledged ourselves to do the country's duty by the soldiers? I think it is worth while. And it is because of that, because I believe these things to be worth while, that I say we ought to insist upon the work of repatriation being actively undertaken, energetically undertaken. Is it enough if the Government to-day appoint Mr. Camm, and to-morrow, without a word of reason except that there is some complaint that something is unsatisfactory, dispen-  
 se with Mr. Camm's services? Is it enough to say to-day that Mr. Camm can fix up everything for the soldiers, and to say to-morrow that Mr. Camm must go and Mr. McLarty replace him? Is it enough to be merely chopping and changing? Is it enough if the Premier changes his mind and his methods day by day? The only thing that has been done is this chopping and changing. I should like to see the papers in this matter, and I think they ought to be laid on the Table of the House. I should like to know what communications have passed with the Federal Government since we gave our undertaking. Mr. Camm is quite capable of doing the work which was assigned to him and then taken from him; and it is a criminal thing to place a man in such an office, and then turn him out during the night. I have been told that Mr. Camm was not even informed that his services as repatriation officer were to be dispensed with—I have not seen Mr. Camm.

The Premier: That statement is quite wrong.

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Camm first learned through the Press of his retirement.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Shall we insist in this House that there shall be no more of this chopping and changing? Shall we insist that the scheme entered upon with the Federal Government shall be carried out on Western Australia's part? Shall we affirm that it is our duty to keep our word, given to the people, as regards soldier settlement? The Government of this State are paltering with this great question of land settlement for soldiers. I doubt their sincerity. I am dealing with the two Ministers most concerned. I am not now referring to the member for Nelson (Hon. F. E. S. Willmott), because I question whether he had the opportunity of doing much.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He has to carry the responsibility with the other Ministers.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think the House will agree that the inability, at any rate, of the Government is beyond question.

Mr. Munsie: Nobody doubts that, inside this House or outside it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Government are always vainly proposing, but they are never doing. I do not know what the House will think of this question when the debate has closed. But I do know that we are facing a responsibility which we shall have to accept. This, it has been said, should not be made a party question. Again, it will be argued that I should not have brought the matter forward in this way. But this is the way to have the subject discussed thoroughly and well. We want to be absolutely certain that this work which the State has promised to do shall be done. I hope it will not be made a party question. I hope the question will be decided solely and entirely on its merits. I hope that those who vote—and I trust every member will vote—will say whether the work of the Government has been adequate, whether the Government have kept faith, whether the Government have fulfilled their promises, whether we are determined that all it is possible for us to do shall be done in the matter of repatriation, whether all that we have undertaken to do shall be carried out.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Give the Government rope enough, and they will hang themselves.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That might be well enough, but they will at the same time hang so many other people, and a question affecting our soldiers cannot be left to time or chance. I hope that this discussion will result in concrete good, and that the interests of our soldiers will, as the result of the debate, be served adequately. As for myself, whether it be right or whether it be wrong to move this amendment, whether I succeed here or whether I am forced to the country, I am going to attend to this vital question of repatriation, of the setting up in life of the men who have fought for me and for others. I care not one jot if I am beaten here. If I am beaten here, I shall appeal to a broader tribunal, and I shall keep the question alive until the interests of our soldiers are properly served.

Mr. Teesdale: You are quite sure the soldiers are complaining?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If members would only repeat in this Chamber what they have said to me on this subject, there would be no doubt as to the issue.

Hon. P. Collier: If they had the courage to say here what they say in the streets.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If hon. members would say here what they have said to me—not what they may have said in the streets—the vote would be all right. I desire that we recognise our responsibility, that we see our duty to our soldiers, and that we do that duty. I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the Address-in-reply: "But we regret to inform your Excellency that in the opinion of this House neither the activities nor the proposals of the Government for the repatriation of our soldiers and sailors are adequate."

Hon. P. Collier: That is putting it very mildly.

The Minister for Works: The member for Northam always was generous.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is there a seconder to the amendment?

Mr. H. ROBINSON (Albany) [6.10]: second the amendment.

Sitting suspended from 6.11 to 7.30 p.m.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy-Moore) [7.30]: The member for Northam moving an amendment to the Address-in-reply began his speech in a friendly tone, and as he had no feeling personally against the Premier, but that he felt it his duty to submit the amendment for the consideration of the House. From time immemorial it has always been recognised that an amendment such as this to the Address-in-reply means a vote of want of confidence in the Government. The Governor's Speech is delivered by His Excellency, but it voices the views of the Minister, and any amendment to the Address-in-reply must be regarded as a reflection on the Minister of the day. I regret that the member for Northam should have chosen the subject of repatriation on which to base his amendment, and I regret, too, that the hon. member has not dealt with the question in its broader sense, but simply dealt with the question of repatriation. In view of the fact that hon. members have repeatedly stated in this House that the question of settling and looking after returned soldiers should not be made a party one, it is a pity that the amendment of the hon. member proposes distinctly to make it such. I do not know to which party the member for Northam belongs. He sits on this side of the House and by doing so should be recognised as a supporter of the Government of the day. If he does not intend to support the Government, the day it is his duty to sit on the other side of the House.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I can sit where I please.

The PREMIER: I consider it is the hon. member's duty to sit on the other side of the House. The time has arrived when I hope hon. members will come out openly in their opposition to the Government, if they intend to oppose the Government.

Mr. O'Loughlin: There is nothing more of that than that.

The PREMIER: Ever since I have had the honour of leading the Government of this State I have had dished up to me every morning nothing but criticism, nothing but abuse, regard to what the Government are doing, as to what they have been trying to do. Is the hon. member for Northam the mouthpiece of the opposition to which I allude? If he is I am afraid he has made out a very poor case. He will be able to show to the House that the case put up by the hon. member is like a house of cards, capable of being blown down by a slight puff of wind. The hon. member did not deal with what we are doing now, but what happened two years ago.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I dealt with what you should be doing now.

Mr. Munsie: We cannot find out what you are doing now.

The PREMIER: The member for Northam stated that schemes were proposed 18 months ago. Those schemes originated with the hon. member for Northam. He then said that he would be able to settle 4,000 men on the land

in a year. I never believed for one moment that it would be possible to do that.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You could not get them back.

The PREMIER: The hon. member did not think of that when he formulated his scheme. At that time the hon. member and many other people also did not think that the war would last as long as it has lasted. Many thought then, as they did in the earlier stages, that it was impossible in these days of modern warfare for the war to last any length of time. We did not have the men here to settle on the land. Do hon. members think that I would have been justified in going out into the country clearing land, fencing it, and putting up houses for men who were not here? If I had done such a thing as the hon. member suggested, that is, to clear thousands of acres of land and put up houses for men who were not here, I would have been a fit subject for an institution situated between here and Fremantle. The hon. member has not so much criticised the actions of the Government at the present time as what the Government have not done. The hon. member spoke of Nornalup. That was one of his schemes. I admit that Nornalup is a very fine piece of country which will be settled some day. It is absurd, however, to think of settling soldiers at Nornalup unless we connect the place up with a railway. We know, however, that the State is not in a position to build new railways. We have criticism from all sides with regard to the expenditure at the present time, and are we to go out and build railways when we have a large tract of country available within sight of our existing railway system? A sum of £8,000 was spent in the Nornalup district. I tried to get there to inspect the country, but I found it was impossible to do so. I also found that the surveyors could not work there. Half the time they were idle, and I came to the conclusion that it would be advisable to take the surveyors out of that country and also that it would be better to leave Nornalup until we had settled some of our country closer to existing railways. Nornalup was the scheme of the member for Northam.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Who spent the £8,000?

The PREMIER: The hon. member by direction of the Premier of the day, took charge of the question of settling men on the land. The matter had nothing to do with the Minister for Lands. The question was left entirely to the Minister for Industries, and the Minister for Industries proposed to spend money in clearing tracts of country, putting up buildings, and fencing in blocks for the returned soldiers. I would ask any sensible member in this House to say whether he thinks that that was a proper thing to do.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you not think that more preparation could have been made with the Harvey blocks?

Mr. Nairn: Let us finish with Nornalup first: leave Harvey till afterwards.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I thought the Premier was condemning the general scheme.

The PREMIER: Throughout the whole of the South-West I believe there is a large tract of country fit for settlement. At the same time we have not the people to go on the land.

Hon. P. Collier: You have not the land ready to put them on.

The PREMIER: I am not going to get it ready until I have the people to go there.

Hon. P. Collier: You declared in your policy speech that you would.

The PREMIER: I am not going to clear land years ahead on the off chance of requiring it afterwards.

The Colonial Treasurer: And allow it to grow again.

The PREMIER: It is quite true that there has been a good deal of land surveyed for settlement in the South-West. Mainly in the Nelson district a number of blocks were surveyed from 1910 to 1912, the number totalling 2,276 blocks, containing 572,476 acres. The approximate cost of the survey was £30,000. With all that land already surveyed, would I be justified in sending out surveyors to survey further land? The statement which I gave to the Press when I returned with the Minister for Industries 18 months ago from an inspection of the South-West was a clear exposition of the impressions I gained during the trip. The Minister for Industries went with me, not as Minister for Industries, but as Minister for Forests, because I wanted to be quite sure that we would not be blocked in our land settlement in the South-West by any action of the Forestry Department. I admit that the timbers of the South-West require to be conserved, but I hold that people are of more value than trees. Still, there is no reason for destroying this valuable timber. The time will come when the timber will have been all used up, and then the land now occupied by the timber may be occupied by the settler. It is impossible to put men on the blocks that have been surveyed, because in the majority of cases the land is not suitable. I do not want any repetition of that expenditure. The country is not in a position to go in for extravagant expenditure unless some profitable result can be seen. I decided that the proper way to settle the South-West was to follow the contour of the creeks, to survey the blocks off the creeks, thus giving the settler a certain area of good land with an assurance of water, together with a certain area of inferior land lying behind. The survey work that has been done down there is of no value except from a departmental point of view as showing the character of the country. Apart from that, those blocks are absolutely useless.

Hon. P. Collier: When were those blocks surveyed?

The PREMIER: In 1910 and 1912. In my opinion, the way I propose is a sane way of tackling the question. The country should not be taken on a face by the surveyor; there should be with the surveyor some practical man with experience of land settlement to show the surveyor where to run his lines. That is the system I have adopted. I have already surveyed within a reasonable distance of Big Brook 100 blocks of from 100 to 160 acres, which are all quite suitable for land settlement. When the time comes those blocks can be cleared. We cannot proceed any further with that work at present, because we have been stopped by the wet weather. It is im-

possible to do much survey work in that country in winter time. The surveyors cannot get what they require, because it is raining nearly all the time, and the country is in a state of bog. Consequently I stopped the work until, under more favourable weather conditions, the surveyors can get on with it.

Mr. Johnston: Are they going back then?

The PREMIER: Certainly, as soon as the weather suits.

Hon. P. Collier: When the weather breaks.

The PREMIER: Then we shall have a system of settlement which we shall be able to carry out. To say that we should spend £250,000 in six months clearing land and building houses for the men is absurd. The cleared land quickly grows up and, moreover, if we build a house and leave it unoccupied for any time, it may be burnt down. The South-West is a country of great possibilities and is going to be the home of a large number of people. But the settlement of the land will have to go hand in hand with the timber industry. The timber industry down there has really created the settlement which has taken place during the last few years.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Harvey is the place we want to know about.

The PREMIER: The hon. member said nothing whatever about the wheat areas, but confined himself to the South-West where, he said, I have broken faith with somebody, I do not know with whom, because I have not built houses, cleared land and erected fences. Fancy erecting fences at the present time without being quite certain that people are going to settle on the land! Wire is five times as costly as it was a few years ago.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The money is available for that purpose.

The PREMIER: Although the money is available I am not prepared to put up fences at five times the cost of a few years ago, when I think it is a much saner policy to wait until I have the people to settle on the land. It will be quite time enough when we have the men in sight. The hon. member informed the House that he could settle 4,000 men in a year.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No, I said that in all 4,000 blocks were sold.

The PREMIER: How many in a year? The hon. member was going to settle an enormous number of men in a year. How can we expect to get men to settle on our lands at the present time? Every eligible man has gone to the Front, and those who have returned and been discharged are men physically unfit. They are not fit for the rough work of pioneering in a country like the South-West. These men have been discharged because they are not able to go to the Front again. The military authorities would not have discharged them if they had been fit to go back to the Front. The time will come when we shall have a large number of men returning who are fit for the work, and we shall then be prepared for those men as they return.

Hon. P. Collier: One-fifth of the total number who left the State to go to the Front are already back.

The PREMIER: Yes, 30,000 men went to the Front and about 6,000 have returned. How many of those men have applied for land? Something like 709 inquiries have been made by men desiring to settle on the land. Of those, 156 have been suitably assisted or placed. We have done just as well in Western Australia as has been done in any other Australian State. And we have done that without having to repurchase one acre of land. In the Eastern States they are spending hundreds of thousands of pounds in the repurchase of land.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We have no occasion to repurchase land, for we have hundreds of thousands of acres of our own.

The PREMIER: Of that 709, about 190 already held land, and the Government are assisting them on their holdings. Some 60 men made casual inquiries into the scheme, and have not been heard of since.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Some went to Harvey but could not get satisfaction, and in consequence they have turned their attention to other avocations.

The PREMIER: Of the balance only 160 have qualified. It shows how few of those men are really qualified to go in for pioneering work on the land. I know of returned soldiers who went on the land but had to leave it because they found they could not stand the work that had to be done.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): And that was not on virgin land, either.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They should not be required to take virgin land.

The PREMIER: The number really waiting to go on the land is comparatively few, and those men always want improved holdings. They do not want to go on land where they will have to do all the work themselves, but want improved holdings.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How many suitable improved holdings have you got for them?

The PREMIER: Not a great number, except on our repurchased estates. Would the hon. member suggest that we should go out and clear country for them?

Mr. Lutey: Certainly.

The PREMIER: And then have it all growing up again afterwards.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Have Denmark over again.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You got the sack; you keep quiet.

The PREMIER: The hon. member said we should make use of the men who have returned. We do not want to make use of the men who have returned. I do not want to encourage men to go on the land unless they desire to go there. I think the majority of the men who come seeking land at the Lands Department are without experience of land settlement. If they were accustomed to the work, it would be totally different. They have been led to believe that the land settlement scheme is going to carry them straight-away to a place of bliss where they can be happy ever after.

Mr. Lambert: Who led them to believe it?

Mr. O'Loughlen: They have been reading the Premier's speeches.

The PREMIER: I have not led them to believe it. If those men were physically fitted to go on the land, there is no better life for them. If I had to commence life again, I would go on the land, because I feel that the man on the land is doing something which is of benefit, not only to himself but to the country also. The hon. member says, "Make it easier to get the land." It is easy to get land if people are prepared to take it, and wait for it to be cleared for them, or if they are prepared to help in the work of clearing, which they will not do. The hon. member also says, "Prepare for the home coming." That is what we are doing. The hon. member would like us to put up two or three thousand buildings, clear as many hundreds of thousand acres of land, and leave it all ready for the men to go on to when they return.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It is ridiculous to talk like that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows that it will have to be cleared for them. He expects us to clear the land now, and have it ready for them when they come back some time or other. We do not know when they will come back, though we hope it will not be long.

The Colonial Treasurer: If the war ended in 12 months it would be another two years before all our men came back.

The PREMIER: I do not think anyone would say that it was good policy to do all this work before we knew when our men were coming back, and before we knew how many were likely to settle on the land. The hon. member says that our soldiers must be given an opportunity to work. The only work we can give them an opportunity of engaging in is the work of clearing the land for their own holdings. When the able bodied men come back I think we might then settle on some scheme for a bona fide, sane, land settlement, whereby these men would be able to obtain employment, and clear some of their own holdings, and at the same time make themselves qualified to settle on the land. Although we have an enormous tract of country in Western Australia I am firmly of the opinion that more should be done with the land that is already held along our railway system. We have built railways here and there throughout the State that will last for many years to come. We should, therefore, adopt some policy in regard to the settlement on those lands which are in the vicinity of existing railways. Our railways are not paying at the present time, but if we get more people on the land in the vicinity of these, we shall be adopting a policy which will not only be of benefit to the country by increasing production, but also a benefit by increasing the revenue of our railway system.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are the Government prepared to adopt such a policy?

The PREMIER: Yes. I propose to inaugurate a scheme whereby the Government will be able to acquire land at a reasonable price, adjacent to our railway system, and whereby it will be made compulsory that sales should be made if the land is not offered at the free will of the owners.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is admitting that we require to repurchase.

The PREMIER: I do admit now that there is a large amount of land held in areas that are too large in extent along our present railway system, and if a great deal of that country was disposed of it would not only be better for the people themselves, but for the State, as I have already shown.

Mr. Pickering: How would that apply to the Midland lands?

The PREMIER: Most of the good land along the Midland railway has already been disposed of. Some of the members would force this by taxation, but I do not propose to do so.

Mr. Lutley: It will never be done in any other way.

The PREMIER: In all the other States they have compulsory purchase clauses in their soldier settlement schemes. A clause such as this might be introduced into our measure to enable the State to secure land in this way. I am certain that this would be better for the individuals concerned.

Mr. Lambert: Are you going to buy them out on the speculative value of the lands?

The PREMIER: There is no likelihood of my being a party to paying a speculative price for land. We have in the Lands Department piles and piles of applications for the sale of land.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Every one wants to sell.

Hon. P. Collier: And they are all actuated by patriotic motives.

The PREMIER: That is so. People do not want to part with their land, but say they are anxious to do something for the returned soldiers. The Government have not purchased any of these estates, because the time has not arrived for them to do so. It would pay the country better to secure some of the land in the South-West which is already partly cleared, than to clear virgin land of this enormous timber.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Will that increase production by much?

The PREMIER: Certainly.

Hon. J. Mitchell: There is a lot of ring-barked country there which can be bought up cheaply.

The PREMIER: Much of this land in the vicinity of our railways can be purchased at a reasonable price of from £2 to £3 an acre, and it would be better to purchase such land than to clear virgin country at from £10 to £20 an acre.

Hon. J. Mitchell: We agreed on that two years ago.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You are not obliged to buy land at all. You should withdraw your Agent General. He is on a false mission.

The PREMIER: I say that this is a sound proposition. Such land as I have mentioned will have been sweetened, and will be in a proper condition for settlement at once. On the other hand if we go on to virgin country, it will take years for it to sweeten and for the settlers to grow anything upon it. Furthermore, on the areas of which I speak the grasses have already grown for stock purposes.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I do not know of any people holding sweetened land adjoining the railways who are prepared to sell it for £2 or £3 an acre.

The PREMIER: I know of some. At any rate, I am not here to answer questions. Question time is over. I am merely replying to the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), who has moved a vote of censure upon the Government for their lack of extravagance in spending money at the present time in building railways, and in clearing land when we have not the men ready to go on the land. He certainly said that we should build a railway for the purpose of coupling up Mamjimup with Noranup.

The Minister for Mines: He would put men there without railway communication.

The PREMIER: I want to satisfy the House that the work of the Government up to the present has been adequate. We have only a few men now who are seeking settlement on the land, whom we have not been able to place. I think that is a clear answer to the hon. member, that we have been doing something in regard to the settlement of these men. All these men want land that is partially improved, but it is impossible just now to put them on land of that description, unless we purchase estates in the neighbourhood of our railways. I am fully aware of all that took place at the Premiers' Conference. We are in a different position now to that in which we were then. We never dreamt that this war would go on for such a long time. It was stated that we would be able to absorb a certain number of men when they came here. We are still in a position to absorb them when they come here.

Mr. Jones: Can you absorb 25,000?

The PREMIER: I think it was stated that we could absorb 25,000 from the Old Country. Things have altered considerably since then. The British Government are adopting a different policy now. Mr. Lloyd George himself has repeatedly stated that in future they will have to be most careful to keep their men in their own country. To say that the Government are doing nothing to prepare for these men is, I think, absolutely ridiculous. The Minister for Industries has been twitted in regard to the establishment of secondary industries in Western Australia. Nothing could be better than to get these industries established. They will absorb many of those men who are unable to go on the land, or who do not desire to do so. I do not believe that ten per cent. of the men who return from the Front will want to go on the land. We shall, therefore, be prepared to receive these men, and every assistance will be given to them to engage in that work in which they most desire to engage. At the same time, I am not prepared in the present condition of the finances to spend money extravagantly in doing work if there is no immediate prospect of getting a return from it. It is perhaps well to point out that the repatriation of our men, that is placing them in suitable occupations when they return, is entirely the function of the Federal Government. I am of course speaking generally. The Federal Government have a Repatriation Department, with a Minister controlling it. The department deal entirely with the repatriation of soldiers in all work except that of settlement on the land, with which the Federal Government have nothing whatever to do. The

Federal Government deal entirely with the matter of settling returned men in industries. A board has been appointed here to deal with repatriation, and sub-committees have been appointed throughout Western Australia. The Federal Government intend to do everything they possibly can to see that returned men are suitably settled in the civil life of Australia when they return. At the same time, the State and the Government of Western Australia are anxious to assist wherever they possibly can in the settlement of our returned soldiers in any direction. With that object in view, we aim at establishing in this State industries which may, as time goes on, absorb a great many of the returned men. To me that appears a sound policy. We have our primary industries, and alongside them we should have secondary industries also. The only matter with which the hon. member for Northam has really charged the Government is that during the last 18 months, or two years, they have done nothing to carry out the scheme formulated by the hon. member himself.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The scheme of the Federal Government.

The PREMIER: That was the hon. member's scheme. Before he went to Melbourne, the hon. member handed this scheme to the Premier of that day.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No; I did not.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Cabinet approved of that scheme.

The PREMIER: We need not trouble as to whether Cabinet approved of it or not.

Hon. J. Mitchell: May I be permitted to correct the Premier? I prepared a scheme and—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in interrupting.

The PREMIER: After the hon. member returned from Melbourne—

Hon. J. Mitchell: You posted the scheme to the Premier in Melbourne.

The PREMIER: How could I have posted it to the Premier in Melbourne if the hon. member prepared it only after he came back from Melbourne?

Hon. J. Mitchell: I returned much earlier than the then Premier. I returned in December, and you sent the scheme over to Melbourne early in January.

The PREMIER: The hon. member prepared the scheme.

Hon. J. Mitchell: And you sent it over.

The PREMIER: I sent it over, but it was a scheme drawn up by the hon. member, who was Minister for Industries. As Minister for Industries, the hon. member was given the duty of formulating a scheme for the settlement of returned soldiers on the land. The Lands Department were merely to find the land; the hon. member was to do all the other work.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But you submitted the scheme, and you drafted a scheme yourself.

The PREMIER: My scheme had nothing to do with that. The scheme which the hon. member charges me with having formulated—

Hon. J. Mitchell: I have not charged you.

The PREMIER: That scheme is the one which was formulated by the hon. member himself.

Hon. J. Mitchell: And adopted by you, and by you sent over to the Premier in Melbourne.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has now admitted that he formulated that scheme in December, upon his return, and that it was sent to Melbourne in January.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I said that in speaking.

The PREMIER: The hon. member was entrusted with the duty of formulating the scheme.

Hon. P. Collier: That is so; but the scheme was approved by Cabinet.

The PREMIER: I really do not know whether it was or was not approved by Cabinet.

The Minister for Works: It is not the Wilson Government who are being tried now, but the Lefroy Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There are four members of the Wilson Government in the Lefroy Cabinet now.

Hon. P. Collier: Has not the Minister for Works been in both these Governments?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: Then take your gruel.

The PREMIER: The position I take up is that the Government would not have been justified in carrying out that scheme.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But you yourself sent the scheme over to Melbourne.

The PREMIER: The scheme might have been all right then. It might have been justifiable then, and not justifiable at a future date. It certainly was not justified.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: In that case, why did you approve of it?

Hon. P. Collier: Did the Minister for Works himself directly approve of it?

The PREMIER: I do not know. But I do know that the Government would not have been justified in carrying out such a scheme, justified in entering upon a huge expenditure of £250,000 in six months.

Hon. P. Collier: Have you now reached the stage of condemning your own scheme? The present Premier was a party to that scheme, and now he is arguing that it was an absurd scheme. That is the position.

The PREMIER: I am referring to the scheme formulated by the member for Northam. We need not mind whether it was or was not adopted by me. It was sent over to Melbourne by me at the request of the member for Northam. The hon. member knows full well that the Government could not have carried out that scheme, providing for the expenditure of £250,000 in six months in clearing land and building houses.

Hon. P. Collier: Did not that occur to the present Premier at the time?

The PREMIER: I submit that proposition to the House. When the duty was entrusted to myself I came to the conclusion that to carry out the scheme was impossible.

Hon. P. Collier: In fact, the scheme was absurd?

The PREMIER: I am quite certain that the House is entirely with me in the position that I took up in this matter. We had not the men to go on the land when it was cleared.

Hon. P. Collier: And yet you adopted the scheme?

The PREMIER: Let us not trouble about that. That has nothing to do with the question. I think it well that I should point out to the House what the Government do propose at the present time to do. The charges levelled by the member for Northam have been completely shattered. The House must recognise, I think, that it would have been futile for the Government to spend the money which the hon. member states should have been spent in doing on the land work which would have been absolutely of no immediate use, of no use until the men return. I have informed the House that the repatriation of our soldiers and sailors has been engaging the attention of both the Commonwealth and the State Governments for some considerable time. It is a matter that has, perhaps, caused more discussion and more criticism than any other matter which has been brought before the Governments of Australia during recent years. We are all anxious that everything possible should be done for the returned soldiers. But, at the same time, I am anxious to see that these men are put into work for which they are suitable; and I do not wish to encourage men to engage in work which afterwards they will be sorry to have engaged in. Realising that settlement on the land must be one of the main planks, if not absolutely the main plank, in a sound repatriation policy, the State Government have perhaps given more consideration to that aspect of the question than to any other of its aspects, and have endeavoured to formulate a scheme on sound lines having in view the interests of the State. It is a scheme which I have formulated, and which I believe will meet with the approval of the House. It was decided that new selection was to be the basis of the scheme, and that operations be confined to Crown lands as far as possible.

Mr. Troy: What are you reading from now?

The PREMIER: I am quoting from my own proposals.

Hon. P. Collier: New proposals?

The PREMIER: Yes. This is what has been done; not what is being done, but what we have been engaged for some time past in doing. A board consisting of representatives of the various Government departments was appointed, its duty being to select areas for subdivision, to decide as to the suitability of the holdings for their particular purpose, according to locality, and generally to recommend what land should be made available for settlement. One of the first duties undertaken by the board was to take stock of the Crown lands within nine miles of existing railways, which could be accepted as being suitable for the settlement of returned soldiers. In my opinion we should not settle returned soldiers more than nine miles from existing railways. We see now that it is unprofitable for a man to settle on land more than 12½ miles from an existing railway. If it is unprofitable for a man to settle at a greater distance than 12½ miles from railways at the present time, it is better to keep our returned soldiers well inside that distance. Consequently, I make the maximum distance nine miles from existing railways.



Hon. P. Collier: Is that the policy which was outlined at the time of Mr. Camm's appointment?

The PREMIER: No.

Hon. P. Collier: Was it formulated before Mr. Camm's appointment, or after?

The PREMIER: This is the policy we have been formulating for some time past.

Hon. P. Collier: But the time the board consisting of officials were appointed would be about the time Mr. Camm was appointed, would it not?

The PREMIER: Yes. Mr. Camm was in the Department when this scheme was formulated.

Hon. P. Collier: But was he not appointed to take charge of the scheme?

The PREMIER: Yes. The results of the board's investigations proved most disappointing. The board reported that, after exhaustive inquiry, they found that very few blocks indeed were available in either the wheat belt or the South-West. That is to say, blocks already surveyed within nine miles of our railways. Since that time 150 men have, as already stated by me, been placed on holdings mostly in the wheat belt, and it is doubtful whether it would be possible to find more than 50 suitable blocks in this area at the present time.

Hon. P. Collier: Does that mean the whole of the wheat belt?

The PREMIER: Within nine miles of existing railways.

Hon. P. Collier: But that is not taking into account the blocks held by the Agricultural Bank?

The PREMIER: No. Outside the doubtful areas to which I would not encourage men to go, there are large tracts of country surveyed over 12½ miles from the existing railway system. Although those blocks may be within the rainfall area, I would not encourage returned men to go on them. I do not think it would be fair to do so.

Mr. Troy: What are you going to do with those blocks alongside the railways, alongside the Wongan Hills railway, south of Mullewa, for instance?

The PREMIER: Those blocks are very doubtful country for farming.

Mr. Troy: Then why put men on that country?

The PREMIER: I do not think any of our returned soldiers would care to go there. The theory that the returned men should be settled on Crown lands is undoubtedly sound; but experience has proved that to a large extent this is impracticable, for the following reasons: It is found that returned men are more or less incapacitated from doing hard work, and are quite unfit to tackle virgin country. Moreover, the men themselves almost unanimously demand improved holdings, as already stated. I have tried to emphasise that the Government do not favour the settlement of returned men on the heavily timbered country of the South-West, Ministers being of opinion that the pioneering difficulties are too great. However, the time will come when we shall have our able-bodied men back here, and those able-bodied men will be better qualified

to deal with this land than are the men returning at the present time. It is impossible to expect that the soldiers coming back now discharged, who are physically unfit for this heavy pioneering work, should settle in the virgin forest country of the South-West. However, I am quite certain the time will come when we shall have returned soldiers able to tackle that country; and when they are ready to do so I am quite sure that the Government of the day, whoever they may be, will be willing and able to help such men to acquire the land they want. The charge of the member for Northam, that the work of the Government in the matter of repatriation is inadequate, is, I think, perfectly unjustifiable and absolutely without foundation, because the Government have done everything they possibly could do for the men who have returned to Western Australia up to the present time. The only charge the hon. member makes against the Government is that the Government are not now clearing large tracts of country, putting up buildings, and fencing the land ready for settlement.

Hon. J. Mitchell: There are many wanting land then?

The PREMIER: There are only about 60 men who have inquired for land who are waiting; a great many have gone away; they do not desire to go on the land at all. None of the men are prepared to go on the land in its virgin state. How can you settle men on uncleared land if they are not going to clear it? We will find the land for them. The Government have now 100 acres cleared in the South-West alongside some of the brooks, and it is our intention to see that some clearing is done on that country as soon as we are in a position to clear it. But this work cannot be done in winter time. The Government are prepared to enter on the work of clearing portion of the land and preparing it for settlement. And that work will be entered on as soon as the opportunity of doing so presents itself. At the same time we could not go into the country and take a lot of the blocks which have already become vacant and start clearing operations on them, because they are not in a suitable position for doing so. It has to be remembered that although we have £500 allotted in this State for the settlement of each man on the land, that £500 is only for the work of improvement and for the work of supplying men with plant. That £500 will not be sufficient, and the Government intend to supplement the amount to assist soldier settlers where it is found that the £500 is not sufficient.

Mr. Johnston: Any limit?

The PREMIER: The Government will have to be perfectly sure there is ample security for the money that is expended, and a great deal will depend on the character of the men themselves, and the work on which they are engaged.

Mr. Lambert: What will the Government do for the soldiers already possessing land, returned farmers?

The PREMIER: We are helping these men. Every returned farmer has already been assisted on the land. I recognise, and every hon.

member recognises, that everything that possibly can be done is being done for the returned men. I am sorry this has been made a party question by the member for Northam. What motive could he have for making this motion a party question? It could have been moved in a different way. The hon. member could have moved it as an ordinary motion, but it is tacked on to the Address-in-reply as an amendment. Why does the hon. member do that? To make it a vote of censure on the Government. What motive actuated the hon. member? It is not for me to say.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I have already told the House.

The PREMIER: I think I have answered fully the complaints the hon. member has made, and the charges he has levelled against the Government, of not having spent a large amount of money in preparing land for men who are not in sight at the present moment. I think the House agrees that the policy adopted is the right policy, and the proper policy under the present circumstances. What motives have actuated the hon. member? It is difficult for me to say. The hon. member spent the greater part of his time, nearly the whole of the time he was speaking, to what he had done when he was in the Government. Only about three minutes of the hon. member's time was devoted to what the Government were doing at the present time.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I do not know what they are doing.

The PREMIER: I have already told the House what we are doing. I have already told the House what we are prepared to do in the future. We have the repurchased estates that have been lying on the hands of the Government for some years, and I have always felt that these fine tracts of country should be utilised for returned soldiers only. For that purpose the Yandanooka estate has already been cut up and already a number of men are settled on the land and beginning to work. The land has already been surveyed, and nearly all has been allotted. But there is a difficulty about Yandanooka. It is not a property well supplied with water, consequently the Government have had to put down tanks in various places to supply the different holdings with water. The Yandanooka estate will settle a considerable number of men, and it is alongside a railway with all the conveniences available for making it a success. But it is not right to suppose that every man will make a farmer. Besides, because a man has been at the front that is no reason why he should be expected to engage in the work of farming. There are very few who will find it congenial to their temperaments. Everything is being done and will be done to supply these men with land when they require it. I had to take this motion as one of want of confidence in the Government, as the hon. member moved it as such. If the hon. member did not intend it as a motion of want of confidence he could have moved it in another form.

Mr. O'Loughlin: You are not making a party question of it?

The PREMIER: It is for the House to say whether the Government policy of land settlement is to be the future policy of this coun-

try, or whether the hon. member's policy is to be the land policy of the future. The member for Northam is desirous of having control of the land policy of the State. It is for members to judge whether the hon. member should have control of the land policy or not. I say the hon. member must be actuated by some ulterior motive of which possibly we are not aware. I do not know what that motive is. The hon. member seems to voice the views that have been expressed in the morning Press of the State for the last 18 months, and the hon. member is probably backing up those views. The question which the House has to decide is whether the destinies of this country are to be entrusted to the member for Northam and the morning Press which he represents, or whether they are to be entrusted to myself and the Government of the day. I can assure the House that the Government of the day and myself are desirous of doing everything we can, and are doing everything we can, in the interests of the returned men. I am confident of this, if members speak to the motion they will be able to inform the House whether the Government have assisted men in settling on the lands of the country. It is now for the House to decide whether they have faith in the capacity of the present Government to carry on the work of the country, or whether they will entrust it to the member for Northam. I have learned before to hear the words I have uttered twisted by knaves to be made the sport of fools. I have learned that, and there is no doubt the words I have spoken in the past have been twisted by others to make the sport of those who like to believe them. Those are my views with regard to the matter, and I trust the House will say conclusively at the present time what their feelings are, and what their views are with regard to the Government of the day. I do not want to carry on the government of the country for a moment if members do not consider that I am fitted, with the gentlemen alongside of me, to be entrusted with the destinies of the State.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [8.40]: I feel that this matter is not one for party politics or bickerings or personalities in this House. The question, to my mind, becomes somewhat simple if looked at alone, but if mixed up with things that happened 12 months or 18 months ago we get into a turmoil and we hardly know what is before the House. I understand the motion of the member for Northam is that the proposals of the Government are inadequate. I have been waiting to hear the counter proposals which might appear better. To my mind there is one question before the House: which is going to be best for the returned soldiers, improved land or unimproved land? I mean virgin country in the South-West, which takes at least five years before a man can get a living off it. It must be ringbarked for a certain period before it becomes sweetened, and to my mind the idea of the soldiers having the advantage of railway communication and repurchasing partially improved estates is much more to their interests than being placed on land removed from railway communication, and virgin country. I am satisfied of this, that it often takes until the third generation before

a good living can be obtained from the land. It is not the man who goes on the land in the first instance who obtains the benefit, and not often his son, but his grandson. Returned soldiers are not able and should not be asked to do the pioneering work in Western Australia. The best will not be too good for them. The least we can give them are facilities to go on partially improved land which has already railway communication, to give them an opportunity of obtaining decent land in return for what they have done for us in the past. Therefore we should analyse the proposals before the House. I say it is a question of what is best for the returned soldiers, improved land with railway communication, or virgin country without railway communication. The utilisation of improved lands next to the railways will have my support. I read the proposal as follows—Already the improved lands in the possession of the Government are being made available for returned soldiers, but it is felt that it would be necessary to acquire further partly improved properties in the vicinity of railway lines, a policy which, if wisely followed, will have the effect of bringing a good deal of land into full production. I entirely agree with that proposal in the interests, not only of returned soldiers, but in the interests of the State. We are suffering to-day from too much railway mileage and too few receipts, and if our railways are ever going to pay we must have the land which is available alongside those railways brought into a state of production. In that way we may see our railways become a source of revenue for the State.

Mr. Lambert: How do you propose to bring the land into a state of production?

Mr. MONEY: The Government intend to introduce a Bill to bring that about and it will then be the responsibility of every member of Parliament if the provisions contained in that Bill are not adequate. I would ask the Premier to give us an undertaking that one of the first measures to be submitted after the Address-in-reply has been disposed of will be the Bill to deal with these lands.

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. MONEY: When the measure is before the House, it will be our duty to give it our sole attention and see that it goes through.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are very innocent. Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne—on amendment) [8.50]: I purpose taking the opportunity presented by the amendment moved by the member for Northam to bring before the House the advisability of initiating repatriation schemes in the North-West of the State. We should look on this phase of the question from the point of view of statesmen rather than of parochial politicians. We all know that the war which was launched by militarism four years ago has completely upset the normal conditions which existed. Huge armies have been created, armies which are fighting in different parts of the world, and when the war is over, there will still be militarism in existence everywhere. Therefore, when any question of settlement of this description is to be initiated in Australia, there should be considered which portion of the Continent more than any other requires the settlement of men

accustomed to the use of military weapons. I would ask hon. members to call to their minds the map of Australia, and to think how its relationship to other lands close to our shores is affected. Hon. members will agree with me that there is no part of Australia so closely adjacent to foreign lands as the North-West portion of this State. Within two days sail of our Northern ports, we have huge islands teeming with millions of aliens who, every day, are becoming more civilised and familiar with the use of arms. Anyone looking at this question from the point of view of a statesman must realise the necessity which exists for populating, especially with people like our returned soldiers, that portion of the Commonwealth. It is the only sure defence we are likely to have against aggression. Not only should the House realise the importance of the position but we should endeavour to press the question under the notice of the Commonwealth Government. In the North-West of our State we have a territory equal in area to the whole of Queensland. It stretches from Geraldton to Cape Londonderry, and that may be said to be equal to the distance from Brisbane to Cape York. In this area we have a population of only 6,000 people, whilst the population of Queensland is 680,000, and Queensland is doing its utmost to develop its resources. Mr. Ryan, the Premier of Queensland, when visiting this State a little while back lost no opportunity of advertising the possibilities of Queensland and urging men to go there, and I do not blame him for his attitude. There is another phase of the question that I would bring under notice, and it is that the North-West of our State has sent over 1,000 men to the Front, amongst them being some of the finest type of manhood who have ever left the shores of Australia. Most of those men went with the mounted infantry.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Every district makes that claim.

Mr. ANGELO: We can prove it by figures. Cannot hon. members see the right we have to claim attention in connection with repatriation schemes which may be formulated? No opportunity should be lost to settle our returned soldiers and we should induce as many ex-service men as possible to come to our shores. I am afraid, however, that the present Government in considering the repatriation question might be compared with the new lamps on motor vehicles. We find on those lamps there is a line of demarcation; the lower part of the lamp throws the full force of the light on the road, while the upper portion is dimmed. The present Government on the question of repatriation can only see brightly like the lamp of the motor, that is to say, from Geraldton downwards, while so far as northward of Geraldton is concerned their eyes turning upwards are dimmed. It has been said several times that it is all very well to criticise but that we should advance some scheme and do some constructive work. I am going to advance two schemes and I will be able to prove to hon. members that there is a good opportunity to do something practicable for returned men. So far as Gascoyne is con-

cerned, the scheme I intend to suggest is one in which even men who have lost an arm can make a living. I am not advancing this scheme as my own. I intend to bring under the notice of the House the opinions of four experts who were sent to the North-West to report on the possibilities of the Gascoyne. In 1911 Mr. Despeissis who had been appointed Commissioner for Tropical Agriculture went through the North-West, and the result of his investigations was the publication of a pamphlet, a copy of which I have here. The pamphlet was one of the most readable and instructive ever issued by the Government. Mr. Despeissis strongly advocated settlement of the Gascoyne district and there is an appendix to this pamphlet to which I would draw attention. He mentions in the appendix the tropical products imported to the State in 1910, products which were capable of being grown in the North-West of Western Australia. The value in that year of those imported tropical products was £887,029, and the value of tropical products imported into the Commonwealth for the same year was £4,382,000. When hon. members ask what we intend to grow up there, I reply that Mr. Despeissis gives the answer.

Hon. P. Collier: And I do not think he included bananas.

Mr. ANGELO: He only credited us with £5,000 worth of imported bananas, whereas the value of imported bananas was £30,000 last year, every one of which could have been grown in the North-West. Then Mr. Crawford paid a visit to the North-West. He was sent up in 1912 by the Minister for Lands in the late Labour Government. Mr. Crawford also made a strong recommendation. He considered that dairy farming could be carried on in the Gascoyne district as well as anywhere throughout Australia. Then followed Mr. Moody last year. This officer wrote a long report, and I will read one or two extracts from it. He wrote—

To say that I am pleased with my visit is to put it mildly. I am more than that and had no idea of the place, quality, and extent of the country along this river and the possibilities for intense cultivation. I had no idea that such splendid country existed in the State. The land is similar to that along the River Murray which is utilised for the numerous irrigation settlements in Victoria, and the huge Yanco scheme in New South Wales. In my opinion here the soil is of a higher quality and more suitable for irrigation. It is far ahead of the Yanco area in quality and suitability for intense culture. The water also is of good quality, being pure and sweet. I am satisfied it is a white man's country and only regret that I have been in the State six years without seeing the Gascoyne before. I wish to state that I know of no better soil conditions in the whole of Australia, and believe that sufficient of the abundant water now running to waste can be conserved for the purpose of settling a large community.

Hon. P. Collier: Does not the hon. member know that that report earned Moody the sack?

Mr. ANGELO: It appears to me that anyone who reports well of the North-West gets the sack.

Hon. P. Collier: The North-West has been fatal for public servants. All who have reported on it have had the sack.

Mr. ANGELO: His concluding paragraph, which should please the leader of the Opposition, reads as follows—

I wish to remark that the bananas growing there are the best I have ever tasted, including those from Queensland and the Northern rivers of New South Wales.

Mr. Scott, the irrigationist, in whom the department has the utmost confidence, after visiting the Gascoyne the other day, wrote as follows—

I am most enthusiastic as to the possibilities of this portion of the State.

I wrote to the Government some time ago, and since then a file about four inches thick has been built up. I thought everything was going right. Then, presently, the Under Secretary suggested that the question should be deferred for 12 months. I stirred things up again, and eventually they finalised the thing by suggesting that two returned soldiers should be given £500 each and sent up there. They are going to settle those men up there to prove the possibilities of irrigation, all on their own. It would be better if they sent up one man and his wife, for apples will not grow there and so there would not be much chance of temptation. The last thing they did was to send Mr. Surveyor Pitt to Carnarvon to get samples of the soil. They allowed him ten guineas for the purpose. What is the use of sending a man to get what they had already got?

The Premier: When was that done?

Mr. ANGELO: Mr. Pitt is still up there. He sent down the samples six weeks ago. Here, in Mr. Despeissis' pamphlet, is all possible information as to the analyses of the soil. I think the officer responsible for the expenditure of that ten guineas ought to be made to pay it. He could not have read the file. I suggest that 2,000 acres of land should be selected for settlement. Mr. Moody says that it will cost only 15s. per acre to clear and grade. It is all Government land, so there will be no question of repurchasing. There is the land, and there is the water. The water merely requires pumping, and we shall have one common irrigation scheme established over the whole area. Then the Government should plough and plant the lot, and by that time it will be found that the proposition has cost, say, £30 per acre with water provided, ploughed and planted. It could then be subdivided into ten acre lots, for ten acres will be ample for the upkeep of a man and his family. He could then be debited with the cost, and would have some £200 to keep him going for a couple of years. He could grow all the vegetables required.

Hon. P. Collier: A real Arcadian existence.

Mr. ANGELO: The Government say, "Why do you not give us figures as to what you have done." Well, my brother and I have 20 acres under irrigation and we employ eight men. According to my taxation return our receipts were £1,338 and our expenditure £863, leaving a profit of £475, for last year we wrote off £135, making £610 in all for 12 months.

The Minister for Works: What wages do you pay your men?

Mr. ANGELO: The usual wages.

Mr. Green: Are they white men?

Mr. ANGELO: Well, besides white men we have a couple of old Cingalese, but we should be very glad to get rid of the latter if you could send us white men to take their places. We are working under the most primitive conditions, because we have had no encouragement or advice from the Government. They have never sent up a man to show us how to do the work. That is the secret of our comparative want of success. We have been trying to do the experimental work for the Government at our own expense. Again, if we are going to settle a lot of men on areas such as Nornalup, it will cost a lot for inspection and supervision, and an army of inspectors will be required, whereas under my scheme one inspector could attend to the whole settlement. A great saving would be made in this one phase of the question alone. Further, in a scheme such as the one I am advocating, barracks could be built to accommodate 30 or 40 bachelors, and married men's quarters also could be built. This would effect a great saving in building material and time in cooking and such other things. A question has been raised about the climate of the North-West. The Honorary Minister for the North-West and the Honorary Minister for Lands both know the Gascoyne, as does also the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy). It has one of the finest climates in the world. It is on the same latitude as Brisbane, a beautiful city of 168,000 inhabitants.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): The climate in Carnarvon is better than that of Brisbane.

Mr. ANGELO: Of course it is. Can the putting of a lot of returned soldiers suffering from shell shock amid the depressing conditions of huge timber and wet souden country compare with a scheme for putting them into the brighter conditions of the North-West? There is no healthier place in the State. No germs are to be found up there.

Mr. Lambert: No self respecting germ would live there.

Mr. ANGELO: It has been said that it means driving people away from all classes of amusement. Nothing could be more erroneous, for when a man has done his week's work he can find up there the best fishing or shooting in Western Australia. To a returned soldier the conditions of life would be far more beneficial than those down south in the timber areas. Not only that, but with the land once ploughed and planted even an injured man could look after his holding himself, because all that he would require to do would be a little weeding and diverting water on to his crops. The Government say they want more data, and that it would be a very expensive proposition. It was suggested that to settle 100 men up there would cost £40,000. Last week the Honorary Minister promised to get an estimate from the Works Department as to the cost. Needless to say, the estimate is still coming. However, I saw Mr. Dunckerley, a practical man, the other day, and on the following morning he made me an offer to do the

whole of the work necessary for providing water for the scheme for the sum of £9,171, the work to be completed in 12 weeks. That would run into about £9 per acre to provide the scheme with water. Mr. Dunckerley to supply the pumping plant, erect the reservoir and put down the necessary well in the Gascoyne River. The House should insist upon the Government giving that scheme immediate attention. Another scheme that I would suggest is the settlement of a portion of the Kimberley country which at present is populated by only the natives. The red line on this map shows the fringe of country taken up for pastoral purposes. The whole of this coast line, with its hinterland, is untouched. On this coast-line we have some of the finest harbours the State can boast of, such as Admiralty Gulf, York Sound, Brunswick Bay, Napier Bay, and last, but not least, Collier Bay.

Hon. P. Collier: Some of my pioneering ancestors got up there.

Mr. ANGELO: They showed their good sense. I had a talk with Mr. Canning about this area, and he reminded me that Mr. Brockman had reported that in one portion of it there are 10 million acres of splendid country, well grassed and watered.

Hon. P. Collier: Does not the hon. member know that one can get from the Lands Department a report on anything on earth.

Mr. ANGELO: Mr. Brockman says that this country is capable of carrying a beast to every 30 or 40 acres. I asked Mr. Canning for his own opinion on it, and he said that it is the finest pastoral land available for stocking in the whole of Australia.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the hon. member endeavouring to prove?

Mr. ANGELO: That the Government, in their repatriation scheme, have left out the most important part of the State.

Mr. Lambert: But they are not settling Cingalese just now.

Mr. ANGELO: They are not Cingalese in that particular part of the country, but only our own aborigines. That is the trouble. The Bovril company took up this huge piece of country painted red on the map, but they had to abandon it because they found that the natives were too bad. I suggest that the Government should work hand in hand with the two schemes, that is, settling our northern area and settling our soldiers at the same time. Some years ago Sir John Forrest, seeing the possibility of settling East Kimberley, arranged an expedition. He procured a steamer and sent up a party, including surveyors with all necessary impedimenta. Why cannot this Government do the same? Why not get 100 or 200 returned soldiers, physically fit, and send them up in a boat, together with the necessary horses and material, to settle this huge, undeveloped portion of our State? These men will have been accustomed to the use of the rifle, and if necessary will know how to protect themselves from the depredations of the natives, though I do not think much in that way will be required. Furthermore, in the cattle business no fencing is required. No wells would be needed because the country is already well watered. A few tents would do for the time being, or cheaply constructed

buildings could readily be erected. The cows necessary for stocking this country could also be purchased at a reasonable price. This would assist the State in the development of our northern areas, place a population there which might later on be necessary for defence purposes, largely get over the question of settling our returned soldiers who desire to go in for pastoral pursuits, and there are a great many of these, and last, but not least, would help to increase our cattle herds, and assist the Wyndham Freezing Works in years to come, and also similar works which must eventually follow in Derby. On the question of climate, it may be advanced that it would be ridiculous to send these brave men to the far North-West. I may point out that this area is in the same latitude as Cairns and Cooktown in Queensland, and that these two towns are the centres of large and prosperous districts. In conclusion, I would say that I consider I should not have been doing my duty to the North-West, to this State, or to the Commonwealth had I not made a claim for consideration for that portion of Western Australia.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [9.17]: I am surprised at the attitude of the Premier upon the amendment to the Address-in-reply moved by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell). On the formation of the present National Government we find the following embodied in the platform—

Parliamentary freedom, representative Government, free discussion and action by members in Parliament, who shall be responsible only to their electors.

This is signed "H. B. Lefroy, leader." Seeing that the Premier has subscribed to this plank in the National party's platform I am unable to see, for the life of me, why he should find fault with any member who, he considers, is fairly criticising the policy of the Government. In addition to that, on July 31st, 1917, this House carried the following resolution—

That in order to more effectively safeguard the interests of returned soldiers, this House is of opinion that a separate department under the direct control of a Minister for repatriation should be established, having the management of all things necessary to restore our soldiers to the various industries of the State.

Seeing that this was a direct instruction from the House, I cannot see why the Premier, if he has been at all fairly criticised in this connection, should complain. I do not agree with the member for Northam that we can place all our returned soldiers upon the land. On account of the physical incapacity of many of these unfortunate men, not only shall we not be able to put them on the land, but possibly they will be a charge on the State for some years to come. The member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington), the other day, in a rather eloquent and not altogether fair speech in many respects, took the Government to task for what they had not done. He said it was absolutely useless to talk of repatriation and meeting the invasion of rabbits, and that the

first thing to consider was taxation. Will the member for Perth and those who follow him at any time support in this Chamber any reasonable or effective measure of taxation? The hon. member knows well that if an effective measure of taxation was brought down to-morrow morning, he, and those who follow him, would not support it. I think both branches of the Legislature realise that there is no hope for this country until the Government of the day can relieve the position by means of reasonable taxation. There has been a lot said about the policy of the late Labour Government. It may be true that there was an advanced public works policy carried on by that Government while in office. It was also unfortunate that, following on that policy, we had this war forced upon us. This, however, is not the reason why the finances of the State are in such an unsatisfactory and unfortunate position as they are to-day. Neither the member for Northam, nor the member for Perth, no matter how they may criticise the Government now in power, will ever, when the interests of those they represent are concerned, support any measure of taxation for the purpose of giving the Government of the day some financial relief. Until that is done, and only when that is done, can any Government bring about the reform the member for Northam desires. I agree with the member for Northam in some respects. Some reasonable provision should be made to meet the requirements of our returned soldiers. I do not agree with the Premier when he says that we can wait until the boys return. He must know that only by some reasonable and equitable measure of taxation such as this unimproved land tax can we become repossessed of those large areas which are adjacent to our railway system and are being held for speculative purposes. Until the Premier is prepared to bring down this measure and give this House an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon it, we shall not become repossessed of those lands which are so vital to the financial and commercial stability of this country. I believe with the Minister for Industries that much can be done in the way of assisting our returned soldiers, and that he is to a great measure entitled to praise for the attempt he has made in this direction. Even if he does not go beyond establishing an industry for the manufacture of grindstones in this State, he will, at all events, have been as useful as any K.C. in the State, no matter how eminent he may be. If he will assist in establishing the secondary industries of the State, he will deserve our everlasting credit. Only a little while ago we had a select committee sitting upon the rabbit question. One of the leading officials of the State, Mr. Mann, the Government Analyst, stated in evidence that we were absolutely out of phosphorus, a substance which is vitally necessary for stopping the invasion of rabbits. That officer informed the committee it was impossible to produce phosphorus in Western Australia. He ought to have been told by the Government that he could get out of his office, and should have been given a certain time in which to produce phosphorus, instead of theorising upon other matters of com-

paratively little importance to the country. Such a matter is of more importance than the standardising of potstill whisky and a lot of other rubbish of the kind.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): You do not call that rubbish?

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not call it rubbish, but it is so by comparison with the subject of phosphorus, which this officer should know full well there is little difficulty in producing in Western Australia. I think what I say will be borne out by every other responsible officer in the Government possessing a technical knowledge of the subject. Only the other day the Government were being railed at for not possessing this very necessary commodity. It is quite possible to produce it in the State. The Minister for Industries will be supported by the House and by the entire country in his efforts to establish these industries which are so essential in the absorption of our returned soldiers. It is regrettable to find members like the member for Perth, with all his brilliance and knowledge, making a statement that we should only stick to the three big primary industries of the State. He says, "Produce mutton, cattle, and timber." He then goes on to say that we can practically cut down the education vote by half, because he apparently considers that, in this country, we only have a community of boundary riders, cattle thumpers and bush hewers.

Mr. O'Loughlin: All very good men.

Mr. LAMBERT: I admit that, and am surprised at the member for Perth not having greater faith in the potential wealth and resources of this country. He can go to men just as eminent in their profession as he is in his. He can go to our laboratories here where men are unselfishly working and devoting their time and abilities to research work, which is so essential to the commercial life of the State. It is discouraging to men who are endeavouring to assist this country in its present financial stress to hear of men like the member for Perth talking like this. Furthermore, it is a bad advertisement to the State. The day after the member for Perth made these remarks I was met by the manager of one of the leading business houses in Perth, who asked if I had heard what Mr. Pilkington had said.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: We are not discussing the member for Perth; we are discussing the amendment to the Address-in-reply. Will the hon. member please confine himself to the subject before the Chair?

Mr. LAMBERT: I am only speaking on this subject in an indirect way, for I maintain that the secondary industries of the State are embraced by repatriation. I desire to deal as closely as I can with that aspect of the question. While we should urge the Government to make, and insist upon the Government's making, reasonable provision for land, and upon their taking effective measures to become repossessed of the land privately held along our existing railway lines for speculative purposes, and speculative purposes alone, side by side with that we should show some little faith in the known resources of our country. Not only should we second the efforts

of the Minister for Industries, but the Chamber of Manufacturers and the big importing houses should be made to realise that, after all, it will pay them to show a little practical patriotism by supporting the industries of their own country. If we realise to the extent that we should the valuable latent wealth of this country, there will be very little occasion to send men out into the distant and impossible parts of the State where they will have very little prospect of earning a decent living but we should be ready to place them in congenial and payable occupations for which they are both mentally and physically fitted.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister) [9-32]: I listened with very keen interest to the remarks of the member for Northam. To me it seemed that the hon. member talked round and round his Nomalup scheme. I listened most attentively to everything that he said, because I thought I might learn from him something which would be of great assistance to me in my work as Honorary Minister. But after hearing that gentleman from half-past four till a quarter past six, I had learnt nothing. That may not be the hon. member's fault; it may have been his misfortune that he could not put up something. He said "Get your surveyors out," and he displayed a plan like a chess board, showing what country had been surveyed south of Manjimup. But the trouble is that there are far too many blocks surveyed already. The hon. member stated that he had given instructions that in the survey of the blocks timber of marketable value was not to be surveyed in. Were those instructions observed? I say without fear of contradiction that they were not. Close on £30,000 was spent in laying out blocks irrespective of soil or timber or anything else. The surveyors adhered to the meridian, and nothing seemed to worry them except tacking on one block to another from Manjimup to the Southern Ocean. My knowledge of that country is as great as that of anyone to-day in Western Australia. I rode over it for 17 years. I defy contradiction when I state that on the land as surveyed into blocks between the coastal country and the forest there is at the present moment four feet of water, as regards hundreds and hundreds of blocks. What is the use of surveying such country into blocks? Am I going to advise the Premier to settle returned soldiers on such land? Why, I would not settle the member for Northam there. I acknowledge that the hon. member, to whom I wish to give his due, is a very earnest man, and a goer and a worker. I say that straight out. But the trouble is that in his anxiety to open up that country and get it surveyed the hon. member put on surveyors who had no idea of what was required.

Hon. J. Mitchell: There was Mr. Brockman, the Surveyor General.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Mr. Brockman himself could not get over all that country. The area is far too large. Mr. Brockman had to leave the work to surveyors under him. Those surveyors were in that country in order to make what money they could. Who blames them for that? They surveyed the whole country in the face, as the plan shows; and the result to-day is that those surveys have to be absolutely discarded. The only use of those surveys has been to assist those officers of the Forestry Department and the Lands Department who together have classified the country for timber. I acknowledge that the timber classification will

be of the greatest possible use in future settlement. Some of the blocks surveyed carry up to 100 loads of karri per acre. I am sure the member for Northam would not wish to sacrifice 100 loads of karri per acre, to see it wasted, ruthlessly destroyed, in order to put men on that land. There is in that district mixed timber country and open red gum country which can be and will be used.

Mr. O'Loughlin: When?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): But I ask hon. members have they thought what it is going to cost at present to deal with such country as that? The country cannot be dealt with by traction engines; the timber is too large. There is only one satisfactory method of dealing with it—by using explosives. What is the position to-day as regards explosives? They are only one-fourth as efficient as they were before the war.

Mr. O'Loughlin: That is what people say of the present Government.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The trouble in using "Fracture" for that timber is that one cannot get enough "Fracture" into the holes bored into the tree to knock the tree down; and this although "Fracture" is extremely powerful. Surely we are not to be asked to have that country grubbed by hand? That country, with the very best appliances obtainable in peace time, would cost up to £20, and even £30, and I really believe for some blocks £40, per acre. I leave hon. members to work out for themselves the cost of clearing those blocks by hand. At the old Warren homestead as much as £1 per tree has been paid, and yet the contractor gave up the job. The cost of hand clearing becomes apparent when one knows that the country carries up to 100 trees per acre.

Mr. O'Loughlin: It looks as if we shall never be able to settle that country.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): We shall be able to settle it, but I do not consider that it would be advisable to attempt to go into that country at present.

Mr. O'Loughlin: If there are 100 trees to the acre, the land is more valuable for other purposes than for farming.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): It depends on what the trees are. The member for Northam said that Mr. Wilson's policy was to make Crown lands available in every centre. But can that be done when there are no Crown lands in a centre?

Hon. P. Collier: He meant, every centre where there are Crown lands. Surely that is obvious.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I do not know what he meant. I am simply stating what he said.

Hon. P. Collier: Mr. Wilson meant what any sensible man would understand.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Houses, he said, were to be erected, land cleared, and so on. Have not we in the past had a pretty severe lesson as regards going ahead with the clearing of country without having people there to take it up immediately? I think we have. Let me take Denmark as an example. There we had a case of improvements being made at heavy cost and then not being maintained, with the result of the last state of the land being worse than its first, with consequent very heavy loss to the State. The area of Denmark is given at something over 26,000 acres. The price paid for it was £26,000. The accumulated debit to date is £75,000, of which sum £27,000 is represented by

clearing; and of the clearing not five per cent. is to-day effective.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That was scrubbing.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): It was scrubbing on some blocks, and clearing on others. Nominally, 347 selections totalling 19,000 acres were sold for £20,000; but of the 347 selections 101 were actually abandoned; and as regards the balance of 246 ostensibly occupied at the moment, it is questionable whether 100 settlers are to be actually found on the land.

Hon. P. Collier: What are you doing to keep them there?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Are we to continue such a policy as that? I say, no, certainly not. And it would be madness to go into the Warren country at the present time to clear virgin land, put up houses, and fence. The member for Northam knows perfectly well that in that heavily timbered country one cannot fence. Even when one is living on the spot, it takes one all one's time to keep the fences effective. Let the hon. member go and look at some of the abandoned properties in that district now, and see the state of them—houses burnt down, fences knocked to pieces, scrub growing up. It would be a mad waste of money to proceed on such lines. Regarding Nornalup again, to settle men in that district without railway communication is a thing this House would never agree to.

Mr. Munsie: But a great boom was made of Nornalup for a long time.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I do not know by whom that boom was made. Nornalup is a beautiful and healthy and very fertile spot.

Mr. Munsie: Do you know there are only two settlers in the Nornalup district?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I know that, because I have been there.

Mr. Munsie: It has not been tried.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): It has been tried. If hon. members would go to Mr. Boulanger's place at Nornalup, they would see something to gladden their hearts—the wonderful fertility of the land.

Mr. O'Loughlin: That can be seen on the Riverton estate also.

Mr. H. Robinson: Why cannot others do what he is doing?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): That man went to that district with money.

Mr. Hickmott: How long ago?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Several years ago. Have the returned soldiers money? Very, very few of them have. I for one would never agree to settle in that district soldiers or other people until railway communication exists. To link that country up with Denmark on the one hand, or Manjimup on the other, means 130 miles of railway construction.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But look at the country.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): At present our railways are not proving so profitable that we should want to build more immediately. In the absence of railway construction it would be madness to send returned soldiers to Nornalup. The Premier has told the House that 2,276 blocks were surveyed south of Manjimup, but those surveys were made in such an unsatisfactory way that they are no good to us to-day, and that will have to be remedied.

Mr. Munsie: What are you doing to remedy it?

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]



Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The member for Northam said that the scheme put up by the Government of the day was to spend something like two millions sterling and that the Commonwealth were to find the money. Boiled down, what did it amount to? The Commonwealth said they could find the large sum of £14,000.

Hon. J. Mitchell: They said nothing of the sort.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The member for Northam said that perhaps the South-West was too vast and that we were afraid. Why go right away to the South of Manjimup when, as hon. members have stated, there is a lot of land adjacent to the railways which is not being used to the best advantage at the present time.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Which areas appeal to you?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): South of Perth on the South-Western line. I know excellent country in the neighbourhood of Pinjarra and from there on to Burrekup, near Waterloo. There is also a lot of land that we should repurchase between Boyanup and Bridgetown which to-day is not producing what it should. The soldiers who get hold of some of that land will be lucky men indeed. The land has been ringbarked for a great many years; it is sweet to-day and the timber being dead, it can be dealt with in a much more satisfactory and economical manner than the green virgin country. It would pay to give £3 or £4 an acre for that land rather than put men on to virgin country south of Manjimup and tackle it in its green state.

Hon. P. Collier: This is a new discovery on the part of the Government.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Steps have been taken—

Hon. P. Collier: To re-purchase?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): No, to go into that matter and see what land is available. There are men there at the present time engaged on that work, and I am sure the House will accept their opinion. The object is to ascertain exactly what lands we have within nine miles of railways, lands which are not being used.

Hon. P. Collier: You do not know that you will get legislative authority yet?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I am coming to that. In the Bill which it is proposed to submit to Parliament there is a compulsory purchase clause. If these people are not prepared to part with their land at a reasonable price, the Government will be enabled to step in and secure it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What did it cost you to get the Harvey blocks prepared for the soldiers who went away dissatisfied?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I do not altogether blame them. The drainage scheme there was inadequate, and the trouble is that it was found to be inadequate only within the last two winters when heavy rains have fallen. We had to close that land against selection until further drains were put in.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is that not likely to apply to the other localities you have mentioned as well?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I think not.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Of course; they are exactly the same.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The member for Northam had in his mind the

construction of three railways in connection with the Nornalup scheme, one from Wilgarup to Mount Barker, the second from Big Brook to Denmark and the third from Big Brook to Augusta. It would have been an ambitious scheme if the money had been available. These railways would have opened up a large tract of country, but what is the use of talking like that when we know there is no chance of getting the money which would be necessary? In February 1917, parties were despatched to carry out a railway survey between the Deep River and the Franklin River. In August, 1917, the work was stopped on account of the wet weather, and when summer came again the surveyors were not sent back because funds were not available. The member for Bunbury, I am glad to say, approves of the re-purchasing of suitable partially improved holdings.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Recall the Agent General; why allow him to tell them in England that we have millions of acres available when we have not?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): We have the area but we cannot make it available because we have not the railways.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Well, tell that to the people in England.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The member for Gascoyne referred to the possibilities of the North-West. I know the land there well, and I am aware that if water can be obtained at a reasonable price it may be worth while going on with the scheme he proposes, but when the hon. member blows into my office on Thursday, and on the following Monday inquires if the engineers have submitted a price for which the work can be done, he is expecting too much. The hon. member said that Mr. Dunkerley had stated that he could do the work for £9,000. I would ask whether this Mr. Dunkerley is an engineer.

Members: Yes.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Hon. members say, "Yes," but they do not know.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What does it matter?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): It matters a great deal. Of what use is it to have a man who can say that a scheme can be carried out for £9,000 if he is not a competent engineer? I do not know Mr. Dunkerley, but the member for Gascoyne appears to have great faith in him. I am interested to hear the price at which this work can be done and as soon as the reports from the Government engineers are available it will be more interesting still to make comparisons. The hon. member, I presume on account of the absence of the member for Kimberley, had something to say about the Kimberleys. So far as sending men to the Kimberleys is concerned, only those who have lived there should be sent to squat there.

Mr. Angelo: Why?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Because they have to be acclimatised. Any man not used to that country becomes disgusted with it after 12 months residence there. If he remains there, however, he becomes more settled. One individual suggested that men should be sent to Moola Bulla for six months and they would become capable stockmen.

Hon. P. Collier: One of your Government officials said that.

Mr. Angelo: A thousand men have left the North-West; give them a show.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Half a dozen men have already been fixed up on pastoral propositions.

Hon. P. Collier: That is six, and two others have applied.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Six have applied and six have been fixed up. There was a strip of country 10 miles wide which was kept open as a tick barrier, but I am sorry to say that the barrier existed on paper only and that the cattle took no notice of the marks on the plan, and wandered across the barrier at their own sweet will. I think that 10-mile strip can be utilised with great advantage for our returned soldiers. That is a matter which is receiving attention at the present time. We have heard a great deal inside and outside of the House as to what is being done and what is not being done. What do we find? We find that the repatriation scheme we are working under to-day was inaugurated in May, 1918, three months ago. The Commonwealth did not come to a decision until then. That is the trouble. I have been interested in this matter since the War Council was first appointed. The War Council dealt with land settlement for a time and I can assure hon. members that it was very disheartening indeed because everything had to be submitted to Melbourne for approval. That is altered now.

Hon. P. Collier: I have documents from the trenches which were circulated 12 months ago and which set out the Commonwealth scheme.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The repatriation scheme was explained to the Senate on the 2nd May, 1918. The member for Northam knows that it was understood that funds would be provided by the Federal Government for such work as roads and railways to open up our lands, and all the schemes for settling soldiers on the land depended on that, but when that scheme was altered, the original proposals had to go by the board.

Hon. P. Collier: Senator Millen's speech was delivered in July, 1917.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): That was his first speech, but the scheme we are working under now was unfolded in May, 1918. When the Federal Government altered their policy, we had to alter our land policy.

Hon. P. Collier: They did not alter their policy.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): That is a matter of opinion.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a matter of fact.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I say they did, and what I say is right. In the South-West we have a much better chance of settling a large number of men than in any other portion of the State. In the Eastern districts a large area is required if a man is to be successful, but in the South-West from 100 to 150 acres of the best land is sufficient.

Mr. Harrison: How many have you placed in the South-West?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Very few.

Mr. Harrison: And how many in the Eastern districts?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Most of the returned soldiers have been placed in the Eastern districts, because the applications have been for the Eastern districts in consequence of the men not knowing the conditions of the South-West.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Should you not outline the conditions to them?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): They have been outlined to them, but the men have an idea that it is easier to make a success of it in the Eastern districts.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Can you explain how it is that Queensland is pushing land settlement so well?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): From the complaints that I have heard I do not think they are much more successful than are we.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Read the reports of some of the returned soldiers.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I have read them. I know that in New Zealand, where they have paid up to £40 per acre for land for returned soldiers, they are in a bigger hole than are we. In the South-West we can put a man on from 100 to 150 acres, and if it is first-class land he can keep 20 cows and make a good living. A little while ago the Leader of the Opposition interjected that we were sending out of the State £900,000 annually for dairy products. The South-West is the district in which to grow those products. Unfortunately, if the men do not want to go down there they cannot be compelled to go.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Make it sufficiently attractive.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The most attractive offer we can make those men is to put them on sweetened land, and not on virgin soil. That is why I am so strong on purchasing partly improved land alongside the railways. We have had but one application for virgin Crown lands, and I could not fix him up, because he applied for a reserve which the local roads board refused to part with.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I have a letter from the committee, intimating that they will take up the whole reserve if you make it available.

Mr. Pickering: What about the application at Thompson's Brook?

Mr. O'Loughlen: The soldiers are prepared to take the whole of the reserve.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Something has been said in regard to the repurchased estates. At Avondale we have a local repatriation committee. We are forming those local committees throughout the State, and they should be of the greatest assistance.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Who is the "we" who are forming them? The Federal Government are forming them.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): No, that is entirely different. The same committee have agreed to take on the land settlement in many cases. In some cases there is a slight difference in the personnel. Those local men know the local conditions, and have been of very considerable assistance, not only to the department but to the soldiers themselves. At Avondale the local repatriation committee will lend valuable aid to the men. The member for the district (Mr. Brown) has already been of great assistance to us in respect of the Avondale estate. At Yandooka we have to find water for the men. For weeks we have had engineers there fixing sites so that we can let a contract for the lot at the one time. I think that by the end of the summer as much of that estate as is going to be thrown open will be ready.

Mr. Troy: At what price?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): At an average of £2 10s. per acre. Of course the best of the land is nearly double that price. I know of no better land in Western Australia

than the pick of Yandanooka. The 70,000 acres on the west side of the line is pastoral land. I think it is well to hold that as a commonage for the assistance of those taking up the better portion of the conditional purchase land on the eastern side. With that area as a commonage those men should make good. If the feed gets a little short on their holdings they can always fall back on the 70,000 acres, which is well watered.

Mr. Pickering: How many do you expect to settle at Yandanooka?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Over 50 men. Of course in that country it is not advisable to put them on small areas.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What area is available?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): There are roughly 70,000 acres of freehold and 70,000 acres of pastoral land, which is rather poor country. It is not proposed to turn those men loose up there. We have a very excellent man there in Mr. White, who will look after the men and render every possible assistance. The same will be done at Avondale and on any other estate of the sort. Up to the present we have not found any men anxious or even willing to go on a training farm. Still I think it is very necessary that we should have training farms, and that Brunswick on the one hand and Avondale on the other, should be used for that purpose. In England, unfortunately, the training farms have not been a success, but I hope that out here we shall have better results. The Premier said, and I want to stress the point, that the men coming back to-day are not physically fit. In England they have a land scheme. What do they say? They say this—

These colonies are intended for sound men, and most of the men so far discharged are not considered fit enough, so there have been very few suitable applicants.

We are in exactly the same position here. Even those who have obtained their medical certificates and passed the qualification board and been placed on the land, after being some months there have had to come back and say their health will not allow them to continue. It would be a crime to force those men, who are not physically fit, to go on the land. Those of us who have made our living off the land for many years know that the land will only produce according to the labour put into it. The land will not produce on being tickled. I know that in Devonshire and in Cornwall, where the member for North-East Frome (Hon. W. C. Angwin) comes from, the land is so productive that if you drop a wire nail over night you will find a crowbar in the morning. That is not the case here. If one is going to make a living off the land, one has to work very hard indeed, and the men at present returning to our shores are not physically fit to take on pioneering work, although, in some instances, they are fit to take on partially improved properties. A man comes along and says he wants to go on the land. The doctor says he has a reasonable chance of pulling through. The qualification board do not altogether like the look of him, but are willing to give him a trial. The department has thus been run sympathetically all the time. But, unfortunately, as I have said, many of the men after being placed on the land have had to give it up. They are advanced £500 of Commonwealth money for improvements. We are responsible to the Commonwealth to see that the money is properly sent. Mr. Camm, who was brought up to take charge of that department, is a very ex-

cellent and most efficient officer, but it meant that if Mr. Camm remained there in charge another department would have to be created to handle the cash.

Mr. Pickering: Why could you not use the Agricultural Bank?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): We tried it, but we found that with the bank where it is and with Mr. Camm in the Lands Department there was considerable confusion.

Mr. Pickering: So there is now.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): There is not. In consequence everybody was disappointed with the result. Than Mr. McLarty we could not have a better man.

Hon. P. Collier: You said the same thing about Mr. Camm.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Yes, but we could not work in with the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. Pickering: To whom, then, does Mr. McLarty belong?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Mr. McLarty is still an officer of the Agricultural Bank, but his office is in the Lands Department, where he is surrounded by Lands Department officers with all the information available for him, and where he is directly under the control of the Premier, the Minister in charge of repatriation.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What is the reason why the Premier took charge of repatriation?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Because the matter is so important that it should be under a portfolioed Minister. It has been said in this House and in another place that Honorary Ministers should be merely advisers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Have you adopted that policy?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Personally I am working as an off-sider to the Premier. Everyone knows that an off-sider gets plenty of work and generally all the dust.

Hon. P. Collier: Who is the off-sider in the Agricultural Department?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The Premier.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Tell us the cost at Harvey, and the number of men who will be put there.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): It depends a great deal on the efficiency of the drains now in hand. If they are efficient we can put several more men on.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Have you any idea as to how many, all told?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): No, because I differ with some of the departmental officers. There is a portion of the Harvey estate which is a very poor proposition. The idea of certain officers is that these men should be given so much cleared land and so much of the rough land. I do not think that is advisable. Moreover, these men do not want it, and are not fitted to go on some of the rough land we have there.

Hon. P. Collier: The Harvey is as much improved as a good deal of the land in the State.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): A portion of it is improved, but a large quantity of it is still in the virgin state. There is a lot of it which is not ringbarked, and it is proposed to give a proportion of that to these men. We stopped receiving applications for the No. 2 scheme until the drainage was fixed up. Approval has been given for a further expenditure there in order to hurry matters on.

Mr. O'Loughlen: About £7,000 is authorised.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): More than that.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Is that all it is proposed to spend in this direction?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): No. Having watched this land settlement business from the beginning of the War Council of Western Australia, I may say that I am proud of the work which has been done. In spite of the criticism of people who, as a rule, know nothing about the matter, I say that very fair progress has been made, and that we have handled the land settlement portion of our repatriation operations as well as they have been handled in any other State in the Commonwealth. We will continue to handle them in that way if we are here. When the reports come in from the surveyors who are at present on the Eastern and South-Western lines we shall know exactly how much land we have at our disposal. We shall have all the knowledge required to purchase, if necessary, those lands adjacent to the railways.

Hon. P. Collier: We will make things move then.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Yes, and in such a way that it will be a long time before any other member in this Chamber has the temerity to move what is practically a motion of want of confidence in the Government, who have done so much and are prepared to go on doing as much as they have done in the past. Very excellent work has been done under trying circumstances. If hon. members knew as much as I know about the work they would be the first to agree with me, and applaud the Government for what they have done. In my opinion the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) has made out no case at all. I have not the slightest doubt of the result of the debate.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The whip has been cracked.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): It has not been cracked. The hon. member must not think that all parties are run as his is run.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I know that.

Mr. Munsie: Why was a meeting held this afternoon?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): This soldier settlement scheme is being administered in the most sympathetic manner by Mr. McLarty, who has a very large knowledge of the work, and possesses a wide knowledge of our lands. He is assisted by a capable staff. The services of Mr. Camm are still being utilised. He is an officer for whom I have the greatest regard, and I respect his opinion. There is no friction between those officers, as has been stated. They are working together amicably, to the one end, namely, the settlement of the soldiers on our land in a sympathetic manner, and with a thorough knowledge of their requirements.

The Minister for Mines: And with profit to the men themselves.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Not only that, but with profit to the State. It is far better to settle 100 men on the land properly than to put 300 men on the land to turn out failures, as some hon. members would have us do.

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

House adjourned at 10:31 p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 4th September, 1918.

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

### OBITUARY—LORD FORREST.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.31]: It is my sad duty to inform the House that the Government this morning received from the Acting Prime Minister of the Commonwealth an intimation of the death of Lord Forrest, which occurred yesterday. During the course of Lord Forrest's painful illness the heartfelt sympathies of the people of Western Australia have gone out to him, to Lady Forrest, and to his relatives; and the news of his death will be received in thousands of homes throughout this State with a feeling of personal loss. As an explorer, as an administrator under the Imperial Government, as Premier of this State, and as our foremost representative in the Commonwealth Parliament, Lord Forrest for over half a century played the leading part in the building up of Western Australia. The high honour recently bestowed upon him by His Majesty the King, an honour unique in the records of Australian statesmen, was accepted throughout the Commonwealth as a fitting tribute to his great services to the Empire. There is no way in which we can adequately recognise his services to the country which he so dearly loved, and for which his broad vision, his wise and far-sighted statesmanship, have done so much. But from one end to the other of this State we find enduring records of his high aims and great achievements, and years will not efface his memory from the hearts of a grateful people. There is an element of peculiar sadness about his death—so far away from his home and his friends, though he was attended to the last by the lifelong partner of his joys and sorrows. Yet we cannot but believe that his closing hours were brightened by the knowledge of a long life well spent in the service of his country. He was a fearless pioneer, a single-minded administrator, a statesman with few rivals in the whole wide realm of Britain's colonising enterprises; and, above all, he was a great, good, kind-hearted, high-souled, and honourable gentleman. Men like Lord Forrest are not produced frequently in a country, or in a century; and there are few of us who will live to look upon his like again.

Foremost captain of his time,  
Rich in saving common sense;  
And as the greatest only are,  
In his simplicity sublime.

O voice from which their omens all men drew,  
O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
O fall'n at length that tower of strength  
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew.