

demand that the wrong shall be put right. It is only a matter of time and the position is rectified. Our system makes it safe for democracy. Our actions as a Parliament are free and, as a matter of fact, we protect members even against bribery and violence and we protect them from the law in connection with statements made by them in this Chamber. Anything which members think is in the best interests of the community can be stated on the floor of this Chamber.

Mr. Money: Members have been doing it to-night.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: While we are not always right, we are by no means always wrong. We may be in a majority, but we cannot use our majority to coerce the other side.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You would have a difficult job.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: While I continue to occupy a seat on the Treasury bench, I will not refuse to receive advice from any quarter, but I will refuse to accept dictation from any quarter, I care not from where it comes. The man who will adopt an opposite attitude and reject advice from every quarter, will not be acting in the best interests of the community. Let us freely discuss these matters and get away from party domination. There is surely enough at stake to enable us to deal with these matters without paltry party interests entering into the subject. If we look at questions from that broad point of view any Government will be the better for the support and advice tendered them, and thus they will be able to work more effectively in the interests of the community as a whole.

On motion by Mr. J. MacCallum Smith, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.59 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 31st August, 1921.

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

QUESTION—RIVERTON ESTATE.

Hon. A. H. PANTON (for Hon. F. A. Baglin) asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is it true that competent agricultural ex-

perts, such as Messrs. Tyler and Newman, reported against the Riverton estate as suitable for the settlement of returned soldiers? 2, In what amounts and to whom has the Agricultural Bank given financial assistance? 3, At whose instigation, and upon whose recommendations, have such advances, if any, been made? 4, What was the total sum of money incurred in settling soldiers on the Riverton estate? 5, How many so assisted are at present residing on the estate?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, A Tyrrell Williams, £388 8s. 5d.; E. Gaynor (who subsequently transferred to Chas. Ginbey), £497 15s.; Thomas Greig, £494 11s. 11d.; T. E. Simpson, £416 6s.; C. E. Jones (transferred to Alec Dewar), £431 12s. 1d. 3, The advances were made by the Agricultural Bank at the request of and upon the indemnification of the Government of the day acting upon the recommendation of a select committee appointed by Parliament. 4, £2,228 13s. 5d., exclusive of interest. 5, Two, including one of the original settlers.

QUESTION—LUNACY DEPARTMENT.

Proposed Royal Commission.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Minister for Education: Will the Government, when submitting terms of reference to the Royal Commission about to be appointed to inquire into and report upon the Hospital for the Insane, Claremont, direct the Commission to inquire into and report upon the justice or otherwise of the dismissal of certain returned soldier employees during the influenza epidemic in 1919, and the many subsequent refusals to reinstate some of those employees?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: No. This matter has already been inquired into and determined.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eighth Day.

Debate resumed from previous day.

Hon. J. MILLS (Central) [4.35]: I, too, wish to join with other hon. members in expressing regret at the death of the Hon. E. M. Clarke. I did not know Mr. Clarke until I became a member of the Council a little over three years ago, but since my first meeting with him I learned to hold him in the very highest respect. A number of speakers have referred to the financial position, and to the deficit. Personally, I do not blame either the present or any previous Government entirely for the condition of our finances. I believe we are the victims of circumstances over which we have no control, and that the reasons for our present condition are not so much within as without the State. Until trade

relations are restored throughout the world and the commerce of the world returns to normal, we must expect that the abnormality will be reflected in the Dominions. It is therefore necessary for us to be very careful, and I suggest that we sit very tightly, that we practice thrift and do not borrow any more money than is absolutely necessary. Then our deficit will soon pass away. At any rate, if we do live extravagantly we will certainly forfeit our sovereign rights and become an impotent State under the Commonwealth Government. Turning to matters affecting the province I represent, and indirectly the whole State, I remind hon. members that recently coal was discovered in the Irwin River district at a depth of 550 feet, where a 12-foot seam was pierced. So far we have not had the analysis, but naturally the people up there are very hopeful that it may turn out all right. We trust that if it is not actually better than Collie coal it will be equal to that product, for it would be very helpful to our lead mines in the North, where fuel is scarce, and even the gold mines near to Geraldton could be served by it. The locality of the discovery is 17 or 18 miles distant from Mingenew as the crow flies, and practically the same distance from the Mullewa-Wongan Hills railway. If the coal prove to be of good quality it will enhance our chances of having the promised smelters erected at Geraldton. At present I think the intention is to erect them down here, but with the discovery of good coal in the North I hope they will be established at Geraldton. It is not only for the district of the Irwin that the discovery of coal has been predicted, for as far back as 1850 Mr. A. C. Gregory, one of our earliest explorers, said that sooner or later coal would be discovered between Oakabella and the mouth of the Murchison River. There is there a belt of country entirely different from that in which the galena is found. I have been told of several discoveries of coal shale in that stretch of country, notwithstanding which the country has not been tapped. I suppose the reason for that is that it is too far from Perth, and that if coal were discovered there it would come into serious conflict with the Collie mines.

Hon. J. Ewing: It would not interfere with Collie coal at all.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Where is the justification for boring there?

Hon. J. MILLS: As I say, coal shale has been discovered in several localities up there. Also I have been told that on the eastern fringes of Ellendale there is coal bearing country. I do not know of it personally, but I have eyes to see and read with, and I am of opinion that coal will be discovered there also. But the Government have never made any determined effort to discover coal in our district, except for a half-hearted attempt at the Greenough crossing, where they tried to obtain coal near the railways.

Hon. J. Duffell: What do you suggest the Government should do?

Hon. J. MILLS: Send up a geologist and, if necessary, put down a test bore. Those who know say, and I firmly believe, that coal exists there. Yet no attempt has been made to test the country.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They sent a geologist up North to locate oil. Why should they not send one to look for coal?

Hon. J. MILLS: The price charged by the Government for second-class and third-class land is far in excess of its value, particularly in respect of third-class land. In 1915 the Labour Government amended the Land Act and reduced the price of first-class land to a maximum of 15s. That was all right for men who had land previously priced at 30s. per acre, but the man whose land was classified at, say, 14s. 9d. per acre, was left on the same mark.

Hon. H. Stewart: He could appeal.

Hon. J. MILLS: At any rate we have a very big proportion of third-class land in the South-West division of the State. Also I think that if the great South-West were stripped of its timber it would be found that at least one-half of that also is third-class land. Perth is built on third-class land, and if one goes to the end of the macadamised road at North Perth he can follow the stretch of country right up to Dongarra, 250 miles distant. With the exception of an oasis here and there, the whole of that area of over three million acres, is second-class and third-class land, and is practically unoccupied except in a few instances where men are raising cattle. The minimum price of third-class land to-day is 3s. 9d., which, plus survey fees, brings it up to 4s. 1d. There are hundreds of thousands of acres which in their natural state are not worth 1d. per acre, let alone 4s. 1d. The trouble is the abominable taxation with which every man is loaded immediately he gets into possession. Something should be done to bring about a better use of the land than is the case at present. Just now it only offers a breeding ground for rabbits. There is a great deal of land in the South-West division outside the zone of safe agriculture, which could be put to better use if the Land Act were further amended to permit of its being held in larger areas. It is not what may be called under the regulations third-class land. It is red land and as such should be at least second-class. Some of it may be considered to be first-class, but the rainfall is not sufficient to justify its use from the agricultural point of view. It is, therefore, chiefly useful for grazing purposes. The minimum price at which this land can be held is 6s. 3d. per acre plus survey fees. Seeing that it takes from eight to 10 acres to keep a sheep on this class of land, it is easy to see that this price of 6s. 3d., plus survey and taxation, is too high. Under the regulations no one can hold more than 5,000 acres of this country under conditional purchase conditions in the case of third-class land, and 7,500 acres in

the case of a married settler. In the case of second-class land only 3,000 acres can be held, and possibly an extra 1,000 in the case of the married settler. This is quite inadequate for a man to make a living out of. He can only engage in grazing, but may do a little wheat growing as a side line to sheep raising. The land I speak of is lying to the western side of the outer boundary of the rabbit-proof fence, junctioning with the southern ocean. on the one side and near Yalgoo on the other. There is a good deal of it.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: How many miles are there?

Hon. J. MILLS: Some 300 or 400 miles. It is just a fringe of country along the rabbit-proof fence which forms the boundary of the two districts. I should like to see the Government amend the regulations this session so as to make it possible for a man to hold at least 10,000 acres. I do not care whether it is held under C.P. conditions or is leased to a settler for, say, 30 years. He might be given a pre-emptive right over it so that he can purchase it at the end of that period. There is no such regulation in existence at present and the land is therefore lying idle. People cannot take up an area large enough to make a living out of, and the price charged is too high. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [4.50]: Last night Mr. Sanderson voiced my views in regard to the Address-in-reply. He said that it served a very good purpose, and I think so, too. As a representative of the South-West Province, I do not pretend to know all about every portion of Western Australia for I have not travelled over the entire State. I, therefore, have to depend upon other members representing the North-West and other portions of Western Australia to educate me in those matters appertaining to the requirements of their particular districts of which I may be ignorant. When any subject affecting any particular district is brought forward we should have an opportunity, as we have had lately, of listening to the views of members in regard to it, and as to the undertakings necessary in their particular districts. Mr. Miles last night made a very vigorous speech and one upon which I congratulate him. It is very invigorating to think that members who are friendly with members of the Government, perhaps more so than most of us, have the temerity to stand up in the House and say exactly what they mean. I am sure the Leader of the House will appreciate the speech made by Mr. Miles, because we realise that he and the other members from the North know more about that part of the State than does the Minister. One remark made by Mr. Miles was that it was a know-all Ministry. I have not found that. So far as I am concerned, any matters which I wished to bring under the notice of the Government have at all times been willingly attended to. Other members have spoken elo-

quently with regard to the position of the State. I know of no occasion since I have been a member when I have listened to such speeches as I have done on the occasion of this debate. Let me tell Mr. Miles and other members representing the North that I am heart and soul with them. I appreciate the splendid manner in which they have worked for their provinces. We hear much about the small States and Dr. Earle Page's policy. Probably the North is at least one portion of Western Australia where that principle might be applied. I have not given the matter sufficient study to warrant me in making a statement with regard to Dr. Page's views, but I do think that of all the places in Western Australia the North appeals to me as the one place where the principle might be applied. One may safely leave the North in its present hands, which include the hands of the Minister for the North-West. I hope the prosperity which is its due will not be long delayed. I do not profess to be a financial expert. Last night I was greatly interested in this matter. I found out things I had not known before. It may be asked why I did not know of these things. I have always understood both from utterances on the public platform and elsewhere that we are paying sinking fund on all our loans. In analysing the statements which have from time to time come before the House and hon. members, I have gathered that we were paying this sinking fund towards the redemption of all our loans.

The Minister for Education: The sinking fund never applies to a loan until it has been in operation for three years.

Hon. J. EWING: I know that. There are many loans which have been in operation for more than three years, and a good many of these have not been converted into inscribed stock and do not pay sinking fund. Since last night I have analysed the matter as far as I could. I have figures to place before the Minister in the hope that in his reply he will give due consideration to the statements made by Mr. Sanderson. I could have listened for a couple of hours last night to Mr. Sanderson if he had been good enough to continue. As he said, he only touched the fringe of the subject and if more time had been at his disposal, he might have gone deeply into it. He is certainly an exponent on this particular question. The sinking fund only applies to inscribed stock. I have often found fault with the Labour Party and their administration, but I now find from the figures that the Labour Party were apparently a little more honest in their administration than the present Government have been. In 1911 the debentures issued amounted to £396,800 and in 1916, when the Labour Party went out of office, the debentures amounted to £359,300, the amount paid off being £37,500. Treasury bills or bonds issued in 1911, when the Labour Party came into office, amounted to £711,000, and when they went out in 1916 had increased to £4,682,625, this being an increase for that

period of £3,971,625. This shows that the administration of the Labour Party, so far as the finances were concerned, cannot be taken great exception to when compared with the present Government's administration. The inscribed stock in 1911 amounted to £22,596,153 and in 1916 to £34,097,751, showing that the Labour Government added to the inscribed stock by £12,503,000. During the five years under review we did not pay any sinking fund on the amount of £5,041,000, represented by debentures and Treasury bonds, while we paid on inscribed stock amounting to £34,097,000. Most of these loans were running for over three years, therefore there ought to have been more set aside for the purpose of paying sinking fund during that period.

The Minister for Education: You know the circumstances under which the Government had to borrow through the Commonwealth.

Hon. J. EWING: I am referring to the five years preceding the time when the Labour Government went out of office. If my knowledge on the question is not sound the Leader of the House can give us a clear exposition of the case when he replies. Between 1916 and 1921, the debentures were added to by £1,404,000, the additional Treasury bills amounted to £6,463,000, and inscribed stock was only added to by £1,268,000. During that period we were only paying sinking fund on £1,268,000, for that amount only had been added to the inscribed stock. Hon. members know that when money has been borrowed provision has to be made for its repayment. When the Treasury bonds and debentures become due it will be necessary for the Government to meet them. The Minister tells us that we do not pay sinking fund until after three years. Many of the Treasury bills and bonds have been running for over three years, and have to be converted into inscribed stock before they can bear the one per cent. charge. When they are converted I suppose we will go on borrowing in the ordinary way.

The Minister for Education: They will only bear one-half per cent.

Hon. J. EWING: Has the amount been cut down? At one half per cent. it will mean a further burden on the people of Western Australia of something like £65,000, for at one per cent. it would be £130,000. Hon. members will now have some idea of the position, which I hope will be elucidated later on by the Leader of the House. From 1911 to 1920 we increased the burden on the people to the extent of £52 per head of the population. In 1911 the debt was £73 per head of the population, whereas it is now £125 per head. Naturally we must admit that we were passing through troublous times which necessitated large borrowings and thus the public debt was considerably increased. On the other hand we find from the latest census there has only been an in-

crease compared with the population of the State in 1911, of 37,500 souls, which practically represents the excess of births over deaths. That fact came as a surprise to me. An analysis of the figures I have quoted shows that our borrowing has not increased our population, and the burden per head has been increased. During the first five years under review the Scaddan Government borrowed 15½ million pounds. It has been said that amount of money was expended in improper directions. We have to be fair in these matters. In politics, the Opposition may endeavour to secure advantages over the Ministry or Ministerial supporters. That is no reason, however, why we should not be fair in dealing with so important a question. It has to be admitted that in 1914 we had a very serious drought in Western Australia. A large amount of money which was borrowed by the Labour Government was expended in the shape of relief to the farmers and that accounts for the non-reproductive application of a great deal of the money borrowed during that period. The farmers have not been able to repay the whole of that money and it has not, in consequence, returned interest or sinking fund. I want to support Mr. Mills in his contention that during the period of five years from 1911 to 1916, owing to the Labour Government introducing the State trading concerns, our position has been made much worse. It is largely on account of those trading concerns that we are in our present difficulties. I want to show that the whole of that 15½ million pounds was not badly expended. The Labour Government had to contend with great difficulties and so had the succeeding Governments. The Government in power during the succeeding five years spent over 10 millions, making 25½ million pounds borrowed and spent during that period of 10 years.

Hon. J. Cornell: You are not accounting for the deficit.

Hon. J. EWING: We would expect when money is borrowed to such a large extent that it would be spent on reproductive works as far as possible. We have to realise too that the Labour Government had to spend a considerable amount of that money in constructing a large number of railways which are non-paying still. Those railways were constructed in the agricultural districts. Although those railways have not paid interest and sinking fund they have resulted in a large number of people settling on the land, people who would not otherwise have gone there. I hope we will live long enough to see the money spent on those railways returned to the State and the policy fully justified. During the time the 10 million pounds was being spent, it is common knowledge that the war was proceeding and the Government of the day were called upon to do many things which they would not otherwise have had to do. Money has been spent on soldier settlement and out of the 10 millions I suppose quite 3 millions or

4 millions have been spent in that direction. We all agree that it was the duty of the State to do that for the soldiers who fought for us. We trust that that money will be returned in the shape of interest and sinking fund. I do not want to labour this question, but I wish to give my earnest support to Mr. Miles and other members who have voiced their opinions regarding the State trading concerns. On every possible occasion when I have spoken in this Chamber and have had an opportunity of referring to these trading concerns I have expressed my firm conviction of what I believe to be right and what I believe three-fourths of the people of Western Australia believe is right, namely, that these trading concerns should never have been initiated and that we should not be in our present parlous condition if they had never been started. The Government who were returned to power because of their opposition to the State trading concerns, instead of selling them or making arrangements to dispose of them, actually continued their operations and increased them, despite the fact that we are losing money on them every day. So far from disposing of them, they are building them up. Look at the State Implement Works, the purchase of the hewers' concession and the purchase of the timber yard in Perth. All of these are in competition with private individuals or companies who have invested money in Western Australia and who have expected a fair deal. I know most of these particular trading concerns and I cannot see that the conditions are any better to-day than if they had not been started. I do not think the conditions of employment are any better at the State Sawmills than they are at Millars. The price of timber is not lower because of the establishment of the State Sawmills. One has only to ask any member who represents the fruit-growing areas if they can get cheaper fruit cases from the State Sawmills than from Millars to find that it is impossible to do so.

Hon. V. Hamersley: The State Sawmills have joined the timber combine.

Hon. J. EWING: That may be so. However, I will deal later on with the statement made by the Minister for Railways last night regarding Collie coal. It has vexed me very considerably. It is on a par with the statement made by the Premier that the State trading concerns showed a profit of £7,784 during the last financial year. I will not contend that I know as much about these matters as the Premier. I know that he has access to records and has officers at his disposal, who can place the necessary information before him.

The Minister for Education: The amount of £7,784 is merely cash transferred from the State trading account to revenue and has nothing whatever to do with the profit or loss on the State trading concerns last year.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It was not put that way by the Premier.

Hon. J. EWING: No, the Premier never said that; it was not placed in that way before members in another place.

The Minister for Education: That money represented the profits from two of the State trading concerns which profits were transferred to revenue.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Premier did not say what the loss was on the others.

Hon. J. EWING. I intend to deal with this matter as it appeals to me. The Minister will probably deal with it as it appeals to him. When he does so, I hope he will deal with the position clearly and lucidly so far as the whole of the State trading concerns are affected. What we really want is a thorough investigation regarding the State trading concerns from their inception. I am not an accountant or a trained business man, but I know when one set of figures is less or greater than another and how to apply that knowledge. I guarantee that there is no man in this State who has gone thoroughly into this question. Take the question of the actual capital invested. I do not know what money is invested. The Premier has said that it represents two millions. That is a bald statement. We have to take the Premier's statement and he certainly would not make such an assertion unless he were thoroughly satisfied that he was correct. We want a plain statement of what money is invested. I would like to ask the Government to take this matter into consideration, but, of course, the Government do not do what we want on all occasions, because they say it involves expenditure and I am afraid, in addition, it does not suit them. What I would like the Government to do, however, would be to engage a first class accountant, who is not a civil servant, and allow him to thoroughly investigate this question and report to the public. I do not ask for a Royal Commission or any such expensive procedure, but I think that if a trained accountant were to go with this matter, the figures placed before the people would astound them.

Hon. A. Sanderson: Hear, hear.

Hon. J. EWING: We will never get any such clear statement when we have people interested in keeping their jobs in connection with the State trading concerns. I do not want to cast any aspersions on officials, but the information they give is not put in the clearest way. I do not want a statement affecting only one or two concerns, but I want a thorough investigation into the whole of them showing what is the actual capital invested, what interest is involved, the sinking fund, and what depreciation has been allowed during the whole of that period. As it appeals to me, the Premier has simply said that there is a profit of £7,784.

The Minister for Education: That is not so. That is a profit transferred under the State Trading Concerns Act and has no reference whatever to the profit and loss on the whole of the State trading concerns.

Hon. J. EWING: That is not what we inferred from the statement of the Premier. However I accept the Minister's statement, as it probably strengthens my point of view. I do not think there is any profit. I want to know what is the position regarding the whole of the State trading concerns.

The Minister for Education: The amount you have just referred to was transferred from the State ferries and the State hotels in accordance with the Act.

Hon. J. EWING: What about the others?

The Minister for Education: The statement by the Premier was purely from the revenue point of view, and had nothing to do with the State trading concerns generally.

Hon. J. EWING: In reply to an interjection by Mr. Angwin when he asked whether the Premier's statement was a clear one and included interest and sinking fund, the Premier said that it included everything, but that the full amount of depreciation had not been charged. If that is a profit and no charge has been made for depreciation, what is the position? If we have only £500,000, taking a quarter of the two million pounds invested, the depreciation at one per cent. would represent £12,500. If that is so, what becomes of the profit of £7,784?

The Minister for Education: I can assure hon. members that those figures have no reference to the whole of the State trading concerns, and that for two of those trading concerns we have not had balance sheets for last year.

Hon. J. EWING: I thank the Minister for that statement. I think that everyone understood from the Premier that there had been a profit on the State trading concerns to the extent of £7,784, but the Leader of the House now assures me that it was not so.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: That is the profit on two of the trading concerns.

Hon. J. EWING: I am not dealing with only two trading concerns, but with the whole question. Is there a profit or loss on the whole of those State trading concerns? Had the Premier said that the figures he quoted represented the profit on two or three only of the trading concerns, I would have been satisfied.

The Minister for Education: He was dealing with the revenue account.

Hon. J. EWING: Well, I will leave that matter alone for the time being.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Premier said he wanted to make it clear that there was no loss on the State trading concerns.

Hon. J. EWING: That is the inference I drew from the remarks. I understood that the hon. member mentioned this £7,000 odd, and therefore was under the same impression as I was. The inference was that we had made money out of the State trading concerns last year. If we take the "Statistical Register," however, and analyse the figures given there, we will find how alarming the prospect really is. I take the figures

there as being an ordinary trading account showing so much debit and so much credit. They have expended so much and received so much. Curiously enough, it is all on the debit side, and there is no credit at all. The brickworks show a debit of £750, ferries £665, hotels £3,258, implement works £68,152, Boya quarries £617, sawmills £19,590, shipping £120,453, and Wyndham Meat Works £152,775, a total of £366,268. That is a clear trading account. What the Government have to prove is that they have stocks on hand of the value of £366,268. Now have they? If they have not got stocks to the value of £366,000, then on their own showing there is a loss. I have not been able to find any statement giving particulars of the stock in hand with regard to the State sawmills.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Or the implement works.

Hon. J. EWING: The implement works have stock in hand to the value of £70,000 or £80,000, but I would remind members that £100,000 or £120,000 has been cut off the capital of the State implement works, and instead of the works being capitalised at £150,000 they are capitalised at £50,000. We are paying interest on the £150,000, and yet the works are paying interest on only the lower amount, and thereby are able to show very different results from what are actually being attained.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about their working capital?

Hon. J. EWING: That is what we cannot get at. I do not suppose the State steamship service has any stock on hand, or that any other of these trading concerns have any stock on hand with the exception of the Wyndham Meat Works which may be holding considerable stocks. If that would wipe out the whole of the £366,000 to which I have referred, all I can say is that it is bad business. Here we have at Wyndham a huge plant which is gradually deteriorating. I am very sorry for the position in which the Government find themselves because the difficulties are not of their own making. These works have been built up and up until they have reached the enormous capital expenditure of £700,000 to £800,000. On every occasion when the Minister speaks he tells us that the capital expenditure is not finished yet and that the Government want another £120,000 or £200,000 in order to provide adequate storage accommodation. This will bring the capital cost of the works up to about a million of money. I do not suggest that we should harass the Government, but I want members to insist upon there being no misapprehension as to the position. I certainly desire that there should be no misapprehension as to my attitude towards the State trading concerns. At the Wyndham Meat Works we have an enormous stock lying idle, machinery depreciating in value. Members familiar with the North-West know what this means in that part of the State. On the sea coast, the depreciation in con-

nection with the machinery would be simply enormous. No doubt the depreciation there would be equal to 10 or 15 per cent. If the works remain idle during the next two or three years, we shall lose an enormous amount of money.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Why should depreciation be higher there than down here?

Hon. J. EWING: Of course it must be, seeing that the works are located on the sea coast. In an ordinary balance sheet 5 per cent., 6 per cent., or even 10 per cent. is allowed for depreciation, and surely when this amount is allowed on ordinary plant, my estimate for these works in the North-West is well within the mark. It is up to the Government to do something. What, I ask, are they going to do? If the Minister found himself in the same position in his private life, what would he do? He would either have to go bankrupt or get rid of these trading concerns.

The Minister for Education: Private works all over Australia are in the same position.

Hon. J. EWING: The Premier has said that the Government cannot sell these trading concerns. If the Government displayed any energy and determination they would be able to find someone who would sell these trading concerns for them. The Government would only need to advertise them for sale or offer some energetic person a decent commission to negotiate their sale and I am satisfied that they could be sold. I hope that after what has been said in this House, the Government will realise that the best policy they can adopt to-day is to advertise these trading concerns for sale and do away with them. I desire to congratulate the Country Party. I am not a member of the party though I represent a country province, and I claim to be as good as a Country Party man. The Leader of the House, too, represents a country district and he is still a member of the old Liberal Party or the National Party, whatever it is called. The Country Party were always opposed to State trading concerns, but they made one exception. Mr. Willmott pointed out this fact in the course of his election campaign. He stated that the Country Party were in favour of closing down all these trading concerns except the State Implement Works.

Hon. A. Sanderson: It is quite characteristic of them.

Hon. J. EWING: That undoubtedly was the position taken up by the Country Party. Mr. Willmott did not approve of that sort of thing and he said so clearly and distinctly. I congratulate the Country Party, however, on having receded from that position. They say now that if the Government are going to sell any of these trading concerns, let them sell all of them. That is the attitude adopted by the Country Party to-day.

The Minister for Education: The Primary Producers' conference said that each undertaking must stand on its merits.

Hon. J. EWING: If that is so, then I cannot congratulate the Country Party. I was certainly of a different opinion.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: You are thinking of what the President of the conference, Mr. Monger, said.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Monger is a level-headed man who knows what he is talking about and he knows that these trading concerns must be disposed of. He also knows that it is impossible for the Government to differentiate between these trading concerns. However, I do not wish to refer to Mr. Monger, though I appreciate very much the work he has done for Western Australia. This question was discussed by the Primary Producers' Conference and I was under the impression the conference had decided that all these trading concerns should be disposed of. If that was not so, then I must withdraw the congratulations I previously offered to the Country Party.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: The President distinctly said so.

Hon. J. EWING: Though in this Chamber the President's word is law, the same thing does not apply to the Primary Producers' Conference. I congratulate Mr. Miles and also those who have supported him on having put up such a splendid fight. I hope the Country Party will find that they cannot expect to retain the State Implement Works if they are determined to get rid of the other trading concerns. It must be realised that this differentiation cannot take place.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Let them lease the implement works to the farmers if they want them.

Hon. J. EWING: Certainly. I now wish to refer to a few matters which have attracted my attention. The greatest public utility we have to-day is the railway system, and I understand that this month will be the worst month the railways have ever experienced. If this is so, I feel very sorry for Western Australia. The railways are certainly in a bad way. They have an interest bill of £716,000 to pay, and during last year they showed a deficit of £413,000.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is a very light deficit compared with the deficits in other States.

Hon. J. EWING: The other States do not appeal to me at all. We in Western Australia have a duty to perform and let us perform it. Do not let us think of the Commonwealth or of any other State. Let us mark out a policy for ourselves and then pursue it, provided we consider it to be the right policy, irrespective of what other States may be doing. It has been said that the tonnage carried by the railways decreased by 9,000 tons and the passengers carried were less by 678,600, and that at the same time there has been an increase in the staff of the Railway Department of 524 persons. I do not think

there is much in the argument except insofar as the increased staff is concerned. The railways experienced a few weeks of idleness during the last financial year.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Fourteen days.

Hon. J. EWING: It is possible to lose a lot of traffic in 14 days. However, the increase in the number of employees is a point that calls for explanation. The Country Party fought the proposed increase in railway freights tooth and nail but they have not succeeded in moving the Government one iota. On this question the Government remain adamant. They say they are going to continue these heavy freights irrespective of what the Country Party do.

Hon. A. H. Panton: What about the freights on fertilisers?

Hon. J. EWING: It has been pointed out time after time that great value accrues to the State as a result of carrying fertilisers at low rates because greater production and therefore greater traffic is the result.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The more wheat produced the bigger the loss on the railways.

Hon. J. EWING: I have a policy of my own to suggest. There is considerable competition between the railway service and motor lorry traffic between Perth and Fremantle as a result of which the railways are not getting the traffic they used to get. Further, people are trying to avoid the payment of heavy fares by taking up their residence nearer to the city. The heavy fares at present charged are a consideration to working people. These are two results of the policy of the Railway Department in increasing freights and fares. The policy adopted by the Railway Department is one of merely following the line of least resistance. It is a policy easy to carry out. The Railway Department, however, is still losing revenue and we are confronted with this position, that the department is going to raise the freights on agricultural produce, timber and other lines unless the traffic improves very much, and raise them to such an extent that the industries in a large number of our country districts will be annihilated.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: That is not what the Minister for Railways states.

Hon. J. EWING: I am not at one with the Minister for Railways on a good many points. I am satisfied that he is quite wrong in his statement as published in the Press this morning. There is no doubt that these very high railway freights are doing great injury to our primary production. Members know that the man situated a couple of hundred miles from Perth cannot now get his produce to market and make the business pay. The result of these high railway freights is to increase the cost of living. The railways should reduce the freights and carry produce at a reasonable price and then the cost of living also would come down. I noticed last night with the very greatest regret a remark made in another place by the Minister for Railways.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member is not in order in alluding to the debates of the current session in another place. There is a growing tendency in that direction.

Hon. J. EWING: Have I the right to refer to the Minister for Railways?

Hon. G. W. Miles: Refer to his statement as published in this morning's paper.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member may refer to the Minister for Railways.

Hon. J. EWING: I saw in this morning's newspaper the following remarks attributed to the Minister for Railways, who otherwise has shown himself most sympathetic towards the Collie coal mining industry, and has endeavoured to help it in every possible way by providing wagons, and so forth—

The PRESIDENT: I should advise the hon. member not to be too accurate or too definite as to the source of the statement he is about to quote.

Hon. J. EWING: Very well, Mr. President. The Minister is reported as having stated that, in order to benefit local production, Collie coal was used by the Railway Department where £12,500 yearly could be saved by the use of Newcastle coal. Those are very serious words, which may do a great deal of injury to our coal industry, and may prevent people from developing other coal mines in this State. A bald statement like that, put forward without any extenuating circumstances or explanation, must prove harmful. I have known Collie for 20 years, and I know the difficulty that field has had with the Railway Department. I thought that was all over. But when the department imagine they could use Newcastle coal to greater advantage than the local fuel, they represent this to the Minister, and the Minister states it publicly. I want to know from the Minister how those figures were arrived at. If it is costing more to use Collie coal in the outlying portions of Western Australia than to use Newcastle coal there, that circumstance is absolutely due to the action of the Government themselves in increasing railway freights. They have to debit themselves with those railway freights; they cannot get out of doing that. I hope the Minister will be good enough to state exactly how his figures have been arrived at, how much freight is involved in them, and so forth. I am not going to accept the statement as it has been baldly given. I am satisfied that anybody connected with the Collie coal industry can demonstrate that it does not pay the Government to use one ounce of Newcastle coal on any portion of the railway system of Western Australia. I, therefore, take the strongest exception to the Minister's bald statement. Having a notice of motion with reference to electricity on the Notice Paper, I am not going to touch upon that subject, except to say that the Tramway Department have this year lost £10,000, notwithstanding the putting up of fares, and that they lost that money by reason of the action of the Government themselves in putting up

the freight on coal to such an extent that it is costing the Government 1.24d. to supply a unit of electricity to the Tramway Department. They have been obliged to put up their charge for electricity to that figure in order to make any showing at all after debiting themselves with the present high freights on Collie coal. I really do not know what the Government can be thinking about. Ever since I have been a public man, my policy has been, and is to-day, to give the people the advantage of the Railway Department throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia. I do not think the railways should be called upon to pay really any interest at all. I have already stated that the interest charge on our railways amounts to £716,000, which seems a large sum of money to forego altogether. But the members of the Country Party, who have taken a special interest in this matter, will, if they go into it further, find that direct taxation would be much more advantageous to them, with freights reduced to a minimum, than paying the interest on railway loans in the shape of the present high freights.

Hon. H. Stewart: In 1913 the railways made a profit after paying interest and sinking fund.

Hon. J. EWING: That was before the war. Indeed, I believe that in one year the department made a profit of £268,000; but that was long before the troubles and adversities which now beset us. The course which I suggest affords, in my opinion, the best and speediest means of successfully developing our territory. If the farmer has his land tax doubled, he will not object provided he is getting his produce carried to market at minimum freights. That method would save him hundreds of pounds. As for the people of the cities and towns, they are practically dependent on the country, and they should not mind paying a little to assist the development of our lands.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: They have a nasty habit of passing it back.

Hon. J. EWING: At all events, that is a policy which will enable us to get our primary industries going and enable us to export. Mr. Lynn, who has just entered the Chamber, will back me up when I say that unless railway freights are reduced, we shall not have any success in Western Australia. I have the greatest sympathy for hon. members who represent the goldfields. I know those hon. members will be with me in the endeavour to secure reduction of railway freights. Ever since I have been in this House there has been one cry from the goldfields members against the impositions in the shape of freights placed upon the residents of the goldfields. Of course we know that the goldfields made the State of Western Australia. Long before we had a policy of land settlement, the goldfields started everything going. Nobody ever forgets that. No Government ever forgets it, or will ever be allowed to forget it. But it seems to me that Western Australia has not been very

liberal to the goldfields in the matter of railway freights. If the Government will take heed of what is said, it is my earnest desire to point out that a policy of cheap railway freights, and meeting any deficiency by direct taxation, will give the goldfields the relief they need. Mr. Harris will have something to talk about if he can go to his constituents and tell them that there is a possibility of getting their railway freights reduced by half. People will be far better pleased to pay something in direct taxation than to go on paying the enormous railway freights they have to bear at the present time. I was pleased to learn from the Governor's Speech that a great deal is being done on the goldfields to assist prospecting, that the Minister for Mines has been so energetic as to assist the industry by starting out 70 or 80 prospecting parties. I do not know whether any good has resulted yet, but I hope there will be some tangible outcome from the expenditure of the money. Although things look rather flat on our goldfields just now, we must remember that at any moment the stroke of a pick may bring fortune to a prospector and a new goldfield to this State. That is the great thing. I consider that the man who goes out prospecting for gold or tin or coal is absolutely living the life. He thinks, "Although I am broke to-day, to-morrow I may be wealthy." That is the spirit which keeps these men going; and if they have that spirit, let us help them. I offer my congratulations to the Government on the assistance they have given to prospecting. It is wonderful to see how old prospectors stick to the game. Once in it, they would rather die looking for an ounce of gold than live in luxury in Perth. Take the position which arose the other day in connection with the ore development—telluride I think it was—in the Lake View mine. I believe that certain people wished to take the mine over and find the necessary capital to work it. The existing law, however, prevents them from doing so immediately. I am glad the Government are about to amend that law, so that people will be able to invest their money in propositions of this kind without being robbed through the medium of taxation. Reverting to the coal industry, let me say that my colleague, Mr. Rose, when speaking the other evening, put the position very clearly; and I am sure the Collie people are very grateful to the hon. member for bringing the facts under the notice of the Government. Mr. Rose specially mentioned that the Railway Department can effect great economies in connection with the Collie station. I suppose the trade of that town is second to none outside Perth to-day. It is an enormous trade. It includes not only coal, but also timber and wheat. Mr. Rose said that as regards the Collie railway yard the department could obtain a better grade and more conveniences for weighing coal and so on. The present practice of the department is to convey the coal five miles from one mine to weigh it, and then to bring it back again

five miles—at what cost? By a little capital expenditure they would be able to improve the position, and reduce the cost very considerably. I am grateful to the Minister for Railways for his promise to go definitely into the question of bins. Before he decides on what he does, however, I want him to thoroughly understand the position. It is not a good thing to have Collie coal lying too long in bins. Bins may answer at Fremantle, but may not at Bunbury, where there should be 6-ton hopper wagons and a crane with about a 12-ton lift. I now desire to refer to a place which I had the honour of representing many years ago in another Chamber—namely, Greenbushes. I visited Greenbushes lately, and there came back to my recollection the marvellous activity which used to prevail there, and the splendid men who formerly worked on the field. You, Mr. President, may have visited the old tin fields. Many of the old tin miners are still there, but for some years, I regret to say, they have not been doing too well. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) pointed out the other day that 400 tons per annum of alluvial tin—

The PRESIDENT: Is the hon. member again referring to the debates in another place of the current session?

Hon. J. EWING: No, Sir. This is a statement the member for Nelson made to me in conversation—that for a period of 20 years 400 tons of alluvial tin had been sent out of Greenbushes annually. At any rate that is not being done now and there is no prosperity there. The people in that district are anxious that a bore should be sent there to test the country. We have the Collie coalfield in full work and the Government are boring all over the State in the hope of finding additional coalfields, but we have no other tinfield except at Pilbara, and it would be a fair thing to put down a bore at Greenbushes to see whether or not lodes exist there. I hope the Minister will give consideration to the suggestion. I congratulate the Premier on what he has done in connection with the work of settling soldiers on the land. I do not think there is a man in the State who is not pleased with what has been done in this direction. The Premier may not be regarded as being particularly keen so far as other industries are concerned, and on some occasions I have been compelled to take exception to what he has done, but there is no doubting his faith in the question of the settlement of the land, and we are fortunate in having Sir James Mitchell at the helm to-day, because under his guidance the lands of the State are going to be put to valuable use, and it is to the land that we must look to get us out of our troubles. The Premier is a man with a big heart and I hope every hon. member will give him the encouragement to which he is entitled in connection with this policy which he has so much at heart. In the South-West many soldiers have been settled on repurchased estates and most of them are doing well. I am

convinced that there will be very few failures. The Premier, however, is going beyond that; he is going in for group settlements which is the only effective way of peopling the heavily timbered lands and bringing them under cultivation.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Group settlements have been a failure in Victoria.

Hon. J. EWING: At any rate this is the only way in which we can settle heavily timbered country. I shall criticise the Premier every time I think he is wrong, but I do not think my criticism will be necessary so far as land settlement is concerned. I think the Premier knows far more about it than any man in Western Australia to-day. A great deal has been said about the unimproved lands of the State, and in this direction the Government will have to be forced into taking action. In the south-western part of the State we have large areas of unimproved lands. Especially is this the case in and around Pinjarra. There are opportunities there which exist in very few places. There is the Murray River available and the possibility of irrigation is very big, in addition to which the land is rich. There are large estates in that district, some of which are unimproved, and the Government should not fail to secure possession of them.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Or tax them.

Hon. J. EWING: We find the newspapers urging the Government to take action in connection with these unimproved lands. Even those papers which are supporting the Government are insisting that the Government should lose no time in taking steps to bring these lands into cultivation. Moreover, I have heard utterances in this House and outside as well in a similar strain, and it seems to be clear that the Government will have to look into the position. When it is proposed to take action I trust that the position of the old settlers will be considered. There are people in Western Australia to-day who say "Tax the land; tax these people out of existence."

Hon. J. Cornell: Force them to use it.

Hon. J. EWING: I realise that many of these old settlers have done wonderful work in the State, and they should be considered before anything in the shape of heavy taxation is thought of. The Government, in my opinion, should consult these people and ascertain what they require. It may be said that the owners of these properties may advance the price of the land. My opinion is that they will not do such a thing. The Government should appoint someone who understands the value of these properties, and in that way arrive at what is a reasonable and fair price. If an agreement cannot be arrived at by this method, I say without hesitation that the land should be taxed or acquired. The time to take action is opportune, seeing that we still have so many soldiers for whom we require agricultural land. Immigrants must also be considered, and if we can secure these old estates and place them at the dis-

posal of new settlers, it will not be long before there is prosperity throughout the length and breadth of the State.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Resume the land and appoint an arbitrator to determine the value.

Hon. J. EWING: I would not do that. I consider that the fairest way would be to approach the owners and first see whether they are reasonable people. If they prove themselves unreasonable, then the Government can deal with them. I am with the Premier in his policy of opening up the country south of Bridgetown. Some people declare that we should not spend any more money in building railways. But let me urge that the construction of railways such as those proposed from Big Brook to Denmark, and also from Bridgetown to Mount Barker, will be the means of providing enough timber traffic which will be more than sufficient to pay for the cost of construction.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The timber traffic on the Preston line has proved very profitable.

Hon. J. EWING: The argument was used in connection with that line, that it would not pay, but it has paid over and over again. The timber traffic is responsible for that. Sir Newton Moore contended that the timber along the route would pay for the construction of the line, and his belief proved to be correct. Not only had that railway paid, but it has been the means of bringing about successful settlement along the Preston Valley.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: The southern lines, in spite of the heavy grades, are paying better than the other lines in the State to-day.

Hon. J. EWING: At any rate I have quoted a concrete case, where the timber is paying for the line and where the construction of that line has been more than justified. The same thing will apply to the other two lines I have mentioned. At the South-West agricultural conferences which have been held each year, Mr. Money, the member for Bunbury, has advocated in connection with the construction of roads that assistance should be given by the Railway Department towards this end. Mr. Money has advocated that the Railway Department should get into touch with the roads boards and supply the necessary material at cost price. The Government should realise that it is very important that a step in this direction should be taken. With regard to the ports of the State, I would like to say a few words. The ports of the North and that at Albany can be looked after by the members interested; I desire to say something about the ports of Bunbury and Busselton. At various times the Government have spent a good deal of money on the Busselton jetty, and in recent years they have placed a sum of money on the Estimates for improvements to that jetty. The money, however, was never spent. I urge on the Leader of the House to bring under the notice of the Minister in charge of jetties the importance of giving this question attention. A sum of money, I think it was £50,000,

was voted for the lengthening and widening of that jetty. There is a considerable traffic in timber there. I am not asking for unwarranted expenditure; the money has been voted, but I suppose it has been appropriated for some other purpose. I trust that when representations are made some relief will be given in this direction. So far as the port of Bunbury is concerned, I do not know what to think about it. The intention was, when the breakwater was built, to erect wharves along it. The people of Bunbury, though they are not all engineers, are people of common sense, and they would not hear of this proposal. It is sufficient to say that the intention was not carried into effect. The Government have improved the jetty, and it is a very good structure so far as it goes. That is to say, it meets the needs of the coal and the timber trades.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Was the harbour deepened?

Hon. J. EWING: What we require there is a commodious harbour. I am not saying that we require it any more than any other port in the State. But it is important that something should be done when we remember the great territory which will feed this harbour. Unless accommodation is provided there, the trade will have to go to Fremantle and people cannot afford to pay the freights which the additional distance will involve. Besides, that is a wrong policy. Every port should have its geographical trade. The Minister in charge of harbour construction should have these facts clearly brought under his notice. Another matter that should be emphasised is the enormous silting which has been taking place in that harbour. Those places where, a couple of years ago, one could bathe, are now covered with sand. Some time ago a dredge, which was kept employed at Bunbury, was taken away and the result was that silting went on at an alarming rate. Now the dredge is back again and is employed near the wharves. But all the time the silting is taking place around the breakwater. It is imperative that something should be done at the harbour without delay, so that steps might be taken to carry out the intention to build silos and refrigerating works and provide for cold storage and everything of that kind. It may be said that the Government cannot afford to undertake this expenditure, but every effort should be made to overcome the difficulty. Before I came to Western Australia I was associated with places in New South Wales which were not as big as Bunbury and which did not have anything like the same trade; and which places, under the management of a trust, collected their own dues and carried out their own works very successfully. Will the Government consider the advisability of forming a harbour trust at Bunbury? The trust could carry out their own works, borrow their own money, collect their own revenue and, under a Minister, have charge of all their own affairs. The money would

soon be forthcoming, and a commodious harbour would be built at Bunbury without delay. We are told that to develop the South-West we must have drainage with irrigation. That is a *sine qua non*. The drainage, of course, can be carried out without great expense. We have in the Collic River the most magnificent storage for water in Western Australia. It is said by those who know that 40,000 million gallons of water can be stored there, or seven times as much as the water in Mundaring. I have seen the papers relating to it, and I must admit they do not say that. But certainly they hold out great hopes of an enormous irrigation scheme from that source. I ask the Government is it not possible to go thoroughly into this matter and see what the holding capacity of the ground is, and what the expense will be? It would then be determined whether we can get this enormous quantity of water with which to render fertile the magnificent land in the South-West. It is well worth the attention of the Government. I know that the Minister for Works has already given some consideration to it. At any rate, if the Government can do something in that direction I shall be very pleased indeed. I cannot conclude without a word about our position under Federation. I feel distressed and anxious about our position. When we see the enormous and wild expenditure by the Commonwealth, the huge departments they are building up and the enormous salaries being paid, it is time for us to wonder where it is going to end. Only the other day Sir Denison Miller, possibly a capable man, who has built up the Commonwealth Bank, and who was receiving £2,000 a year on which he should be able to live, was granted an increase of £500.

Hon. H. Stewart: No, that was only the deputy governor of the bank.

Hon. J. EWING: At all events, this is not the time to enormously increase salaries that are already large.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It is a question of whether or not he is worth it.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: Do not make any mistake; the governor of the bank receives over £5,000 per annum.

Hon. J. EWING: I do not say the position is not worth it, but whatever it is and whoever the man may be, he was given an increase of £500. Certainly he should not have got such a big increase at a time like this. The true spirit of Federation was simply that the Commonwealth should take over Defence, Quarantine, Post and Telegraphs, Customs, and a few other important departments. We would never have entered Federation had we been able to foresee the result. The Commonwealth take from us every possible avenue of taxation. It seems to me the position is becoming intolerable. They hardly leave us a feather to fly with.

The Minister for Education: They have this year a huge surplus to which, under the Constitution, we are entitled.

Hon. J. EWING: I was most seriously opposed to the amalgamation of the State and Federal Taxation Departments. The Premier says it will save the State £20,000 per annum. I do not think anybody knows that. Our position is growing worse in consequence of the Federal expenditure.

Hon. A. Sanderson: This Chamber passed the Bill for the amalgamation.

Hon. J. EWING: Yes, and the hon. member and I voted against it.

It is very seldom that a private member can influence the Government.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Will you support a movement for secession?

Hon. J. EWING: No, the hon. member does not understand. Fancy a man in the twentieth century talking about secession! I am not in favour of that, but I am in favour of putting up a fight against the disadvantages under which we suffer to-day. The Minister for Education is with us. He is a strong advocate of our rights as against the Commonwealth. I have heard it rumoured in the street that the next move will be the handing over of the Savings Bank to the Commonwealth, so that the Commonwealth may take all the money we have there and use it in the extravagant way in which they are using other money to-day. We did not know much about the amalgamation of the Taxation Departments until the Bill reached this House. Exactly the same thing may happen in regard to the Savings Bank.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The only way out is to move secession at the conference.

Hon. J. EWING: I am hopeful that with equal representation at the conference we shall get a hearing. Judging by the way the tariff is being steadily increased, it seems likely that soon we shall have no imports whatever into Australia. I agree with Mr. Hamersley that the surplus water in the Mundaring Weir should be utilised for the people of Perth and suburbs. Even to-day water there is running to waste by millions of gallons. It is all nonsense to say that it cannot be utilised and supplied to Perth. The position should be gone into very carefully indeed before it is accepted that this cannot be done. I entirely agree with Mr. Miles that the Government should erect a fitting memorial to the late Lord Forrest. I would not ask the people to subscribe to the cost of that monument. I would make them subscribe by taxation. It is only fitting that the Government should do something to commemorate the life and work of that great statesman.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [6.10]: In common with other members I very much deplore the death of the Hon. E. M. Clarke. He served his country well both in a public and a private capacity. When the Grim Reaper called, Mr. Clarke was well on in the evening of his life. I regret very much the absence through ill health of my colleague, Mr. Dodd. He told me that, if possible, he

would be here to-day. He is more anxious about the business of Parliament than he is about his own health. However, that is a natural characteristic of the man. I am sure hon. members will join with me in wishing him restoration to some semblance of his former health, and that he may long continue to grace this Chamber.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. CORNELL: Since last I addressed the House it has been my privilege to visit an outpost of the British Empire, namely the Union of South Africa and Rhodesia. An outstanding feature to the credit of South Africa is that two races almost constantly at war for many years past, who speak different tongues, are now working together for the benefit of their Union. A recent visitor from South Africa said he was astounded at the progress and resources of Australia. I can reciprocate by saying that before I went there I was as ignorant of South African affairs as is the average South African of Australian affairs. That is not in the best interests of the unity of the British Empire. If there are any two outposts of Empire between which trade might well be improved, those outposts are South Africa and Australia, particularly Western Australia. I congratulate hon. members on having averted what might have proved a calamity. The ceiling of this Chamber was in a much more serious condition than was believed. A member of another place was rude enough to say that it was shockingly unfortunate that the condition of the ceiling should have been discovered. Be that as it may, the discovery was a tribute to the eagle eye of Mr. Duffell, who first noticed the defect. The result of the general elections has been the reinstatement of the Mitchell Administration. It has been said that they were lucky in getting back. The fact remains that they are there by the will of a majority of the people.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I was referring to the decision of the electors given last March for the reinstatement of the Mitchell Government. At such a stage in the existence of the Government, the best method that can be pursued by any member is, to the best of his ability, to offer constructive and not destructive criticism. As time goes on and as age mellow, if it does not altogether submerge, my impetuosity, I am slowly but surely learning that displays of destructive criticism may be all very well from the point of view of fireworks, but, as far as doing any good to those whom we desire to serve is concerned, they amount to very little. I at all times reserve to myself the right of political independence, but I will endeavour to the best of my ability to assist the Government to carry this State a little "forrarder" in the financial world, and in the other spheres into which it may enter. I congratulate the Leader of the House, and through him, the

Premier, upon the Government's renewal of office. I join with other hon. members in paying my tribute to the optimism of the Premier respecting the State and the possibilities of its development. Optimism without imagination, however, is not optimism at all. The only direction in which I find fault with the Premier is that he lacks imagination. He may be so circumstanced that he has all the faculties of imagination, but has not been able to impart them to others. He must endeavour to inculcate into people that spirit of optimism which is so manifest in him. Unless he develops this necessary power of imagination he will fail to convey to others that optimism with which he is imbued. We have seen lately the innovation of abolishing Honorary Ministers. In another place this event will not have so much effect upon Ministers. I must, however, extend to the Leader of this House my sincere sympathy in the work that he has been called upon to perform in piloting through the House the number of Bills that come before it.

Hon. J. Duffell: He is equal to the occasion.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is unfair to ask him to do this. In another place there are five Ministers to do the work, but in this Chamber all must be done by one Minister. It is not a fair burden to place upon him. The position now is that he can only carry out these onerous duties, notwithstanding his ability, energy and perseverance, by the courtesy of hon. members.

Hon. J. Duffell: He has a harder task than the Leader of the Opposition in another place.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is so. In another place it is the duty of the Leader of the Opposition to tear things down, but in this Chamber the Minister is called upon to build things up and get measures through. The question which is absorbing the minds of most people, who take an intelligent interest in the country, is our financial drift. The burden of reconstructing the finances has been imposed upon the Government, and whether we in this Chamber are satisfied or not the electors have placed this responsibility upon them. It is pleasing to know that the Government have now been able to show that our deficit is accounted for by the running of our public utilities.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And our trading concerns.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think it would be only tedious repetition for me to go into the question of trading concerns. When the time is ripe for us to deal with them I will have my say upon the subject. The chief of our public utilities is the railways. It may be inferred at a glance that there should be a policy of retrenchment in our railways—wholesale dismissals of men and wholesale curtailments in our services, so that the trains that are run and the facilities that are offered will be such as to square the ledger. That might be all right in a private concern, but when we take into consideration the magnitude of the State, its exigencies, and the

requirements of its inhabitants, I think we can at once dismiss the idea of running the railways on purely business lines to square the ledger.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: Do you not think the inauguration of the zone system would assist matters?

Hon. J. CORNELL: We have above all to take into consideration the requirements, the necessities of, and the accommodation needed for the people. The people of this State are not situated in the same way as those in Victoria are. The railways in Western Australia cover a greater area (with the possible exception of Queensland) than in any other State of the Commonwealth. Our population too is more scattered. I believe that there must be some loss in running these public utilities, when we consider what is taking place in the case of railways in other parts of the world. Alongside our losses on the railways we must place the services rendered to and the boons conferred upon the inhabitants of the State. One of the reasons for the decline in our railway revenue is the retrogression of our gold mining industry. Ten years ago there was a gigantic passenger traffic and food supply freight at high rates over the railways between Perth and Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Norseman, Laverton, and other outback mining centres. In those days 90 per cent. of the beef consumed by the people there went over the railways from the coast. Our gold mining industry has now seriously declined and the population greatly decreased. Instead of beef, for instance, going from Perth to Kalgoorlie and the Murchison, the greater proportion of the beef consumed on the goldfields either reaches there on the hoof or comes from South Australia. Our greatest need so far as the railway system is concerned is prosperity on the goldfields. Nothing will bring us back to normal more quickly. Our only hope in that direction lies in our hardy spartan, the prospector. The Commissioner of Railways occupies a very unenviable position and has a difficult task to perform. Long before the war the railways had been allowed to drift. However much we may criticise the Commissioner, we must admit that he is placed in that office for a definite term. We should, therefore, endeavour by helpful criticism and honest suggestions to assist him to get us out of this difficulty. If we adopt that policy and the Commissioner fails, we can then say to him that we have helped him, have weighed him in the balance, and found him wanting. Until that time we should not condemn him. The two classes on the suburban railway system should be abolished. There is no question about two classes on the tramways. Our metropolitan railway service is nothing more nor less than a tramway service. Railway-men have told me that at certain periods of the day there is no necessity to run such heavy trains. In Victoria, where the system is electrified, it is possible to pull off carriages at certain periods of the day and have a greater number in the morning and even-

ing, and fewer at other times of the day. The same thing should be applied to our service. During the winter months, when comparatively few people are travelling except at the regular times, lighter trains should be run than at present is the case. During the last three years I have had an opportunity of seeing the tramway systems of many other cities in the world. I have seen trams operating in Alexandria, Toulon, Marseilles, London, Bournemouth, and in other parts of England, in Capetown, Johannesburg, Bloemfontein and Durban. I have also seen the trams running in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and Adelaide. After seeing all these different tramway systems operating, I think the worst of the lot is the one we have in Perth.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Have you been to Fremantle?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, but ours is the worst of the lot. I do not know why it is so; it should not be so. It may be that owing to the lay out of the city the trams start from one point, all cars operating from the car barn which is situated at the eastern end of Hay Street. I think that all cars running east and west should start from the car barn which would be the permanent station for those cars. The trams operating north and south should have a permanent car barn and starting point elsewhere. Nowhere else will one find three cars running on the tail of one another and none following. Why should that be so? A benevolent country pays for this sort of thing, but I know that hundreds of people, including women and children, pay for seats on tram cars and never get them. Surely the importance of Perth warrants a better tramway system than we have at present. Despite the croaking that goes on in different places, I am convinced that if Perth gets a decent tramway system the people are prepared to pay for it. I cannot suggest any improvements, but I think members will agree that it would be impossible to find a worse tramway system than the one we have here. Another matter which has been touched upon by other members in this Chamber—although there is only one member of the section I desire to refer to who is at present just now—relates to the Country Party. I notice that references have been made in another place in a very disparaging manner to the Country Party. If members will carry their minds back they will remember that at one time I referred to the members of the Country Party as bushrangers. At that period they certainly were bushrangers. To-day the position is that the Government of this State is vested in a Cabinet half composed of Country Party members and half of Nationalists. The Country Party have justified themselves in the eyes of the electors of Western Australia. I desire hon. members to understand that I am not sparring to join that party. Not only in Western Australia, but in every State throughout Australia and in the Com-

monwealth as well, the Country Party have justified themselves. At one stage I expressed the opinion that the genuine farmer was not represented as he should be in Parliament. That day has gone by and whether we like it or not, we are in duty bound by the mandate of the electors to extend the same respect, courtesy and assistance to the members of the Country Party as to the members of any other dominant political party in our legislative halls. It seems somewhat anomalous that we should hear from Nationalists and prominent Labourites references to the methods followed by the Country Party, who are only following similar tactics and methods to those pursued by the National Party and the Labour Party.

Hon. E. H. Harris: The Country Party have adopted the tactics of the Labour Party.

Hon. J. CORNELL: They are adopting those methods, but they are participating in the Government of the State.

Hon. J. Duffell: They adopted the hire purchase system.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Referring to the wheat pool, I favour the creation of a Commonwealth wheat pool. I was one of those who, when a Bill was first introduced to establish a pool—and that measure was opposed by members of the Country Party—asserted that the wheat pool had come to stay. I am not often given credit for statements I make, but to-day members of the Country Party and farmers of this State have said to me: "If you ever uttered words of wisdom, Cornell, you did so on that occasion." If a pool was necessary during the course of the war when the existence of the nation was at stake and when it was necessary that the nation should be fully equipped to come out of the great struggle successfully, it is equally necessary in times of peace. To-day the farmer has recognised the wisdom of the pool and he is satisfied with the management of the pool. Who is better qualified to give an opinion on the question of whether or not the pool should be continued than the man who grows the wheat? I think that quite 95 per cent. of the farmers in this State as well as in New South Wales and Victoria, and also in South Australia—if the farmers there had the real question put before them clearly—are in favour of the continuance of a wheat pool. A federal pool can be run successfully, but if we cannot have a Commonwealth pool we have to take this question into consideration: Can the farmers of this State run a pool off their own bat? I have doubts as to whether they can or cannot. I am inclined to think that a distinct pool in Western Australia is not an easy matter to accomplish. At any rate, it would not be so easy to conduct as the Commonwealth pool.

Hon. J. Duffell: There are indications that some will run amok.

Hon. J. CORNELL: During my two recent visits to the Eastern States I learned that the main movers in favour of the abolition of the pool and a reversion to pre-war conditions, are not the farmers, but those individuals, firms and corporations who bought wheat from the farmers in pre-war days. The result has been that we have seen evidence in the natural corollary of a combination of the Labour Party and the Country Party—the representatives of the workers and the producers—to defeat the Government who were in favour of going back to pre-war conditions. I doubt whether there will be any necessity for further argument regarding that pool after the elections.

Hon. J. Duffell: If some of the farmers had their way, the people would be paying 1s. a loaf for their bread.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have yet to learn—and I was a farmer until I was starved off the land—that the farmers or the workers can strike a harder bargain than some other sections of the commercial community. I am inclined to think that farmers or workmen would be more generous if they had one in a corner than would be experienced at the hands of other gentlemen in the commercial community. Whether it be a Federal pool or an independent State pool, if the collective credit of the Commonwealth is called in to finance a pool, the people of the Commonwealth must take a big share in the administration of the pool. If the collective credit of the community is not drawn upon I think the farmers should be allowed to run the pool themselves. I would go further and advocate a pool for a period of five years.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: There is nothing to prevent the farmers doing that themselves.

Hon. J. CORNELL: In addition I would advocate the price for wheat for home consumption being fixed at a flat rate over a period of five years. Surely we are able to decide what is a fair price to pay for wheat for local consumption without depending on anything like the world's parity which varies from month to month.

Hon. J. Duffell: You have no idea what will occur in the commercial world in three months' time.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I know what would happen and that is that everything would go to the commercial community. I congratulate the Government on the statement appearing in the Governor's Speech regarding the settlement of soldiers on the land. The details show that 3,954 soldiers have actually been settled and the commitments amount to £4,383,000. This gives an average of about £1,089, per soldier. Compared with what has been done in the interests of the returned soldier in other States, Western Australia can congratulate herself upon the achievements here. Reference has been made to what the Premier (Sir James Mitchell) has done in the interests of soldier settlement. I desire to give every

credit to the Premier for what he has done, but there is one man in addition to whom I take off my hat and he is Mr. McLarty, the managing trustee of the Agricultural Bank and Controller of Soldier Settlement. The test of whether Mr. McLarty has succeeded or not can best be obtained from the soldiers themselves. They are all satisfied with Mr. McLarty's attitude because they realise that he has given them a very fair deal. He has not allowed them to go where he thinks they cannot succeed and he has put no man on land where he has thought he himself could not succeed. I desire to draw attention to a wild and woolly statement made by a gentleman named Thomson in another place. He said that Queensland had done better than all the remaining States collectively.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Which Thomson was that?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not desire to particularise. I do not know at what hour of the evening the statement was made. I recently attended a soldiers' conference in Brisbane where all the States were represented. We discussed the question of land settlement and I found that every representative from the different States was not content to place his particular State second to any other State. Surely that is the best answer to the statement in another place. Queensland has not done better than any of the other five States of the Commonwealth. It shows that in the opinion of soldiers themselves the other States have done equally well, if not better, than Queensland. I have been given to understand that under our soldier settlement scheme, ex-soldiers who had conditional purchase land either before enlistment or selected subsequently, would have 50 per cent. returned to them. That was a generous act on behalf of the people of this State. It was a due recognition of their services in defence of this country. Speaking subject to correction, however, I understand that the soldiers, who in many cases do not know where they stand, have been asked to pay for their land in half the period given other settlers to pay for their land. That is to say, a man who was not a soldier had perhaps 20 years' in which, to pay for his conditional purchase land and the man who was a soldier had 10 years, or in any case less than 20 years.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That ought to be altered.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I agree. Men going on virgin land are in an infinitely better position in the second 10 years than in the first 10 years.

Hon. J. Mills: They get the first five years free.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is so, but they have to make up for it afterwards.

Hon. J. Duffell: In the next five years?

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is the point I want cleared up. The intention was that the price should be reduced by 50 per cent. and the period allowed for payment should still be the same. It is too soon to offer

any optimistic opinion as to whether soldier settlement is going to be successful. It is necessary to understand the psychology of the soldier in the aggregate before one can venture a prophecy in that direction. The only real test we can apply is the test of time. For the man who will not try to make good after the State has done so much for him, the League, with which I have the honour to be connected, has very little time. As regards immigration, the Governor's Speech states that 3,400 immigrants were received during the two years ended the 30th June, 1920. No figures are given for the year ended June, 1921. No figures are given as to how many of the 3,400 settlers went on the land. The Speech goes on to say—

In view of the alarming disproportion of metropolitan to rural population as disclosed by the recent census, it is increasingly necessary that new arrivals should be men and women suitable for country life and adapted to country industries.

I am one of those who believe that there cannot be too many people in Australia, and I also believe that any system of immigration must be regulated. Men should not be lured to come here under false pretences. If they are, their value to the State will be destroyed immediately they are undecieved. There is another channel in which I think we could direct our energies with a view to settling the country instead of bringing people out from England. Why not encourage our own people who are in the cities to go out into the country? Why not devote attention to this proposal? The controller of the soldier settlement scheme would prefer to settle soldiers rather than immigrants on the land. This is tantamount to saying that our own people are more likely to succeed in land settlement. In the past too much claptrap has been spoken about getting immigrants to settle here, and too little attention has been devoted to encouraging our own people to settle on the land. If our own people were settled on the land and the immigrants took their places in the towns to some degree, the immigrants and the country would be the better for it. Personally I prefer the Scotsman as an immigrant, but with all due respect to those who come from the old country I would back the young city-bred Australian to make good on the land in half the time that one of the best type of immigrants from the old country would do. I now come to what I consider is a most vital problem, namely that affecting the mining industry. No one doubts the importance of mining to this State. Say what we like about the agricultural and pastoral resources, we must admit that the prime factor responsible for the population the State contains to-day was the gold discoveries. Our gold output is on the decline. There are two ways in which this decline may be checked. One is by the opening up of new discoveries and the other is to do better with the resources we know of. I hope I shall be pardoned if I draw com-

parisons between mining in Johannesburg and in Western Australia. Though I have represented the Golden Mile in this Parliament for 10 years, I was agreeably surprised during my sojourn in South Africa to find how far Johannesburg was ahead of us. I may be assailed for referring to this, but here goes, I shall take the consequences. There has been great antipathy and objection to the concentration of leases and labour in our mining areas. This was justified because the concentration of leases and labour was not safeguarded as it should have been. I make bold to say that there is a good many years of life in the mines of the Golden Mile yet if we only adopt some up-to-date system of concentration of leases, and consolidate our labour, effort and output. Though under such a system fewer men in the aggregate might be employed, the life of the field would be considerably lengthened. We have a group of mines, the Great Boulder, Horseshoe, Ivanhoe, Perseverance—the latter working on tribute, and paying perhaps the biggest profit of any—the Associated, Kalgurli, South Kalgurli, and Lake View, all within a radius of half a mile. We have separate management, separate batteries, separate treatment plants, everything separate. If they were all working under a system of concentration of leases such as prevails in Johannesburg, we could do away with a great proportion of the overhead charges and scrap a great many of the plants, retaining only one up-to-date plant. When I mention a mine like the New Modderfontein group, which works only one shift underground in the 24 hours and can keep 600 head of stamps going, members will agree that it is a wonderful tribute to what the concentration of leases, labour and effort can accomplish.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are the ore bodies bigger than ours?

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is a big question to generalise on, but they have more faces. One of the disadvantages of the Golden Mile, not experienced at Johannesburg, is in connection with the lay out of the mines. Our mines were laid out for the raising of high grade and not low grade ore. The lay out does not permit of the economical breaking and hauling of low grade ore. People often wonder why such big profits are made by the South African mines out of low grade ore. It is not all due to the employment of coloured labour. It is due to the gigantic lay out of the field and the facilities available for handling the ore. I saw more underground labour-saving appliances on some of the Kimberley diamond mines and Johannesburg mines in one day than I have seen on the Golden Mile in all my existence. In South Africa they recognise that there is nothing so reliable as the mechanical factor. I have many reasons for wishing to see the life of our mining fields prolonged. Some may think that I am actuated only by selfish motives, fearing that the downfall of Kalgoorlie might mean my downfall politically. I would

point out, however, that I am liable to receive the noble order of the sack whether Kalgoorlie continues or not. I am anxious in the interests of the State and the business people and community generally of Kalgoorlie and Boulder that the best methods possible should be adopted to prolong the life of these fields. As regards prospecting, I am a member of the Prospectors' Board. The figures given as to the number of prospectors who have been sent out are correct, but I venture to say that the board are not satisfied with the results. The board are of opinion that unless some alteration is made in the policy we shall accomplish very little in the way of keeping the industry going. So far as the board are concerned no initiative is possible. The initiative must rest with the men. Although the State offers inducements for men to go out, those inducements do not amount to much. For two men going out, a horse, a turnout, and £1 a week sustenance for each man are provided. A man who goes out prospecting on £1 a week is not taking a joy ride, and is not going out for fun. The existing prospecting arrangements have had two years' trial and, with the exception of Ives' Find we have practically nothing to show for the work. The position must be altered in the near future; we must endeavour to break fresh ground. I was greatly interested in certain remarks made by Mr. Scaddan regarding the discovery of Ives' Find and the sharks who made money out of it, and the resultant cry of "stinking fish" in regard to our mining discoveries. There is a great deal in what the Minister said. As to the drilling at the south end of the Golden Mile, I cannot say whether permanent lodes exist there; but if the diamond drill locates what can be described as a payable lode, there is only one logical way of proving it, and that is by putting in money to ascertain whether there is sufficient value to justify working it. As Mr. Ewing pointed out, the hardy old prospector looks for alluvial. What we want is people who will put in their money not so much for a rapid rise as for a mine of permanent value. I was greatly interested in the Minister's remarks regarding miners' complaint. Let me quote from what appeared in a newspaper on the subject—

The Minister for Mines said that the only way to deal with the problem properly was to take the men out of the mines before they became physical derelicts. The Government should say, "You've had enough, old man." Under a proper inspection system the men affected could be picked out, the Government undertaking to find such men other employment, which would restore bodily health and benefit the community.

Mr. Boyland: Why don't you bring in a Bill?

The Minister for Mines: "You must get the public to appreciate the idea first. I don't know that the miners themselves

would consent to a Bill which would compel them to come out of the mines." He added that he did not want to force the miners out of the mines before he had provided the necessary employment for them in fresh air. The Forestry Department had promised to earmark work for these miners, who had served the community well.

This is what the Minister forgot to add, or is not reported as having said: "and in many instances served the mining shareholders by sacrificing their lives at an early age through the medium of a disease peculiar only to the mining industry." One of the things I undertook to investigate for the Minister for Mines during my stay at Johannesburg and Cape Town was the legislation dealing with miners' phthisis in South Africa. I cannot find words sufficient to convey my thanks to all those people in South Africa, including the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa and the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines, and the workers' representatives here, for what they did to assist me in my researches. Epitomising the position, I may state it in this way, that if silica exists to an appreciable extent in the mines of this State, then all Governments of this State should be indicted for criminal neglect, or else the Government of the South African Union should be indicted for unjustifiable expenditure of public funds. I know there is no man more sympathetic towards the miner than is the present Minister for Mines. He has good reason for it, having lost two brothers by miners' complaint. The problem is one we should have tackled years ago. If it is to be tackled in a logical manner, it must be tackled on the South African method. There is no use the Minister saying that he doubts whether the miners will come out of the mines. If silica exists in our mines to any appreciable degree, then the only course to be adopted is that taken by the South African Government with both the white miner and the African native: they have to come out. South Africa goes a little further, they go to an extent which I do not think we shall go in this country, and says that the industry must compensate the victim. Here in Western Australia to-day we have responsible Ministers practically declaring that our mines are killing our miners, but we have not reached the stage at which South Africa has arrived, where the native as well as the white miner working underground comes under the phthisis regulations. If the native is ordered to leave the mines, he too is compensated.

Hon. G. W. Miles: By the mine owners?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes; and here we are discussing tiddly-winking things to be done for our white miners. In South Africa investigations and legislation as to silicosis have been in progress for 18 years, and there the law is that no man suffering from tuberculosis shall be allowed to go underground. Such a man cannot get even a temporary certificate to do so. Then comes the

question of how the problem is to be solved here. It can be solved to an appreciable extent only by means of a rigid medical examination. Moreover any man now below who is suffering from tuberculosis must come out of our mines. Even without compensation, such a rigorous act would merely represent justice to the man himself and justice to his fellow workers. The method of examination should be definitely laid down by statute, as has been done in South Africa. In that country the phthisis Act operates only where silica is prevalent to such an extent as, in the opinion of the Minister for Mines, may prejudice the miners' health. Here our course should be first of all to ascertain whether or not silica exists in our mines, and, if so, whether to an appreciable degree, and, further, whether in a degree injurious to the health of the miner. I venture to say, however, that one could search Western Australia, and probably Australia, unsuccessfully for an instrument by which dust in suspension could be measured with any degree of accuracy. It costs the South African mining companies £880,000 a year to compensate for silicosis and tuberculosis. But, in addition, on the question of dust determination the Chamber of Mines of Johannesburg expends £200,000 a year. From these figures hon. members will realise that in South Africa the question of silicosis is a stern reality. It costs the gold-mining industry there a total of approximately a million sterling per annum. If the South African mining industry has done much for the South African mining magnate, on the other hand the South African mining magnate has done a good deal for the South African mining industry. All that we have in Kalgoorlie as a tribute from the shareholders of the Golden Mile is that £200 memorial in Victoria Park. I ask hon. members not to deal lightly with the question of whether our miners are suffering as a result of their work in the industry. I would suggest to the Minister for Mines that if it is necessary to take miners out of that industry and to start them on the land, the natural corollary is to try and prevent the mining industry from creating any more such cases. That is the position, and it is a position which should have been faced many years ago. However, I may qualify that by saying that so far as my researches go, there is little or no need, in view of the experience of South Africa, for dealing with the question of causes predisposing towards silicosis or miners' phthisis unless the silica in suspension in our mines is sufficiently prevalent to impair the health of the miner. That, I repeat, is the first point to be ascertained by the Government. Now let me deal with the question of education. I am sorry that the members of the late Royal Commission are not present. The appointment of that body apparently arose from the action of hushyodies. There seems to have been no method as regards the calling of witnesses. Or, to judge by the evidence of some wit-

nesses, these called themselves. Though I have not perused the Commission's report, I have read some of the evidence, and I think it is anything but edifying. Reference is made to "snobs" and "kowtowings" and such things. It would have been a very interesting feature of the Royal Commission's proceedings if some of the scholars had been called as witnesses. Probably, more satisfaction would have been got out of them than out of various persons who appeared to testify. There are only two phases of the subject I wish to discuss, and I do not know that either of them is dealt with in the report. If there is one person who is likely to impress his personality on the child, it is the teacher. The finest asset we can have in a teacher is the personality of a big man or a big woman—bigness of mind. I believe that hon. members who had the privilege of deriving their education from the late President of this Legislative Council are agreed that, with very few exceptions indeed, all that gentleman's pupils carried the impress of his personality. Next, let me refer briefly to the subject of forestry. On this subject the Governor's Speech states—

The great task of regeneration and conservation of the forest areas, made possible under the provisions of the Forests Act, is proceeding apace.

I have yet to discover much tangible evidence of that. So far as my observation has extended, all that is proceeding apace is exemplified in an exhibit in Barrack-street. Let me be candid and say that until I visited a country where Nature had been stingy in regard to forests and where, consequently, the need for timber made itself keenly felt, I was inclined to think that our Conservator had too much power and was too much of an autocrat. From now on I am going to stick to the Conservator through thick and thin. I will stand for him against Ministers and against legislators, because I am satisfied that the average Western Australian has no conception of the value of our forests or what the position will be if they are denuded. I notice that the Conservator and the Government are in holt over the extension of concessions, and I am aware that very wide powers are vested by the Act in the Conservator. I note this also that if we had more heads of departments and more men in official positions who would stand up to Ministerial domination as the Conservator has done, we would have a little brighter era before this country. I am not going into the merits or demerits of the matter, or whether the Conservator or the Government are wrong, but I will say that Parliament has handed to the Conservator certain statutory powers and, if we are going to get to the bottom of the position and judge as we should judge, we must so circumscribe ourselves, and it will be incumbent on the Government to so circumscribe the affair, that those who gave the Conservator his powers should have equal opportunity of hearing the Conservator's

side as well as the Minister's side. One of the things that has made me swear allegiance to the needs of forestry was the travelling over thousands of miles of country where no timber ever existed and where I found, that owing to the absence of timber, there was only one thing to do and that was to plant it. The results that I saw were magnificent. I am referring to South Africa, and what I saw there brought home to me not only the need for conserving our existing forests, but the absolute need for their continuity. I will give one illustration of what forestry has done in South Africa. It was my privilege and pleasure to visit the deep mines in Johannesburg. I went down one 6,300 feet on the vertical, and working at that level they were pigstyng their stopes with timber grown on the lease within a period of 10 to 13 years. This is another factor in the low cost of treatment at Johannesburg. In cities like Bloemfontein and Johannesburg there was not a tree of any description 35 years ago, and to-day one cannot but be impressed by the growth of the gums there.

Hon. J. Ewing: What is the size of the trees?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Some of those which are 35 years old are 2ft. in diameter. Other mines also grow their own timber and the process is going on all the time. Then we turn to Natal and we find that 80 per cent. of the wattle bark used in Australia comes from Natal and that the seed was originally taken from Australia. It may be said that black labour helped to bring this about. My inquiries showed that black labour was not the inducing factor. The inducing factor was that there was no timber there and man had to provide that which was lacking. So far as the planting of the timber is concerned, the initial stage is the worst stage. At a height of 5,000ft. above sea level there are wattle plantations of luxurious growth, but many individuals in Natal told me that they were going out of the wattle business and were going in for the growth of gums, because that would be more profitable. There are thousands of acres in Western Australia that could be planted with wattle; land which never will be fit for anything else. To use the words of our own Conservator, there are certain gums in this country that are rapid growers, and he is satisfied that they will grow as quickly here as in South Africa. I trust that our forestry will become a reality and that however arrogant our Conservator may appear to be, we shall give him credit for knowing his business, that his heart is in his business, and that he is seeing 20 or 30 years ahead. The biggest question confronting the people of Australia at this juncture, and for some time to come, is the question of Federation. I understand that before the lapse of the present Federal Parliament a convention will sit in Melbourne for the purpose of recasting the Constitution in the light of experience extending over 20 years. In common with many others who have endeavoured to take an intelligent interest in the working of the Constitution, I say that the position has

arrived when that Constitution must be recast. There is no reference in the Governor's Speech to the proposed convention and I think that every member who approaches the question with an unbiassed mind, should endeavour on every conceivable occasion to get the people of his electorate to take an intelligent and lively interest in the need for the amendment of the Constitution.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Would you support the appointment of a select committee of both Houses?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Side by side with taking that intelligent and lively interest for the amendment of the Constitution, we must also take into consideration the question of what it is best to do in order to bring about the necessary alterations. Going back to the beginning, I am inclined to the opinion that there can be only one satisfactory convention, and that is a convention on lines identical with the convention that drew up the original Constitution and handed it to the people of the Commonwealth. We are all equal partners in this great Commonwealth of ours, irrespective of our population and resources. I sincerely trust that the convention will be equally representative, and that it will be chosen by the united voice of the people. If the original convention was good enough to give us our Federal Constitution as we have it, I think another convention similarly appointed should be good enough to go into the question of remodelling the Constitution, and I shall be the last to advocate or subscribe to any movement which will have for its object the appointment of a committee of any Parliament, Federal or State, to take a hand in or say what the Federal Constitution should be. I honestly believe that the people of this country could, as they did in the beginning, elect intelligent and honest delegates to the convention. I believe that a delegation elected by the free will of the people would put their shoulder to the wheel and give the best that was in them in the light of experience, and that the decision of the convention when presented to the National Parliament should be approached with that open mindedness which is characteristic of the Australian people, and that party will be put aside in favour of country and the Constitution. In conclusion, let me say there are many croakers in our midst who are of the belief that the world is going to crumple to pieces. I am one of those who believe that every month we are getting one mile-stone nearer to a return to sanity and to a sense of responsibility. Those who should take a reasonable view of the position, but who are prone to draw the long bow are Parliamentarians, and in no centre of the British Empire do I think we shall regain our equilibrium and that state of affairs which prevailed before the war more quickly than in Australia. I have recently had the pleasure of meeting representatives from different parts of the British Empire and I say, that there are no places in the Empire which have

fewer problems to solve and can offer the same possibilities as Australia and New Zealand. If we approach the position with a view of toleration, and a greater breadth of vision, and not be suspicious of one another, and regarding only the grand issue of whether or not this country shall prevail, I am satisfied that all will be well with Australia. Whether or not Australia is too big, its people are too large minded to allow any section of the community to submerge it.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [8.46]: I join with others in extending a welcome to our new member. Also I deeply regret the death of the Hon. E. M. Clarke. The most important feature of His Excellency's address was the reference to finance. Successful Governments have promised that they would stop the drift, strengthen the finances, and finally bring expenditure more closely into accord with revenue. Invariably they have failed to carry out their promises. Recently I looked up the financial history of the State for a few years back. I found that the last year in which there was a surplus was 1911. From that time forward the finances have steadily drifted. During their five years of administration, from 1911 onwards, the Labour Government accumulated a deficit of £1,360,000, or an average of £274,000 per annum. The Scaddan Administration were charged with having a policy of drift. They were held up to ridicule, possibly because they were deemed to be men without financial knowledge. For their inability to run the country they were even charged with being an aggregate of addle heads. They were dispossessed by the Wilson Administration, who were heralded as saviours of the State come to stop the financial drift. They were men not without financial experience, men with reputations for commercial and banking knowledge. They were expected to straighten the finances. However, they too failed to act up to expectations. Subsequently, their administration was disposed of and the Lefroy Government took charge in June, 1917. Their slogan was to live within their means and strengthen the finances. In the absence of any determined effort on their part to redeem their promises they were subsequently superseded by the Colebatch Administration, which proved to be only short-lived. Before they could devote any serious consideration to the finances they were replaced by the Mitchell Administration. In His Excellency's Speech of 12 months ago appeared the following:—

You will be further asked to consider proposals with a view to bringing the annual revenue and expenditure into closer accord.

That brings the Mitchell Administration up to the present day. They, like their predecessors, have failed to live up to expectations. Between 1916 and 1921 the deficit grew by £3,400,000. Not only did the Government spend the money which they had expected to spend, but they had an excess of revenue and spent that also, which leads us to believe

that their policy was practically to spend all that they could get hands on. During the past year, the expenditure has out-paced receipts to the extent of £1,876 per day for every day of the year. In other words, every hour of the clock takes us backwards to the extent of £78. We have now reached a deficit of practically five millions, and we have an interest bill of roughly two millions. July seems to be one of the worst months of the year. During last July we went backwards to the extent of £238 per hour for the whole of the month. A summary of this would show that during the Labour record of five years we went backwards to the extent of £274,000 per annum, while under the financial geniuses who took over the reins of office from the Labour Government and carried on for the next five years, we receded at the rate of £680,000 per annum, or more than double the retrogression made under their predecessors. Of course, the present Government have been up against hard times; but, like their predecessors, they have failed to come up to expectations. For the last 10 years our deficit has been accumulating at the rate of £476,000 per annum. A financial review of the past is not cheering. It prompts the question, when is the borrowing mania going to end? We have a deficit of over half a million per annum, and the Premier has intimated that our credit is still good, for which I think we might be truly thankful. The Government, like Micawber, appear to be waiting for something to turn up. It is indicated in His Excellency's Speech that they will bring expenditure more into accord with the revenue. Naturally, we assume that they will adopt the same methods as before in regard to finance. Certainly they have had difficulties. There was the shipping strike at the end of the year, while the railway strike seriously dislocated traffic and affected the revenue. The Government seem to be out to make a scapegoat of the trading concerns. I do not intend to go into details regarding those concerns, for I understand that other hon. members intend to specifically deal with that question. But it is interesting to note that representatives of the Primary Producers' Party, who share responsibility with the Government, have now taken upon themselves to condemn the trading concerns. I well remember that when the much discussed State Implement Works were established by the Labour Government the farmers applauded the Government for their action, because of the indirect influence the new works would have on prices. To-day we have heard a good deal of discussion of the trading concerns, but no emphasis has been laid on the indirect benefit of those institutions in keeping down prices. We now find that the champions of the trading concerns are advocating that they should be abolished. When wheat was at 3s. per bushel, the farmer was not half so keen on disposing of the State Implement Works as he is to-day. During the war, certainly, we had a prosperity, brought about by the circu-

lation of war loans. On this point I was interested in the remarks of Mr. Sanderson regarding the amount of bonds and Treasury bills, and I shall be interested in hearing the Leader of the House on this subject when he is replying to the debate. The absence of any determined effort on the part of the Government to bring expenditure more closely into accord with revenue is the subject of much comment. Naturally we look upon this, not as a matter of political promissory notes which they give us when first the House meets, but more as souvenirs. The proposal now submitted by the Government to meet the position is, I presume, to float some further loans to carry on with and to settle as many people as possible on the land. That is a most laudable object. Our chief trouble is that we have not sufficient population for the overhead charges we have to meet. It is highly desirable that we should get as many immigrants as possible. The war has taught us one of the greatest lessons, namely, that a nation should be self-contained and should be prepared. We shall not be able to come up to that standard without a greater population than we have. Were we able to double our population we might halve our debt and double our production. Moreover, it would be highly desirable from the standpoint of defence. If we can fill up many of our empty spaces we would strengthen our man power from the point of view of defence. We claim equality with powerful nations in the world, and if we are to hold this country it is essential that we should fill it with people. I heartily endorse the policy of the Government in placing as many people as possible on the land. The Premier estimates that we might place 20,000 on the land. I do not claim to be an authority on the question of where it is best to settle people, but I am of opinion that if we could settle them on land that is already adjacent to our railways, instead of in new districts into which it would be necessary to run new railways, we should be doing very much better. The Government have set out upon a policy of retrenchment in the railway service. As unemployment is not conducive to production, I suggest that they might pursue the same policy that was pursued in 1911 when retrenchment took place in the service. To those who were being retrenched or who were retiring from the service, they offered special facilities for going on the land. Many of those who availed themselves of this opportunity have reason to be pleased that they did so. As the Government are discharging a number of men from the railway service and probably the Civil Service, they might offer the same facilities to those people. There is a large amount of land available for settlement adjacent to our railways, and the owners should be called upon to utilise it to their fullest extent or make room for someone who will. There is farm land which is only used for grazing purposes. If the Government, however, resumed it at grazing rates, there would be a great protest from the owners, who would claim that they had

no right to take it at that price. The Imperial Government in 1919 introduced an Acquisition of Land Settlement Bill which provided for the compulsory cultivation of land and enforcing the principle that land ownership was a trust, the responsibility of which could not be disregarded. The measure also provided for the value of the land being the amount at which it could be sold by a willing seller to a willing buyer, provided the arbitrator could be entitled to consider all returns and assessments on the capital value, for taxation purposes. This meant that owners would be called upon to value their own land, and the price at which they valued it would be the price at which they could be taxed. If that principle were adopted here the Government would be able to secure much empty land which would be suitable for immigration, without paying a high price for it. The railway facilities and other facilities already exist there. It would be better to utilise that land in this way or compel the owners to use it themselves. To build new railways before the war cost £5,000 a mile; it is now £7,000 and the price is likely to be greater. There are many country railway lines which do not pay. Practically the only railway which does pay is that to the Eastern goldfields.

Hon. J. Ewing: The South-West pays.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: In a general way no railway line has given such a return to the Government as that to the Eastern goldfields, during the past 20 years at all events.

Hon. J. Cornell: Since the losses commenced.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It is generally understood that this line has been the milch cow for the railway service. Owing to the decline of the mining industry, the railway service has been somewhat curtailed even to the back country on the goldfields. During the past week protests have been received from various residents on the ground that the only man who has been employed in the district has been taken away. These small centres open up communication with the back country some 60 or 70 miles away, and the people draw their supplies from that siding or station. The Government should consider the advisability of appointing a local resident to act as station-master for a small remuneration. It is not advisable to keep a station-master employed there when he has only enough work for two days in the week.

Hon. J. Duffell: He might be termed a blackleg.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Government should make some provision for the prospectors in these centres to enable them to obtain the commodities they desire. This could be done in the way I suggest at very little expense. I note it is the intention of the Government to introduce the wheat pool. This affects the price of bread, and everyone in the community. Whilst I would

favour the Commonwealth pool, I understand this State could not compete successfully as a State in the markets of the world if the other States were free. It is suggested that this should be a compulsory pool. I would strongly object to that. Under a system of compulsion every farmer must put his wheat into the pool. Those who advocate this are the very men who denounced those unions which compel men to join their organisation, and in other words create compulsory unionism. If the pool is free we might consider it from an entirely different point of view.

Hon. J. Cornell: Every pool has been compulsory.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: That would be all very well during the war. It is apparently designed to eliminate the middleman, the man who participates in the labour of the producer. Some 50 years ago there were the staunch labour leaders who advocated a combination of unions. We now find the same policy is being adopted by the Country Party in order to force everyone to come into the pool. The co-operation of the State with the Commonwealth in the extension of activity and scientific investigation is a step in the right direction. The recent exhibition in Perth has drawn attention to the resources of the State. The School of Mines at Kalgoorlie is a credit to Western Australia. As the State and Commonwealth are co-operating in the matter of forestry investigation, they might also co-operate in utilising the laboratories at the School of Mines for investigation into the many known minerals of the State. If the matter were put to the Commonwealth Government I think they might offer a subsidy to one of the Schools of Mines in each of the States. The Kalgoorlie School is one to which youths are brought from every part of the world to be given a technical education. Most of the facilities required are there and with the co-operation of the scientists and assayers and others engaged there in the mining industry, much might be done to assist the Bureau of Science and Industry. I hoped to see in the Speech some reference to the probable amendment of the Arbitration Act of 1912. We have heard a great deal about industrial unrest. The employers have signified their desire for an amendment to the Arbitration Act, and the employees in the light of experience wish that the machinery of the court should be altered in order to facilitate the settlement of industrial disputes. Nothing brings about friction quicker than delay in the settlement of a dispute. These losses through strikes exhaust the depleted earnings of the worker as well as the revenue of the State. The advocates in this House of the round table conference from the point of view of the worker are those who in years gone by asked for an amendment to the Act in order to delete the conciliatory sections in it. It may prove of advantage if

we had an amendment in the direction I propose, but as we have a President of the Arbitration Court and an employees' and employers' representative also there, I fail to see why these representatives should not sit as a preliminary reference in the case of any dispute which may be brought before the court. It is not always convenient to have the President who is a Judge and has other work to attend to. If the other members of the court were vested with power it would possibly be found that in a majority of cases the preliminary matters in dispute could be dealt with before the major question came before the court. Suggestions have been made from time to time to the effect that our legislation should be amended to embody what is known as the Whitely report which was furnished to the authorities in the Old Country. Under that scheme, representatives of the employees' organisations would take part in the control of the industry concerned. I am not suggesting that they would be placed in a position of taking charge of an industry as was suggested during the late railway strike. The workers on the other hand would have direct representation in the control of the industry. If we were to inaugurate some principle like that, even as an experiment, it would give the employees an opportunity of testing their efficiency in carrying on an industry. If it resulted in bringing about better feelings between employer and employee it would achieve good results.

Hon. J. Duffell: An experiment of that kind was tried at Bendigo and it was not successful.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I do not think that any such step has been taken in Western Australia, and if the Act is to be amended, I would suggest that in the light of past experience, representatives of the employers and the employees together with the Clerk of the Arbitration Court should be called together to indicate what sections of the Act have proved effective and also in what manner other parts of the Act should be amended, giving their reasons as well. These are the men who have had actual experience of the working of the Act, and they would be better fitted to show what amendments are necessary and to set out reasons in support of their suggestions. Such a report would be of material assistance to members in considering any amendments to be made to the present legislation. The Arbitration Act could be amended in another direction with advantage. I refer to the position of workers who are compelled to belong to unions. Circumstances at the present time compel men to be members of an industrial union, and in saying that I refer particularly to the Australian Workers' Union. In many industries it has been indicated that before one can secure employment or before workers will consent to work with an individual, that person must become

a member of an organisation. I think it is the duty of both employer and employee to belong to his particular organisation, but I object to anyone being forced to become a member of such an organisation. I have a ticket issued by the A.W.U. which I will hand round to members for inspection. This ticket has a number, name and other details in connection with the individual who is joining the organisation. Attached to the ticket are dockets, five in number and lettered A, B, C, D, and E. Printed on the docket, in addition to the member's number, are the following words: "W.A. Mining Industry Branch. Attach securely to ballot paper." Following the rules of that particular organisation, any member, desirous of recording his vote in any ballot the union may take, must attach his docket to the ballot paper and place both in the ballot box when he records his vote. The secrecy of the ballot box is now gone. This is the most iniquitous thing I have ever heard of, and I have heard of some very strange things done in connection with industrial organisations. If it is desired subsequently, the officials of the union can look up the votes recorded and they can pick out the particular votes required and thus they are able to find out exactly how an individual voted. It is high time that the Act was amended to prevent a man who is compelled to join an organisation being placed in the position of indicating how he has exercised his vote. There is another phase which it might be as well to mention when on this subject, and it is that when a man becomes a member of this organisation he is compelled to subscribe to a newspaper, not a paper of his own seeking, but the "Westralian Worker" in this State or the Labour daily newspapers in the other States. Of the £1 which a man pays to join the union, 5s. of that money is deducted ostensibly to be paid over to the newspaper, whether that paper agrees with one's political opinions or not. That money, however, does not reach its destination. I suggest that the Act should be amended. The Trades Union Act, section 15, paragraph (c), provides that money expended in directions other than authorised shall be repaid if applied improperly under the constitution of the organisation. If money were improperly paid away under such circumstances, it would have a beneficial effect if the union were rendered liable to refund the money.

The Minister for Education: What ballots are those tickets intended for?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Any ballot the union desire to take. To show how it would operate: If there are 100 members in the union and a ballot is taken, the tickets are attached to all the ballot papers. Six men vote against the proposition. If the executive desire to find out who those six men are, they simply have to look up the votes and examine the dockets. The whole of the numbers are compared with those which are in the butts of the books in the secretaries'

file and the executive can ascertain exactly who are the six men concerned. The A.W.U. is controlled from Melbourne. These tickets were referred to in the Arbitration Court quite recently in connection with an application for registration. This system enables the executive of the organisation, should they so desire, to find out how an individual has voted. If they are convinced that a member of their organisation is not acting, in their opinion, in accordance with the best interests of the organisation, they can expel him at a moment's notice and he has no redress. If they find that a man has voted on three or four occasions against the desires of the organisation, this system enables them to ascertain what that man has done and they expel him. In proof of the statement I have made that money has been applied for other purposes than those for which it was contributed, I will read an extract from the auditor's report which was presented to the members of the A.W.U., Western Australian Goldfields Mining Branch, at Boulder on July 29 last. The section I refer to reads as follows:—

The long-continued contravention of the A.W.U. constitution and general rules numbers 10 and 29 has created an invidious position, in that receipts, earmarked for a definite purpose, have not been so utilised, with the result that an accumulated amount of £1,552 10s. is now due in respect to "Worker" newspapers supplied to members, and through the failure of the "Worker" not being paid its legitimate dues, it has been compelled to work on an overdraft and has therefore been faced with the unnecessary expense of bank interest. It appears, therefore, that pending the amount being liquidated, a contingent liability of interest thereon may be involved, and which under the circumstances would be quite equitable.

I put that forward as supporting my statement that money has been applied for other than the purposes intended. Here is another gem from the same auditor's report:

The minute book has been perused for the purpose of corroborating authorisation of payments, and we note frequently that no record thereof is made, also that in many instances the minutes are marked "confirmed," but are not signed by the chairman. The system of pasting in sheets and, in some cases, loose sheets forming the records of meetings can hardly be commended, and we venture to say that were the minute book in the form adopted, required for legal purposes, it would not be treated seriously owing to the practically unlimited facilities it offers for fraud. It may be noted that since your present secretary took over in September, 1920, with a few isolated exceptions, the minutes have been written in on the numbered folios of the minute book.

I quote that section of the auditor's report in further support of the remarks I made

will bring under the notice of the Government the desirability of amending the Arbitration Act. The mining industry which has been the salvation of Western Australia and was primarily responsible for putting the State on its feet, every possible consideration should be given. It has been adversely affected by conditions lately. I wish to impress upon the Government the obligation that the State owes to the mining industry. The Government and many individuals are apt to forget what gave this State a start in life. The gold mining industry has been responsible for enriching this country to the extent of £143,000,000 and it has paid in dividends £28,000,000. An industry which is capable of doing that, is worthy of consideration. Paragraph 9 of the Governor's Speech refers to the prospecting parties who have been assisted by the Government and have been encouraged in their efforts to find gold. It sets out that 126 parties have been sent out to prospect in different parts of the country. When we recollect that there are 25,000 square miles of auriferous country in Western Australia, it will be realised that these men represent, roughly, one prospector to every 200 square miles.

Hon. J. Cornell: Each one can get lost up there.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It is on behalf of the pioneer prospectors that I wish to appeal to the Government for help and consideration, as well as for relief from taxation. The Government have indicated through the Governor's Speech that, in order to encourage the prospector, they intend to afford them relief regarding income tax. That decision will be welcomed on the goldfields. I have a couple of illustrations regarding prospectors to bring under the notice of the House. The first refers to a man who has been prospecting in Western Australia for over 14 years and hon. members will know what prospecting means. Mr. Ewing referred to the man who with his cart and load of provisions goes out into the back country, taking his life in his hands. The prospector to whom I am referring, had battled through Western Australia for 14 years and he struck a bit of luck at Hampton Plains. He sold the show and received £6,000 in cash and shares. As the vendor he had no right to trade in the shares for 12 months or some other specified period. That man discovered that the State intended to exact from him £2,360 for having found the mine.

Hon. J. Cornell: And the Commonwealth were going to take the rest.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes, the Commonwealth would have come in for their share afterwards. This man was one of the finest prospectors in Western Australia, and when he learned what the Government intended to do he said, "If I had collected from Tattersalls they would have asked only 14 per cent. and this is about an equal chance." When

notes and carried it on his person, and, in the words of Mr. Kenneally in the Arbitration Court, bade Western Australia a long farewell. That man left the State and went to South Africa, owing the State Government £2,360, and also owing the Commonwealth Government their share of taxation.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: More power to him.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: He said, "I am a man of 51 and I am not going to remain here to give the State or the Commonwealth any of it." He had a fear that if he deposited the money in the bank the Government would get to know of it and would commandeer some of it. Therefore he carried it on his person for three weeks and then, shaking hands with his friends and telling them not to speak of his going, he left. This man was an asset to the State and yet he has bidden the State a long farewell.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Driven out of the country.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: A fortnight ago another case came under my notice. A man had been 20 years on the job. The only bit of good luck he ever had was to strike 400 ounces of gold some seven years ago. He sold a mine in conjunction with three backers for £4,500, but the mine appeared in his name. His share was one-quarter. He had been out for two years and 10 months. He was assessed by the State at £1,050 and his share of the cash was only £1,128. This meant that if the State Government collected their charge, the man would be left with £78.

The Minister for Education: Are they making him pay for the other three?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: No. His share of the cash was £1,128 but he is also assessed on the shares which he never received, or which were no good. This should be regarded as a return of capital.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The shares are taken on their face value.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: That is so. These men did not receive a great amount in the way of cash for their mine; they took the greater portion in shares. But before this man could put his shares on the market it was found that the mine was not of very great value. Yet that man was asked to accept £78 as his share of the find he had made. To my knowledge that man has paid £300 on chits to his friends and supporters; he has purchased a horse and cart and has gone out into the bush again, and his friends are wondering what he will say when he returns and discovers what the State Government are claiming.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: And what the Commonwealth will claim.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: That is so. The Commonwealth do not know as yet that he exists. When he finds out what the position really is, he will probably follow the lead of the other man and leave the State. This shows how the taxation has been hitting the men whom we want to retain in this country.

It is having a bad effect on the industry as it tends to strangle it and prevents backers and speculators, who are prepared to contribute regularly, from supporting these prospectors. If the major portion of the value represented by a find is to be taken by the Taxation Department, these speculators will cease to back any of our prospectors. I welcome paragraph 10 of the Governor's Speech and I hope the Leader of the House will bring under the notice of the Government the desire that this legislation should be made retrospective just as arbitration awards are made retrospective. The unfortunate man I have mentioned would then have the benefit of the legislation and the man and his money would remain here to be employed in the interests of the State. Another question is the sale of leases. There were two mines with excellent prospects which were put on the market for sale. A bargain had practically been entered into, but the vendor stipulated that his consideration should be free of taxation. When the company found that in the one case £32,000 and in the other case something like £20,000 would be demanded for the privilege of buying that mine, they declined to conclude the purchase. Consequently this mine, instead of employing about 60 men as would have been the case if the company had taken it over, has about six men employed, and with the limited capital at the disposal of the owner it is being worked in only a small way. It is possible to tax the mining industry beyond its capabilities. I cannot too strongly emphasise the fact that excessive taxation results in decreased revenue. What we want is assistance for prospectors so that they may be able to locate new fields. We have a new alluvial find on the Hampton Plains property 47 miles from Kalgoorlie. Partly owing to the tactics which have been adopted by the company, I do not think they are ascertaining the exact results of the alluvial find on that field. Most of the men are reticent as to what they are finding, because they desire to peg, and the company have the right which they exercise of taking the adjoining blocks. This accounts for the attitude they have adopted. We are getting some assistance from the Government in connection with the boring at the south end of the Golden Mile, the object being to locate the continuation of the main ore body. The third bore is now in progress. Many leases have been taken up in the surrounding country, but it has been proved that there is 156 feet of overburden which necessitates a considerable expense on the part of companies or individuals who have leases in surrounding district. It has occurred to me that the Government would do well to frame new regulations, and instead of insisting on compliance with the labour conditions, as in the case of an ordinary lease, they might deem these properties boring leases. This would permit of various syndicates or companies amalgamating their financial forces, and with the aid of the Govern-

ment adopting systematic methods of boring under Government supervision. This, I think, would be welcomed by a number of leaseholders in the district, because they now have to employ labour when it is not a payable proposition to do so. It is useless to look for anything on the surface, and the companies cannot be expected to go in for expensive boring plants. If the Government came to the rescue of the various syndicates and co-operated with them, it would lead to a systematic boring of the field, which would demonstrate whether the lode was there, and probably the values it contained. This is not a prospecting venture in the sense that prospecting is generally understood. But what would be an expenditure of £25,000 or £50,000 to the Government if any of these prospectors, who have gone into the country, could discover another Golden Mile or a Great Boulder? After 20 years of working the Great Boulder mine has submitted a report in which it is stated that there is £760,000 of gold still in sight in that mine. If inducements were offered for men to locate a mine and even if only one such as the Great Boulder were found, it would materially help the State. Instead of our having to appeal for population, people would flock here as they did in 1895. Just as it is necessary to assist the man with the plough, so it is necessary to assist the man with the pick. We would like substantial assistance to be made available while the gold premium is in existence. The gold premium has been the salvation of many of our mines; in fact, some of the mines are practically living on the gold premium at present. A word in conclusion with reference to the Tributing Commission which was recently appointed. I am sorry the Government appointed the Commission. A better result could have been achieved if the Minister had called a conference between the employers and the tributers. I happen to be conversant with both sides of the question. The matter fines itself down to three points. Upon two of them the parties were prepared to meet one another half way, and this would have left but one point to deal with. Had some of the parties been chosen to adjudicate upon the three clauses of the Bill to which objection has been raised a solution of the trouble might readily have been reached.

Hon. J. Cornell: That would have been more satisfactory.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes, because the friction which now exists as a result of the inquiry would have been avoided.

Hon. J. Ewing: Was that suggested to the Minister?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Minister knew of it, but not officially. The difficulty was to get the two parties together. Had the Government made a move in that direction I venture to say that success would have attended their efforts. I again urge upon the Government to assist the gold mining industry to the best of their ability, notwithstanding the depleted finances, and endeavour to

restore it to the prosperity of its former days. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. J. Duffell, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 31st August, 1921.

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Criminal Code Act Amendment, 1s.	556

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

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

Mr. R. S. Sampson (Swan) took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

QUESTION—INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE.

Mr. McCALLUM asked the Premier: 1, Has he received any communications relating to the decisions of the International Labour Conference held under the League of Nations at Washington, 1919, and Genoa, 1920? 2, If not, and in view of the fact that all countries who are parties to the Peace Treaty are virtually bound by them, that most of the countries have already submitted the proposals to their Parliaments, and that a number of the decisions such as hours of employment, insurance against unemployment, conditions of employment of women and children, regulations governing the health of all workers,