

with the matter for some time, and, so far as I am able to judge, the merchants in India do not care a jot whether they ever sell a bale of corn sacks to Australia at all. What they are looking for is two million pound orders from the Imperial Government. With regard to farmers under the Industries Assistance Board, it was decided some four months ago that every precaution should be taken, and that where it is conclusively proved that a client of the board cannot make good, his account should be closed. Still, every consideration will be given to clients who have a reasonable chance of pulling through. With regard to settlers who are on inferior lands, I may say that a number of them have been transferred to other properties, and that this process is being carried out almost daily. Those who are in an impossible position, in the way of inferior land, are being transferred to better properties, where they will have a chance to make good. Mr. Stewart's reference to the payment of 9s. per day has no bearing whatever on the Agricultural Department. The matter is one relating to the Industries Assistance Board, who are separate altogether from the Agricultural Department.

Hon. H. Stewart: That was in the initial stages of the Industries Assistance Board.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister): The Industries Assistance Board at no time had any connection with the Agricultural Department, though they were at one time connected with the Agricultural Bank. When any indictment is presented—as in connection with the Royal Commission on Agriculture—I contend specific charges should be made. It is easy to prefer indictments against departments, but I contend that the charges should be of a definite nature. I do not know that I need keep the House longer this evening.

Hon. V. Hamersley: What about the storekeepers?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister): The Government are dividing up the returns from clients of the Industries Assistance Board on the same basis as last year—a percentage basis. Whilst I know there are some very hard cases, in which the storekeepers have had their accounts hung up for a considerable period, the fact remains that in the case of any client whose position is solvent a percentage of the account is being paid each year.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 9.8 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 26th February, 1918.

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

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

### MOTION — GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [4.36]: I move—

"That for the remainder of the session Government business take precedence of all motions and orders of the day."

We are now discussing the Estimates, and I think all members will agree that it is undesirable to protract the session any further than absolutely necessary. Private members have already had a good deal of time to bring forward motions, and nearly eight months of the financial year have now expired. Furthermore, the Government desire to get into session again as soon as possible after the end of the current financial year; and, with that end in view, hon. members will, I trust, support me in this endeavour to complete the labours of the present session as speedily as possible. Private members have already been given every latitude in connection with their business. The time for private members' business, as we know, expires at a quarter to eight o'clock on Wednesday evening; but I have never sought to prevent discussion beyond that hour, having always moved that motions be continued. In the circumstances, the House will no doubt agree that the time has arrived for curtailing private members' business.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.39]: I can quite understand the Premier's desire to get on with Government business, and more particularly to have the Estimates passed. In moving to restrict the time allotted to private members' business, the hon. gentleman, of course, is only following the practice adopted in previous sessions. It is true that the Premier has been generous in the time he has allowed to private members since the session opened; but it seems to me that in carrying the motion we should be swinging from the extreme of generosity in this respect to the other pole. I have no doubt that there are various motions on the Notice Paper which hon. members regard as important; and, in addition, there are one or two private Bills. To deprive private members entirely of the opportunity of having their business discussed would, in my opinion, be going too far. The practice in the past has been to reduce private members' time by making it every alternate Wednesday; and then, towards the close of the session, the motion now submitted by the Premier has usually been agreed to by the House. I think we might well follow that practice this session. After all, a day or so is neither

here nor there in the length of a session. I move an amendment—

“That the following be added to the motion:—‘On Wednesday, the 6th March, and each alternate Wednesday thereafter, in addition to the days already provided.’”

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore—on amendment) [4.41]: I discussed this matter with the leader of the Opposition, who agrees with me that the business of the session should be terminated as speedily as possible, with due consideration for the interests of the country. I agree with his statement of what has been customary regarding the alternate Wednesday. This is an exceptional session, being really an extension of a session through which we passed a few months back. We have got through eight months of the financial year; and all members are desirous, at this period, to terminate the session as speedily as possible. Still, I am quite prepared to fall in with the wishes of the leader of the Opposition, and I accept his amendment. If we have one more day for private members’ business, and if hon. members will restrict their arguments as closely as possible, the House should be able to dispose to-morrow of the motions to which the leader of the Opposition has drawn attention.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.44]: I oppose both the motion and the amendment. One or two of the motions placed on the Notice Paper by private members are really matters of urgency. I regard a motion of mine—relating to fair rents—as urgent and important. It is all very well to say that the Premier has been generous in allowing time for private members’ business; but let me point out that the session was suspended for a day in order to await the Treasurer’s return from the Eastern States. Private members’ business could have been discussed on that day. In addition, the House has repeatedly adjourned at 9 o’clock in the evening. The motion which I have on the Notice Paper is designed to protect Fremantle people who are being robbed of their livelihood; and if the Premier’s motion is carried I shall have no opportunity of getting Parliament to express an opinion on this matter.

Hon. P. Collier: You will have the opportunity to-morrow.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not too sure of that. When the Government bring down this motion, we can only conclude that their business is approaching the end, and probably to-morrow will be the last private member’s day which we shall get. Indeed, the Premier said just now, “I have no objection to one more private members’ day.”

The Premier: It has always been customary in special cases to give private members an opportunity of bringing forward motions.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: With one exception, not any of the motions by private members has been finally dealt with. What opportunity shall we have of dealing with them? Opportunity should be given for the discussion of a motion like that of mine on the question of fair rents, for tenants at Pre-

mauntle are to-day being deprived of their livelihood. I want to see private members’ day continued for another week or two, until we shall have dealt with some of these motions.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [4.47]: Greater consideration should be shown to country members. It is an absolute farce to bring members here on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday and expect them to loaf around Perth until the following Tuesday, or alternatively spend the time in a train. I think there should be a revision of the meeting days of Parliament.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot discuss that under this motion.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is a shame that nothing is done to meet the convenience of country members.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot discuss that under either the motion or the amendment.

Mr. LAMBERT: I feel inclined to move a further amendment. If the Government are desirous of getting through their business, and have no intention of allowing members an opportunity of bringing forward motions, it seems to me that the sooner the session closes the better. We are brought here day after day to listen to abstract and uninteresting business, and I think country members should insist upon some revision of our days of meeting. I hope the Speaker will give us full opportunity of discussing this question. It is a farce to bring members here on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays and then expect them to fill in their time as best they can until the following Tuesday.

Amendment put and passed.

Question as amended agreed to.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES 1917-18.

### In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 21st February on the Treasurer’s Financial Statement and the Annual Estimates; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Vote—His Excellency the Governor, £1,573:

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [4.50]: As one elected to support the National Government, I in nowise resent the criticism levelled at the Government by members on this side; indeed, I trust that if members, whether sitting on this side or the other side, have anything to say against the Government they will say it. I cordially agree with the leader of the Opposition in the sentiment he expressed when he said that the most useful purposes of the debate will be served if the Government gather from the discussion some lesson which may be of assistance to them next year. I trust that every member will endeavour to assist the Government by suggestions. In dealing with so immense a subject as the Annual Estimates it is hard for a new member to address himself to the question as an older member would do. However, I am going to appeal to members on both sides of the House to endeavour to render to the Government every assistance in carrying on the affairs of the country. The leader of the Opposition remarked that the State Arbitra-

tion Court had not increased the basic rate of wage. I think that is entirely wrong, and I hope this correction will serve to put an end to the feeling that arbitration has proved a failure.

Hon. P. Collier: I meant that, generally speaking, I know there have been increases, but in the majority of cases no increases have been made.

Mr. DAVIES: I think it is necessary to correct that impression, because the whole thing hinges on the present industrial unrest throughout Australia.

Hon. T. Walker: And the world.

Mr. DAVIES: And the world. If that feeling can be allayed, I think the difficulties confronting Australian governments will be largely removed.

Hon. P. Collier: Will the arbitration courts do it? There has been more industrial trouble since the introduction of arbitration courts than before.

Hon. P. Walker: There is industrial unrest throughout the world.

Mr. DAVIES: Still it is not wise to fan the flames of industrial unrest, as the remarks of hon. members opposite are calculated to do. The Arbitration Court has done a great deal to increase the basic wage, and the impression given us by the leader of the Opposition in his remarks is, in my opinion, altogether wrong. I admit that arbitration has not done all that we expected it would do.

Hon. T. Walker: You know what Mr. Justice Rooth has said?

Mr. DAVIES: Yes. I know also that Mr. Sommerville, after many years of experience in that court, has expressed views quite the opposite, and we all know that there are many employers who would be prepared to accept Mr. Sommerville as president of the court if it were not that it is necessary to have a Supreme Court judge in that office. Again, when dealing with the increased police vote, a member of the Opposition said he viewed the increase with serious alarm and wondered what it was for. I listened very attentively to the Treasurer's Budget speech, and from the Minister's remarks I concluded that 50 per cent. of that increase was due to increased wages.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are you aware that a lot of special constables were appointed at the request of the Commonwealth, and were never paid for by the Commonwealth?

Mr. DAVIES: I understood the Treasurer to say that 50 per cent. of the increase was due to the fact that the police had obtained an increase in their regular pay. Can any objection be raised by members of the Opposition to an increase in the police vote, when it raises the basic wage of the police force? Also I believe that at least 20 per cent. of the increase in the vote is due to the fact that the uniforms of the police force have increased in price. So at least 70 per cent. of that increase of the vote is due to increased wages on the one hand and increased cost of uniforms on the other. If that is so, why should members of the Opposition express astonishment at the increase? The Govern-

ment are looking around for increased revenue. If existing conditions of industrial unrest in this State and elsewhere are to continue, I think it will be impossible for any Government to improve the present position.

Mr. Munsie: Have you any suggestions for the remedying of that industrial unrest?

Mr. DAVIES: If both sides would come together and endeavour to assist the Government in carrying on the business of the country, there would be less industrial unrest.

Hon. T. Walker: Why have you gone over to the foes of Labour?

Mr. DAVIES: I do not think you should term members on this side foes of Labour. When statements like that are made on the floor of the House, how can we expect people outside to do other than accept them? It is not right for the hon. member to say that members on this side are opposed to Labour.

Mr. Green: That is exactly what you said all your life until you got your present job.

Mr. DAVIES: Why does not the hon. member try to look at the question from a national standpoint, instead of from a party standpoint? Let the hon. member be fair. I know that investors and many others would be prepared to launch out into various industries in this State if they could get an assurance that things industrial would go on a little more smoothly than they have done in the past. Members should endeavour to bring about a better feeling. In dealing with the question of how the Government intend to improve matters, I would like to say that as an ex-railway man knowing something about railway working I disagree entirely with the Government's proposal to bring in a railway expert from abroad to report on the condition of the railways. It is absolutely ridiculous to get a man from the Malay States for the purpose. I hope the Government will not bring into Western Australia a man from a place where he has been in charge of black-fellows. For one thing, he does not know anything about Australian conditions and is an entire stranger to Australian customs. The result is that the man would be entirely at a disadvantage. Of what value would his report be when he had submitted it? It would be of no value at all and constitute a waste of money. I would suggest to the Government that if they want a better system of working the railways than they have to-day they should try to break down these red tape methods, and this snobbishness existing throughout the civil service and throughout every Government institution in the State. If the Government can break these things down there is a chance of matters being very much improved. The Government should take the workmen into their confidence and call together representatives from the workshops, the traffic and loco. branches, and the permanent way staff to confer with them on the question of the working of the railways. In my opinion a very much better result would be brought about than if half a dozen expert officers were brought along, who did not know anything about the conditions or the customs of Australian people.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And the man you brought in would be a marked man, and his boss would sack him at the first opportunity.

Mr. DAVIES: There is not an employer in Western Australia who would be game to sack a man who stood up for his rights.

Mr. Munsie: They always find some other excuse for sacking a man who stands up for his rights.

Mr. Willcock: The Hon. C. F. Baxter said to a man, who stood up for his rights, that he would not employ him again on the wheat stacks.

Mr. DAVIES: In my opinion this is one of the best methods for dealing with the situation to-day, and there might also be brought into the conference representatives of the water supply and other public services of the State. This should bring about a contented service, and result in very much better work being done than is the case to-day. The Premier has suggested that we should wait until normal times come round again. We cannot afford to wait until then. We have to act now and to act quickly. If we do not act quickly we shall be in a bad way. I agree, to some extent, with the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) that we must not wait until the State is bankrupt before we adopt methods of getting out of the slough into which we have fallen.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We are in a better financial position to-day than any State in the Commonwealth.

Mr. DAVIES: Reference has been made to the wheat stacks. Our wheat stacks are going to be the salvation of the country.

Hon. T. Walker: The weevily ones, or the others?

Mr. DAVIES: I do not know anything about weevily stacks. If it was possible to have as many stacks of wool and other commodities, that will be in great demand after the war, and possibly before the war is over, if we can get the ships, they would prove of inestimable benefit to the State. Our wheat and wool and other commodities have to be placed on the world's market at a reasonable price. That brings me to the late trouble which occurred on the wheat stacks. I do not know whether those men were justified in their demand for 2s. 6d. an hour or not, but I do know that if these men had been well-advised and capably led they would not to-day have been walking the streets looking for employment, but would have still been employed on the wheat stacks in Western Australia. These men undoubtedly have been ill-advised and incapable led.

Mr. Lambert: They were neither advised nor led.

Mr. DAVIES: They will be not only foodless but homeless, if that is the way in which the workers of the State are being led.

Mr. Lambert: They acted entirely upon their own initiative.

Mr. DAVIES: I also believe that retrenchment will have to take place but it should not be done indiscriminately. Everything should be taken into consideration. For instance, I am not at one with those who would dispense with the services of the mar-

ried men whilst retaining the services of the single men in the Government departments, provided, of course, that the single men have no dependants or other responsibilities of a similar nature to the married men. Some discrimination should be shown by the Government when dispensing with the services of men by means of retrenchment. I am sorry that this discrimination has not been shown in a good many instances during the last couple of years. I hope that notice will be taken of this matter, and that something will be done.

Mr. Jones: Dispense with unionists, and keep the scabs on.

Mr. Thomson: How elevating!

Mr. DAVIES: Yes. There is one thing with which I do agree in the remarks made by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones), and that is in regard to the decrease in the number of producers bringing about a decrease in the production of wealth. Everyone knows that there are many men employed in the State who are not engaged in producing wealth, but they are still kept in employment. That was illustrated in connection with the Collie coal industry. It is one of the principles, I believe, of the members of the party opposite that every man who produces should produce wealth and be a benefit to the country. If 7,000 men are employed in our railways to-day and we can reasonably get along with only 6,000, the extra 1,000 men are not producing wealth and ought to be placed in some other occupation for the production of wealth.

Mr. Green: You have a good field in St. George's-terrace for your energies.

Mr. DAVIES: I would rope them all in.

Mr. Munsie: The railway system is being run for use and not for profit.

Mr. DAVIES: There must be a little profit.

Mr. Munsie: If the whole system was run like that, I would be quite with you.

Mr. DAVIES: Before that can be brought about it is only right to say that we must have some national organisation. By that means we should have brought into being a system either in Perth alone or in other centres as well, whereby every man would be registered for employment. It was stated by a member sitting opposite, during the discussion on the Collie coal question, that if the Government did not distribute their orders equally amongst the six collieries certain miners would be thrown out of work. What does this matter, providing we can place these men in some other profitable employment? It would not matter one iota if these men could be removed from Collie—and this could be done under a national organisation—and put into some other industry in which their services would be of greater use to themselves and to the country. This could only be done by some national form of organisation—and to bring this about should be the endeavour of every member of the House—and by taking the workers in the various industries into the confidence of the Government and bringing them into conference on the matter. With regard to the point that a man would be marked, I do not think any

Minister or officer in the service would be so foolish, if the Government of the day issued an order that a man should be selected to confer with the head of his department, as to mark this man in any way. If such a system was brought about it would be in the best interests of the country. Men should not be dismissed in a wholesale fashion. That would certainly be wasteful, and the energy of the men would go for nought. With regard to the question of increased taxation, I am prepared to admit that taxation is inevitable; but the question is, what constitutes fair taxation? Speaking generally, I think the present income tax should be based on the same lines as that of the Federal Government, namely, £100 for single men and £150 for married men, with an exemption of £26 for each child. Further than that, I would certainly subscribe to a single man who had dependants upon him, whether they were children or sisters or brothers, receiving exemption at the rate of £26 for every one of these dependants. With regard to land taxation, I am prepared to admit that the matter is a somewhat more difficult one. I would subscribe to a tax which might be known as an undeveloped land tax.

Mr. Lutey: You let the St. George's terrace people off.

Mr. DAVIES: That is a very convenient cry. A tax could be put on land which is not developed to-day only for this fact, that there is a certain amount of stagnation throughout the State, and there would be a danger of taxing a man, because he does not develop his land, who had no money available and no labour with which to do the developmental work. Under a national system of organisation I think the labour would be available to develop those lands which adjoin our railways, which would serve a twofold purpose of developing the land and bringing in revenue to our railways. In ordinary circumstances such a tax could be put on undeveloped land. There is a good deal of talk about a tax on unimproved land values, but what does that mean? My recollection of the first introduction of such a tax was in the Old Country when there was a cry for a tax on unimproved land. Instead of a tax on unimproved land, which is a tax on undeveloped land, the tax became one on unimproved land values. This, of course, comes to the same thing. The danger, in a tax of this sort, is of going on with it until every man is taxed off his holding. We know that there are very many small men, the cockies, and the tillers of the soil in this country, and that not very much can be done by putting a tax upon the unimproved value of the land when such land is in their possession, and they are not in a position to develop it.

Mr. Johnston: The Agricultural Bank has a lot of improved land.

Mr. DAVIES: Those who are not capable to-day of producing wealth and other things, as mentioned by the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) could perhaps be more profitably employed elsewhere. If my suggestion is favoured there would be no more talk of undeveloped lands close to the railways. If there are any men in the State who do not

take advantage of this, there should be a tax placed upon them. I appeal to members of this Committee to stand by the Government in their endeavour to rectify the affairs of our State and place them upon a sound basis. It is said, I think by the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) that this country is going back at the rate of £3,000 a day. How long is this going to last? What is it going to profit any man that the State has come to the end of its tether? Is it going to do any good for members of Parliament or for the toilers of the State? In my opinion the toilers of the State are looking to Parliament to get the country out of this slough into which it has fallen. Unless members are prepared to do this it is right that the Government should go back to the country, and tell the people that there are members of Parliament who are not prepared to give them a fair deal and help them to place the State in a better position. I hope the sentiments expressed by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) will not be listened to. Throughout that hon. gentleman's speech there was not one word of encouragement to the Government, or any suggestion such as would assist them, other than criticism as to what had happened in 1915 or 1904. It is absolutely disheartening for a new member to see other members of 10 or 15 years standing getting up in their places and comparing the action of the present Government with what happened so many years ago.

Mr. Willcock: You do not believe in the value of comparison.

Mr. DAVIES: There was a statement made, and it was that if the lumpers at Fremantle wanted to kick up a row there would not be sufficient police in the State to stop them. They could throw the police into the river, and it would not be the first time. What is the use of making a statement like that in a House of 50 sensible men?

Mr. Jones: You had better ask the man who made it; I did not.

Mr. DAVIES: Who made it?

Mr. Jones: You seem to have the information.

Mr. DAVIES: Anyhow, I hope whoever made it will not repeat any remarks of that description, because such remarks are not calculated to assist the toilers of the State.

Mr. Munsie: It will not assist the toilers of the State if the Government are going to support the national bureau.

Mr. DRAPER (West Perth) [5.17]: The speech which was delivered by the Colonial Treasurer was the first policy speech we have had this session. It was not a very encouraging speech, but it was a policy speech, and I say so advisedly because the Premier stated in this House a short time ago what the policy of the Government was. That policy was to carry on the affairs of the State economically, and to attempt to put the finances in order. The Premier has been twitted on certain occasions for not having a policy. My view is that the Premier was much wiser in making a declaration such as he made than to submit to the country a lot of measures which it would be impossible to carry out. When I read the speech

delivered at Moora I asked, and I have no doubt that other hon. members asked, where the money was coming from with which to carry out all the subsidiary planks. It is impossible to carry out anything in this State at the present time unless we place our finances upon such a basis that there will be some reasonable hope that during the course of the next few years an improvement may be effected, and we may have a chance of looking forward to prosperous times again. I submit when the Government come forward, and in their policy speech allow for taxation, for economy in administration, and for the suspension of the sinking fund, which suspension we know was not permitted, and then find themselves in the position of having to face a deficit of £737,000 for the year, they could not possibly find themselves more miserably situated. It is certainly a position which ought to stir up all the energy and power which the Government possess to enable them to carry out what the Premier in this House announced to be his policy. Unless the Government lend their energies in this direction they cannot carry out the duties which we all owe to the soldiers when they return to the State. It is idle to talk about schemes for repatriation and what we are going to do in that direction unless we can show that during the next four or five years we are not going to become bankrupt. It is quite evident at the present time that the Government have no money to carry out really necessary works in the State. The Treasurer made a very clear statement to the House, a statement for which many of us owe him some gratitude, because if we did not appreciate it before, we appreciate the fact now, that by the end of June we shall probably have a deficit of nearly a million sterling. To meet this the Treasurer proposes certain taxation. Owing to the late period at which the Government decided to call the House together, the Government find themselves in the position of being unable to tax in the ordinary way. We have been told that there will be a super tax. It may be that we shall be obliged to support a super tax because there are no other means of raising money, but I would point out to the Treasurer that a super tax on assessments now made is not a wise form of taxation. The Treasurer is probably aware of that fact.

Mr. Johnston: Some have been paid too.

Mr. DRAPER: At any rate most of them have been made, and people in this State very often have to pay their taxes by increasing their overdrafts. When assessments are made they estimate their expenditure accordingly. It will come hard upon many, after an assessment has been made, to find that they have in addition to pay another large sum. I do not know what the taxation proposals are, but I would point out to the Treasurer that if the super tax is to be imposed it is only fair that we should give those who will be forced to pay some reasonable time in which to pay. I do not want to see the stand and deliver method of having to pay within 30 days insisted upon, and the imposition of an extra

ten per cent. if the tax be not paid within the due date. The Treasurer finds himself in the position of being unable to suspend the sinking fund. Many of us were reluctant to that course being followed, but there can be no doubt that the way things stood it was a measure which was necessary. But seeing the attitude which has been taken up in England no good can follow from discussing the matter. When one looks at the Estimates a first glance will show that there is an increase of £60,000 over the figures of last year. But until one examines the Estimates the conclusion will be arrived at, especially if a member is not used to them as I am not, that instead of there being economies there have been increases. I do not think that is fair because the Estimates show that after allowing for automatic increases—for sinking fund and interest, an amount of £105,000—the net increase is not £105,000, it is only £60,000. That points to some economies having been effected in administration to the extent of £45,000. That is something of course, but £45,000 is very little when we consider the condition of the finances. If we look through the Estimates and if we make inquiries, we shall probably come to the conclusion that a sum of £45,000 is nothing like the total amount of economies which have been effected. What is the actual sum, of course, it is not possible for anyone to state, but there must have been a considerable number of economies effected, for this reason, that we find also a very large increase not in connection with the civil service or salaries, or anything of that kind, but generally in the departmental Estimates. This increase, of course, nullifies the other economies which have been made in administration. It is not the slightest use for the Government to say that they are going to cut down the civil service and reduce little things here and there, when all the time they are nullifying what they are doing in that respect by additional expenditure in other directions. The unfortunate part is that much of the expenditure has been incurred without the consent of this House. It must be admitted on all hands at the present time that whilst we do not wish to alter the principle of free education in the State, we cannot afford to extend the system of secondary schools. Yet when we look at the Estimates we find that large sums have been spent in the direction of establishing secondary schools in addition to those we have now. That expense might very well have been postponed until the House had had an opportunity of discussing the question, and certainly having regard to the financial position of the State. I am merely giving that as an instance. I have no doubt there are a good many similar instances which hon. members can find for themselves. It is perfectly clear that the Treasurer has done everything in his power to reduce expenditure in the department over which he has control. I notice there is a reduction there of £55,322.

The Colonial Treasurer: It had nothing to do with me; that was last year.

Mr. DRAPER: The Colonial Treasurer is modest, but I am willing to give him credit for having done all he can in that respect. But when Ministers come forward and say

that they have not had time to look into things because they have been in office only a little while, that does not appear to me to be a very good excuse. When hon. members now sitting in opposition went out of power, the Wilson Administration came in, and the present Government were, after all, successors of the Wilson Administration. They had the same policy and there are members who occupy seats in the present Cabinet who were members of the Wilson Government. It has been suggested that there are Acts of Parliament standing in the way of economical administration. We all know there are, but what we are surprised at is that as the avowed policy of the Government is to effect economies in administration, they do not ask the House to repeal those Acts or amend them in such a way as to enable them to carry out their desires. We would then give the Government credit for the courage of their opinions. The Colonial Treasurer appealed to us as 49 co-directors. We are not always treated as co-directors should be treated. I think some Ministers, when we ask questions, give answers with a certain sense of secrecy and mystery which should not be the case among a board of directors. We often cannot obtain the information we require. An interjection was made when the member for Perth was speaking, "Why not make suggestions," and the answer the hon. member gave was that members are not in a position to make suggestions. They do not know the inside running of the Government offices, and when we make inquiries as to the inside running we do not always get complete answers. Let me take another matter. I think the Government ought to take the House into their confidence in dealing with State industries. I am sorry the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) is not in his place. The question of State industries is one which we all, perhaps, or some of us, regard from different standpoints. Members on the Opposition side consider that the establishment of State industries is a fundamental plank in their platform and the object of that platform is to effect more equal distribution of wealth. Members sitting on my right regard State industries as worthy of preservation because some of their constituents consider that they should get their farming machinery at a cheaper rate. Personally I say that State industries keep out private capital. We cannot get capital to develop the country unless we make it clear to those who have capital to lend that they will not be brought into competition with the Government as soon as those industries become successful. None of the reasons which I have given may appeal to members but I think this will appeal to them, that bearing in mind the financial position of the country, the Government ought to have power to dispose of an industry if it is not paying without laying the whole of the details before the House. It is quite obvious that if considerations of the kind I have instanced are imposed it will be impossible to realise on State industries at anything like a satisfactory figure. I am not dealing with State industries from my own view, or from that of any individual, but at

the present time it is the duty of the Government to realise on State industries when they are not paying. The member for North-East Fremantle has prided himself on the fact that the State steamship service is now paying. So it is. We are all glad it is paying. But the State steamship service is not paying by reason of normal conditions. It happens to be paying because we are living in times of war. That is the only reason why the State shipping is paying.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We purchased in time of war.

Mr. DRAPER: Only one ship. Take the question of the State sawmills. Up to last year I think there was a profit on the State sawmills of £540. Now, owing to the war, we find a big loss. This year there has been a loss. The present loss on the State sawmills is £9,225. So that, when speaking of profit or loss made today, that is not a proper test. We find that the total loss on State industries to-day is £89,000. Under those conditions, if we are going to effect economical administration and endeavour to realise on those industries that do not pay, it is folly not to empower the Government to take steps to realise the industries without coming to the House. The position is that unless the Government get power to realise on State industries and can treat with people for the sale, they will not be able to realise at all. The unfortunate part is this: Whenever anything is suggested that may happen to be objectionable to any party or section of the House, the Government do not exercise that determination which they ought to do and force the measures through. There is the matter of railway freights. At one time it was determined to increase railway freights. The suggestion of members on my right no doubt was, "You are not going to increase freights in the country; why not increase the town freights?" If the town freight do not pay, and if the country freights do not pay, they ought to be increased. That is a matter for the manager of the railways. It is not a question of suiting any individual; it is not a question of parochial politics, but of attempting to put the railway administration on a sound basis. I realise full well the difficulty the Commissioner of Railways and the Minister for Railways has. The railways are suffering from a policy which was adopted some 10 years ago, the policy by which it was decided to have spur lines instead of lines running parallel. Many of the lines have been handed over to the Commissioner to work without their being any hope for some years of making a proper profit out of them. That is, unfortunately, the position, and that is the main cause of the railway deficit. So far as possible the freights should be adjusted and the railways made to return more than they are doing at present by way of revenue. It has been suggested by some members, and I think the suggestion has been raised by some Ministers too, "that it does not matter; the whole cause of the trouble is the war; war is the only trouble. If we only had peace we would get things right again, and there would be no trouble." That is a false way of looking at it. The difficulty in the State existed long before the war started. The origin of the trouble in the State may go back eight or nine

years. We must go back to the time when the agricultural policy was started, when railways were started in all directions. We also have to look at some of the loan expenditure incurred by members sitting on the Opposition side, and which has not proved as remunerative as was expected. I am not blaming one side or the other. I am trying to point out what, to my mind, is the permanent cause of the difficulty which we have to meet. As soon as the war is ended we shall still meet with difficulties. We have only to look at the figures. Take the deficit. For the year 1912 there was a deficit of £121,000; the following year it had risen to £311,000; the next year to £446,000. Those are all pre-war years. That takes us to the year 1914. Admittedly, after that there is a big jump. In 1915 there was a rise to one million; in 1916, £1,300,000; then there are the last two years—£700,000, and the probable deficit this year of another million pounds. That is not all due to the war and if we look at the figures dealing with the sinking fund and interest, the increases were just as large before 1914 as afterwards. From 1912 to 1914 there was an increase of £106,000. For the next year it was £137,000. Then there was a drop. The first war year the increase was £162,000; the next year £118,000, and then a drop again to £101,000. The fact remains that at the present time we are spending at the rate of 7s. for every 5s. we receive. That ought to assure members that we are not only dealing with what may be the temporary cause, the war; but permanent causes, which were at work before the war started. Let me point out what I think is the position here. Assuming we are faced with a million deficit at the end of the present year, the Colonial Treasurer next year tells us that he is going to raise taxation to the extent of a quarter of a million. I am not concerned with the details. If the Treasurer proposes to raise taxation to the extent of a quarter of a million, and if he does not also back it up by effecting a reduction of expenditure to the extent of another quarter of a million, it is idle to ask people to tax themselves to the extent of a quarter of a million. It is money thrown away. The utmost that it will be safe for the country to borrow will be half a million a year for a few years, for the purpose of making expenditure and revenue meet. If we do that we are justified in borrowing to that extent, with the hope that Western Australia will obtain some recompense and some reward for our developmental work and the money spent on it during the past 10 years. To close down at the present time would sacrifice everything. But we are liable to close down at any moment unless not only we tax as suggested but also insist on our expenditure being reduced in the manner which has been indicated. We cannot go on indefinitely, year after year, borrowing to make good the difference between revenue and expenditure.

The Minister for Works: How would you suggest reducing expenditure?

Mr. DRAPER: That is a matter which Ministers ought to bring before the Committee. If there are Acts of Parliament stand-

ing in their way, they should frankly tell us so. They should say to the Committee, "This is our policy; will you assist us to carry it out"? It is impossible for a private member to point out to Ministers where they can effect economies of £50 here and £100 there. The mere question of the Minister for Works suggests, to my mind, an attempt to throw the responsibility off his own shoulders on to those of private members.

The Minister for Works: No. I am only asking for suggestions.

Mr. DRAPER: I am merely pointing out what is necessary. If the Government say that that cannot be carried out, it is their duty to tell us frankly what difficulties there are in the way, when I am sure the Committee will help Ministers in the direction they desire. There is another matter to which I desire to draw attention. Certainly, it arose six years ago, when I was in the House; and I am prepared to take upon myself any blame which may attach to a private member in that respect. The House has lost control of the finances.

Mr. Troy: The House has never had control of them.

Mr. DRAPER: We have now an assurance from the Treasurer that he will bring down next year's Estimates in July. I feel sure the hon. gentleman will endeavour to carry out that promise; and I hope it will be realised. But that is not the only thing. The trouble is—and this is easily understood—how the deficit has been met. It has been met, admittedly, out of money borrowed for other purposes, money borrowed from people in London and elsewhere on the faith that this country would spend it on reproductive works. But the money has not been devoted to such works. The money has been applied in meeting the deficit. The explanation is that every time a Loan Act is passed by Parliament a little innocent section is inserted which enables the Treasurer to advance for the purposes of this Loan Act any moneys which he may have in hand. Of course he advances moneys which he has borrowed under previous Loan Acts for other purposes. So every Loan Act is used to finance the purposes of subsequent Loan Acts; and thus the thing goes on ad infinitum. In addition, there is really no control over the various funds. We have an Audit Act which prescribes that there shall be a separate account kept of trust funds, and another separate account of loan funds, and yet another for Consolidated Revenue. One would think that where separate accounts are to be kept there would be a separate banking account in each case. That is what would be required of a solicitor holding moneys of his clients. But the Audit Act merely requires separate book-keeping accounts. That is practically useless, because all the moneys are placed in one banking account, and the Government can get a warrant for any moneys in that banking account, and thus the purposes for which the money was originally borrowed and for which it is held in trust can be totally disregarded. We shall never cure that unless we fall back upon the old system, that the Governor shall not sign any warrant unless he



also receives a certificate from the Auditor General to the effect that there are moneys standing to the credit of the particular fund which will enable the work or the purpose to be carried out.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You mean to make the Auditor General and the Solicitor General the advisers of the Governor.

Mr. DRAPER: It is absolutely essential that there should be some check on the expenditure of moneys borrowed for some particular purpose. It is the duty of Ministers to see that moneys borrowed for a particular purpose are spent on that purpose. The deficit has accumulated in this way, and Parliament has passed an Act for the funding of that deficit, and for the issue of Treasury bonds. The Committee no doubt thought that the Treasury bonds would be raised and that cash would be received for them, and, further, that the cash would be placed to the credit of the deficit account as required by the Act. But that is not what is going on. The Minister for Industries the other day, in answer to a question I asked, said that he had purchased machinery from certain machinery merchants and had paid them with Treasury bonds for the purchase of that machinery to the extent of £14,500.

The Colonial Treasurer: You have misunderstood the reply.

Mr. DRAPER: The words of my question, and the words of the Minister's answer, are on the records of the House. The Minister for Industries distinctly stated what I have said. It is suggested that there is some mistake. How is it that the machinery merchants to-day hold those Treasury bonds?

The Colonial Treasurer: They got them over the counter for cash.

Mr. DRAPER: Does the Treasurer expect the Committee to believe that the machinery merchants have parted with cash to the value of those bonds and also parted with their machinery? Obviously, the amounts have been juggled with. I have no doubt that what took place was this: the machinery merchants handed over a cheque; the Treasury bonds were issued to them; the cheque was torn up, and the Government got the machinery.

The Colonial Treasurer: What? Tearing up of cheques?

Mr. DRAPER: The Colonial Treasurer will have an opportunity of answering me. I hope hon. members will not think that in offering these remarks I am in any way criticising any action of theirs. I have simply done what appears to me to be my duty in pointing out what I think—I may be quite wrong—should be done to meet the financial position, and what I think is necessary to do towards effecting economies. I cannot give details of economies; I cannot give details of taxation; and to any question as to what I would do I answer unhesitatingly that I cannot reply because I have not the power of getting the necessary information. The real question of putting the finances in order is hampered by the fact that we are still working under party government. So far as this side of the Chamber is concerned, the Government is called a national Government. But everybody knows

perfectly well that it is a coalition Government, and a coalition Government formed in the last Parliament. Party government, I contend, will never put the finances of this State in order. It will be idle for us to listen to any coterie, class, or party in this Chamber if there is to be any chance of Western Australia recovering from its present position. That can only be done by the united effort of all members. Parochial interests have to be disregarded, and we have to look to the finances solely from a national point of view and not from a parochial one.

Mr. H. ROBINSON (Albany) [5.55]: In looking through the Estimates brought down by the Government, I am rather in doubt how some of the items apply; and I purpose asking a few questions regarding those items this afternoon. Further, I propose to offer one or two comments by the way. First, I will deal with the State trading concerns, of which we have heard so much, and my criticism of which, in the first speech I made in this Chamber, aroused the resentment of our friends opposite. One item calling for review is that relating to shipments of cattle from the North-West. The amount of the expenditure is £158,000 odd, and the estimated return £126,000 odd, leaving a deficit of some £32,000. While I desire an explanation why so huge a deficiency should be the result of the Government's operation in cattle, I also wish to stress the point that I do not think it is fair that the State as a whole should have to bear the burden of this deficiency, seeing that the object of the Government's cattle deal was the cheapening of meat for the residents of the metropolitan area and the benefiting of North-Western station owners. Next, we have the State Sawmills, concerning which the member for West Perth has spoken. On that subject I do not wish to add anything, except to say I do not see that the reason for the unfortunate position in which the enterprise to-day finds itself springs wholly from the war. Let me give one instance in order to enlighten hon. members as to the methods of the State Sawmills. I spoke previously in this Chamber with reference to certain contracts for fruit cases. On that occasion I was not prepared with all the details, and I had a reply from the Minister. As a fact, the Fruitgrowers' Association had placed a definite order with the State Sawmills for those cases. When an amalgamation was effected between Millars' Timber and Trading Company, Ltd., and the State Sawmills, the Fruitgrowers' Association were informed that the cases were not available.

The Minister for Works: There never was a definite order, and there never was an amalgamation.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: I am now quite sure that there was a definite order, and I can prove there was. The Fruitgrowers' Association thereupon interviewed the Minister, and the Minister made a certain statement; and I shall be interested to learn how he reconciles that statement with his most recent assertion. He told the association, "I will execute your booked orders at present

prices; but for any other orders you will have to pay 4s. per dozen extra, or I will cancel present bookings and execute all orders at an advance of 3s. per dozen."

The Minister for Works: The State Sawmills never had a definite order from the Fruitgrowers' Association. Is not that straight enough?

Mr. H. ROBINSON: The Fruitgrowers' Association recognised the impossibility of charging some of their members 4s. extra while other members were being supplied with cases at the original, lower, price. Therefore they decided to accept the Minister's suggestion of an increased price. Those cases reached the Fruitgrowers' Association that very same week, and the association have evidence to prove that the cases were actually made, and loaded in the railway trucks, at the time the statement was made that they were not available. The point I want to make is that, unfortunately, the fruitgrowers so regard the action of the Minister on that occasion that a large order from them involving over £5,000 for timber alone, was not even submitted to the State Sawmills for a price.

The Minister for Works: If your information in this instance is not more accurate than your other information, the statement is untrue.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: This is one of the reasons for the deficit in the finances of the State Sawmills.

The Minister for Works: We have all the orders we can cut, and we do not care if we get no more just now.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: In reference to the public service, we find that in 1917 there were 436 temporary clerks employed as against 432 on the permanent staff on active service. The permanent staff employees were paid £59,300 and the temporary officers employed, with an addition of only four men, were paid £70,314, or an extra £11,014. Can the Government explain that this is economy, when the rate of wages in the Government service has increased so much that four additional men should get £11,000? Either we are under paying our permanent staff or we are paying an unnecessarily large sum of money to the temporary staff. In 1916 there were 377 temporary employees, who got £46,021. In 1917 temporary employment was costing the State £54,392. With reference to departmental increases, I join with the member for West Perth (Mr. Draper) in congratulating the Treasurer as being the only Minister who is effecting savings. I calculate his saving to be £10,251. But the Minister for Agriculture has increased his costs by £1,304, the Colonial Secretary by £13,709, the Minister for Education by £35,916, the Minister for Works by £12,858, and the Attorney General by £10,266, or a total of £64,104.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Why do you not say how the increases are made up?

Mr. H. ROBINSON: The Minister reminds me of an instance which recently came under my notice. Many comments have been made in reference to the cool stores at Albany.

Three months ago the manager there was getting £5 per week. For a considerable time he had been endeavouring, without success, to get on to the permanent staff. The Fruitgrowers' association offered him a position with £100 increase. This the manager accepted. But our economical Government stepped in and said to him, "We will give you the £100 increase, put you on the permanent staff, and give you house accommodation."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you not think it would have been better to shut down those cool stores altogether?

Mr. H. ROBINSON: If we are to have individual increases of this nature I venture to say that by the time the year is up the Estimates will show a considerable advance on what they represent to-day. There is another item about which I am very much in doubt. I can only think that some mistake has been made. I find, under the administration of the Premier, in the Estimates of 1916-17, a sum of £200 for motor car service, with an expenditure of £821. I cannot possibly conceive that this would be spent on the upkeep of a motor car. I am surprised to find in the Estimates of 1917-18 another amount of £725. This gives a total of £2,325 for the three cars possessed by the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Oh, no.

Mr. Munsie: We do not blame you. Nobody can understand the Estimates.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: This is one of the reasons why I am asking this question. In the vote "London Agency," there was an excess for 1916-17 of £1,065; the amount for 1917-18 is £7,382. There is some reference there to income tax. I take it this is British income tax paid on the salaries of the employees of the London Office. But I doubt very much whether that statement of £7,382 includes all the salaries actually paid in London to the staff. I would like to know whether, under "Immigration Department in Western Australia," some wages actually paid in London are not included.

The Colonial Treasurer: We will give you all that information when we come to the items.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: In the Colonial Secretary's department, in the division Harbours and Lights, we read an item "Repairs to 'Penguin' £3,400." I understand the Government a little time ago decided that it would be cheaper to get their work done by contract and dispense with the "Penguin." They called tenders for the purchase of the boat. A party prepared to buy her put in an offer, but could not get the Government's decision as to what the Government would accept for the boat. Once the Government decided that there was no further necessity for the "Penguin." I fail to see either why they could not put a price upon her, or where their justification is for spending £3,400 in repairs to the boat. Under the vote "Lunacy, allowances for officials, etc., house and rations," there is an excess of £1,316. Yet the vote for 1917-18 is in excess of that again by £2,100. In reference to temporary labour in this department, there is an excess

of £3,005 over the previous year. The providing of bedding, clothing, etc., shows an increase of £800, and under the health section, the sanitation of Government buildings, I am surprised to find £7,750.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is throughout the whole State. Your people in Albany get some of that.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: Then we come to the police department. While I am not complaining of the increase as a whole in this department, I really think that work is performed by the police officers which is not necessary. I refer to the collection of statistical returns. Here we have the "Statistical Register" for 1916. I cannot possibly see any benefit to be derived by anyone from this report during the war. Yet it costs a large sum of money to collect the information.

Mr. Green: We would not know very much without it.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: Much has been said in reference to education. Education in this State is free and compulsory, but I think that should apply to only primary education. Here is a nice list:—Secondary schools £10,300; continuation schools £8,750; technical schools £13,618; manual training, cookery, etc. £7,890; University £13,500. All these, with their incidentals, total £59,288. I really think the time has arrived when secondary education should be paid for. Another saving would be effected if we ceased to make nurseries of our public schools. Six years is quite young enough for children attending these schools. If we were to raise that age it would affect considerable saving, not only in teaching, but also in administration. By these means and by the elimination of free secondary education we would effect a saving of over £75,000. We have free primary education, but if a boy wishes to learn shorthand or take some other secondary course, he should pay for it. We find that in the Woods and Forests Department there is an increase of £2,346. Included in this I find "Forestry conference, £380." I hope the Minister will give us some enlightenment on this item. Under the heading "Minister for Railways, electric work, salaries, wages, allowances, contingencies, etc.," there is an increase of £10,648. When previously I spoke about one or two matters in connection with the Auditor General, the Minister took me to task and said I had made a mistake, had fallen into a trap, and above all that I had not correctly quoted the Auditor General, inasmuch as I had left out the little word "yet." I will endeavour to explain this particular item. I have gone to the trouble of getting the full information. I regret that while I was being reproved by the Minister, the Minister did not give me credit for securing those papers instead of endeavouring to bring down ridicule upon me.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: Before the tea adjournment I was speaking about the item of £7,126 16s. 6d., and in reply to certain statements which have been made controverting what I have said myself, that this money had been paid but that the vouchers had not come to hand, I was going to read a statement by the

Auditor General. I was rather taken to task by the Minister for Works with reference to having left out a little word "yet." I propose to read that statement in order to prove that my expressions the other evening were quite correct, even without the word "yet." The statement is as follows:—

This money was paid away in London by the Agent General during the months of October and November, 1915, and January and February, 1916. When the entries were made in the local accounts of the Treasury, they were not supported by invoices from public creditors. These were queried for on the 27th July, 1916, and a reply, together with the invoices, came to hand on the 24th January, 1918.

The Minister for Works: You have information which is contrary to information in my possession.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: That proves that these invoices were produced from some place after having been called for over a period of 18 months, and were subsequently handed to the Auditor General.

Hon. T. Walker: Where did you get that information?

Mr. H. ROBINSON: It is absolutely correct, and is signed by the Auditor General.

The Minister for Works: On a point of order. The hon. member's information differs from the information which was obtained from the Auditor General's office by the Under Secretary, Mr. Munt.

The CHAIRMAN: That is not a point of order.

Hon. P. Collier: That is an explanation which could well have been held over.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: With further reference to another item I mentioned of £80, which was an amount paid on account of the manager of the State sawmills journeying to the Eastern States, the Auditor General says—

A voucher was produced in support of the Treasury cash book (purporting to be an advance to Mr. Humphries for travelling expenses) as a final charge against the vote of State Sawmills. Advances are not charges against Votes, but the actual expenditure, which has to be put forward giving the information on the proper forms. The voucher was evidently meant to recoup the advances already made. The approval of the Governor has been obtained for the payment of £79 10s., but this is qualified by the fact that £71 16s. 3d. had to be in accordance with the Public Service Regulations. A request was made to have the claim made in the usual manner, but no reply has been received. The Minister for Works: Is that from the Auditor General?

Mr. H. ROBINSON: Yes.

The Minister for Works: There is another liar somewhere.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: I should also like to refer to the amount of £560 17s. 11d. The Auditor General says—

The statement immediately above the amount shows that the year's financial results in regard to Aborigines differed in three places: 1st, in the published accounts of the Treasury; 2nd, in the books kept showing expenditure from Consolidated Revenue Fund; 3rd, in the Trust Account kept by the Treasury under the Aborigines Act. The object of this portion of the report was to draw attention to the confusion

owing to the methods employed. In addition, the foot-note points out that, although the published return shows an excess of £560 17s. 1d., there was no corresponding entry in the book kept by the Treasury for the purpose of recording "Excess" expenditure—that is, payments made from the "Advance to Treasurer" under proper authority.

This vindicates my statement made to the House. I culled these from the Auditor General's report with the object of having a committee formed in the House to assist the Auditor General to carry out the suggestions he has made for rectifying a number of accounts. I still maintain the necessity for this, and that my statements on these particular matters were not wide of the mark. I think hon. members will agree that this statement has been vindicated by the other statements they have heard to-night. The Colonial Treasurer has asked members of the House to make suggestions. Whilst at the present time I have endeavoured to seek some information with reference to the Estimates which have been placed before us, so that I might have a more intelligent mind to vote upon them when they come along, I hesitate to a great extent to put forward any proposals because those which have been made previously by others have been rather severely criticised, particularly on this side of the House. One is rather diffident after these criticisms about placing suggestions before the Treasurer, especially when one is a new member. If we are here to be of assistance to the Government, our suggestions should be taken in the manner in which they are being put forward, and members should not be dictated to. I wish to put forward a few of my own suggestions, however, and I hope they will be received in the spirit in which they are intended. First I wish to deal with the taxation proposals. I venture to say that this question requires very serious consideration. I know one person in Western Australia who, what with the united Federal and State taxations, and the other local taxes, has to pay something like 13s. 4d. in the pound on his income every year. We have to be very careful in the case of a man like this, lest he should be absolutely taxed out of the State. There must be other ways and means whereby we can procure money without unduly taxing the people. We have had it chiefly through the medium of the Press that the Government are re-organising, and that they expect to effect very big results. I hope in this reorganisation, which I understand is taking place, that some consideration will be given to the housing of offices. In one instance we are paying £550 a year for housing one section of the civil service, and in another case we are paying rental to the amount of something like £1,778 a year. These are only two items of a long list of instances in which money has been paid away in this manner for rents. Our offices at present are distributed very largely all over the town, and this makes one wonder whether the money which we are paying away in rents could not be better employed in improvements to our own buildings. The Colonial Treasurer was very reticent in the manner in which he brought forward the question of reduction of members' salaries. I should like to have heard him say something more bold than he did, and to have had him say that members' salaries will be reduced by half.

Hon. T. Walker: Why not altogether?

Mr. H. ROBINSON: A ten per cent. reduction seems to my mind very small indeed. If this is to be taken by outsiders as indicative of the

policy of the Government it will not have a very beneficial effect. It is the duty of Parliament to lead the way, and, as has been said in the House before, the Government and Parliament should set the example to the people. I do not know of any better example that could be set by Parliament than for members to have their salaries reduced by at least 50 per cent. I should also like to see the Government initiate a bold land policy. It would be wise just now to give land, rent free, for five years, on the condition that those taking it up made certain improvements. We have our men coming back from the war, many of whom will not want to come under the repatriation scheme, but will require to take up land on their own behalf, and every effort should be made to see that the way is clear for the settlement of these men from now onwards. I should also like to see the vigorous development of our mining industry. To my mind this question has rather been shelved of late. I venture to suggest that half the money the Treasurer has got from the insurance companies should be allocated to prospectors under Government conditions. Much good would result from this, and if only two or three mines were found in two or three years' time the Treasurer would not be asking for the taxation that he is now placing before us as desirable. I also suggest an equitable unimproved land tax. I am not prepared to go into the details of this to-night, because I do not think this is the right time to do so. I also suggest the leasing of the State hotels. It is very questionable whether it is wise to continue with the capital outlay of £30,000 for which there is only a net return of £1,300. Considerably better results by leasing State hotels could be obtained than by getting a net return of £1,300 on a capital of £30,000. We have heard a great deal about State enterprises, and the determination of the Government in this respect. I should like a strong and determined statement from the Government that they do not intend to interfere with competing industries. If this assurance was given definitely, I feel sure that even now, in these distressful times, there are people with money not only here but in the Eastern States who would start industries which are so badly needed and would be of such benefit to the State. I think the time is opportune, possibly not in this financial year, but very likely next year, for the transfer to municipal corporations of the trams, ferries, sewerage works and electric light plants. I understand the capital value of these concerns is something like three millions and the interest found for them must be considerable. It also has to be remembered that through some mistake we are losing on each unit generated at the electrical works at the present time. I consider that by transferring these works, the difficulties would be overcome. I also suggest that we should legalise all betting. I think the Treasurer's proposal to impose a tax of 2d. on a ticket in the enclosure and 4d. on tickets outside is merely playing with the matter. At the present time, if one wants to attempt to make a bet in the streets of Perth, serious consequences may follow, but the Telegraph Department will take a telegram from any town to a bookmaker in Perth, the odds will be wired back, the bet will be made, and everything will be quite all right. But if that same procedure takes place in the streets, an offence is committed. Is that not hypocritical? Should we not take advantage in this way of collecting money? We will not stop betting; no matter how wowsieristic we may feel, it will

always take place. Thousands of pounds are sent to the Eastern States and to Tasmania annually, and the money could be retained in the State and the Government would derive a considerable benefit from it. We have bookmakers and betting men here and we accept their income tax. Are we, therefore, not making their avocation legal? If we legalise betting in its entirety, the State, I consider, will benefit to the extent of something like £75,000 a year. I would like to see the art gallery, museum, observatory, and the London Agency closed up.

Mr. Lambert: We will want a bigger museum shortly.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: I think that the High Commissioner who represents the whole of Australia, particularly during a time like the present, should be able to protect the interests of the State. Although there are difficulties in the way of abolishing the office of Agent General for some time to come, I hope consideration will be given to this matter. There is a feeling that all the agencies should be done away with and I venture to propose that we should move in the matter as soon as our existing obligations are completed. I asked a question last week with reference to the Wyndham Freezing Works. My object was to see just exactly what the financial position was, and what we shall have to find during the next 18 months or two years. I do not know whether it will be possible, but it seems to me preposterous to think that by the time the works are completed we shall have had to find about half a million for these works. I think that the remainder of the work of construction could well be let by contract. I understand that there is a party in the State at the present time, not Mr. Nevanas, who is quite capable, and who would be prepared to complete the construction of these works.

The Minister for Works: Is that Dunkerley?

Mr. H. ROBINSON: If the works were let by contract we would then know what the ultimate cost would be but at the present time I venture to offer the opinion that the total cost will be considerably more than the figures which have been placed before us. The name of Mr. Dunkerley has been mentioned and I might inform hon. members that that gentleman is building refrigerating works at Mt. Barker at the present time. These works will be the latest and most modern in Australia and will accommodate 40,000 cases of fruit. The cost will be £12,000 as against the cost of the Albany refrigerating works which came to £21,000 and which will accommodate only 10,000 cases of fruit. Mr. Dunkerley has something in his favour so far as the works he is building now are concerned and I understand he is prepared to build works in any part of the State similar to those at Albany at a cost of £8,000. I make these proposals hoping that some good may come out of them. It is all very well to say that we should economise and cut down but there seems to be an unlimited sum of money being spent at Wyndham and no one can tell us where the expenditure is going to stop. That concern at Wyndham, although necessary, will be saddled with such a huge debt that it will be many years before it will become a paying proposition.

Mr. BROWN (Subiaco) [7-53]: In common with every other taxpayer I deeply deplore the financial position this State has drifted into, but it is useless for us to try and blame any particular political party. I contend the people themselves are responsible for the position in which the State finds itself. The people elect members to Par-

liament and in the past they have forced members to borrow and spend. It was necessary for developmental works to have large sums of money but I think possibly in the past, Governments have failed to realise that the population would not increase in the same ratio as our borrowing. In connection with the present Estimates, I regret that the Treasurer did not emphasise the fact that we are only dealing with practically one-third of the Estimates that have been submitted, inasmuch as two-thirds of the year has already passed and the accounts for that two-thirds period have been paid. It is a remarkable thing that in nearly every instance the Estimates are exceeded and I would like the Treasurer to give us later on the amount over and above the two-thirds of the Estimates already expended, so that we may have some knowledge as to whether there will be much left to reduce of the one-third. Speaking of economy, I think the Treasurer has indicated that the Government are on the right track. He has already mentioned that £22,000 will be saved in his own department during the incoming year. On looking through the Estimates I casually noted two or three items, and although they do not affect this year, it is wise to view them as economies. There is shown in last year's expenditure a sum of £193 as having been paid for a lawn mower for Government House grounds. The officer responsible for the purchase of that article could not have realised that drastic economies were the order of the day, and if that gentleman is still in the public service, any request for equipment or tools coming from him in the future should be carefully scrutinised.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are you sure it was a Government officer who did it?

Mr. BROWN: All I know is that the people have paid the money and I regard it as an extravagance in view of the fact that Government House grounds are very small and should not require a lawn mower costing £193 to keep the grass down. I notice also that £558 was paid as travelling allowance to Mr. J. D. Connolly, the Agent General. I do not know whether that is a reasonable amount but it appears to me that it does not savour of economy. If that £558 is required as a travelling allowance for the Agent General, I think it is a strong argument why we should alter the present system. Another item that does not strike me as being one of economy is a sum of £338 paid to Mr. Colenso Kessell as travelling expenses from London.

Hon. P. Collier: He was mighty cheap at the price.

Mr. BROWN: I am not going to say whether we saved or lost money on the transaction, but it seems to me it was a large sum of money to pay.

Hon. P. Collier: But you do not know Mr. Kessell.

Mr. BROWN: I am not going to dispute the value of the officer. I merely desire to state that officers receiving these payments are not seriously troubled about our financial difficulties. I also think that the permanent officers should conduct the affairs of the country as managers of private concerns would be expected to do, that is, to adopt commercial methods. It is all very well for us to blame the Government for the expenditure of many sums of money, but if there are not heads of the department who are capable of looking after affairs, as they should be looked after, it is utterly impossible for the Government to know what is being done. It is an easy matter for departmental officers to keep on passing accounts

until they finally reach the head, who writes "approved" on them. All this is waste of time and the sooner the officers are taught proper business methods the better it will be for the country. In connection with our finances generally, I am sorry that the Treasurer did not give us more details. We have at the present time a debt of 41 millions less five millions, which represents the sinking fund. That means £116 per head of the population. We have an accumulated deficit of three million pounds, equal to £10 per capita, making a total of £126 per capita. In regard to the three millions accumulated deficit, I hope the time is not far distant when the Government will be able to fund it, so that we will not have it appearing in the Press all over the world as our accumulated deficit. It is certainly a very bad advertisement, and I am confident that this Parliament and the next two or three succeeding Parliaments will not be able to reduce that amount. The sooner it is funded therefore, the better. On top of the figures I have quoted, the Treasurer might have told us also that the Western Australian taxpayers are also Commonwealth taxpayers and that we must recognise that the Commonwealth Government on the 30th June next, will owe 211 million sterling in connection with the war. As we represent a seventeenth of the population of the Commonwealth, it means that we must add another 12 millions to our debt. That 12 millions represents £40 per capita and thus our total indebtedness per head of the population is increased to £166. That is a fairly large amount. I may say that we have 5½ to 6 millions of borrowed money earning interest and sinking fund so that the 166 millions will be less that amount. We have got an Australian debt and we have to pay our share of it, I refer to the war pensions fund that has now reached three million pounds. That represents a payment annually of £176,000 which requires serious consideration. The reason I am drawing attention to these figures is that when the taxation proposals come before us we must also seriously consider the matter from a Federal standpoint and our share of that taxation. In connection with economies and with taxation, it will be necessary before we extend our taxation proposals to the extent that the Treasurer forecasts, which is a quarter of a million, that we should get right down to every possible economy. There is one feature of economy, and I dare say it will be looked upon as an unpopular one, but it is one—the position we are now in financially,—that every member in this House and every member of Parliament throughout Australia will seriously have to consider, and that is the high expenditure in connection with our Parliamentary establishments. In Western Australia we have one-third of the continent with a very sparse population and to legislate and administer that population we have 80 members of Parliament. Eighty members is too large numerically to deal with three times as many people as we have at the present time. We have a population of 300,000 and compared with other populations and other legislatures of the world we have more than three times our requirements. I think the Assembly could be reduced from 50 members to 30 and the Legislative Council from 30 members to 20. The old story is, what is a reasonable medium between stupidity and wisdom? Stupidity might mean a hundred members and wisdom none. With all due respect to the interjections and the doing away with Parliament, we cannot do without a Legislature altogether; it is necessary to

have a Parliament but it should be proportionate to the people who have to be legislated for.

Mr. Munsie: What necessity is there for two houses?

Mr. BROWN: I believe that with the reduction in numbers that I have mentioned and a reduction in the salaries, we could save over £15,000. The present Parliament consists of 80 members each receiving £300 as an annual allowance; on top of that we have a Premier getting £1,200 a year, five Ministers receiving £1,000 each and the President and Speaker £400 each, the Chairman of Committees £200 and the leader of the Opposition £200 in addition to their salaries. These figures amount to £31,400 all told, for Parliamentary allowances without taking into consideration the Parliamentary staffs and other matters in connection with Parliament.

Member: Would you have a bough shed?

Mr. BROWN: I remember something taking place a few years ago in Victoria and one gentleman advocated a tent and he was one of the wealthiest men in Victoria. Before we ask the taxpayers to tax themselves we should try and show them that we are desirous of meeting the necessary funds for our requirements from Parliament. I contend that if we reduce the 80 members of Parliament to 30 and reduce the salaries from £300 each to £200 each as a flat rate, we should be making a start. Possibly some members do not know what I mean by a flat rate. The Premier should get £1,000 extra and five other Ministers £800 extra, the Speaker and Chairman of Committees should be proportionately reduced and the leader of the Opposition should remain the same as a private member.

Hon. P. Collier: Why start on me?

Mr. BROWN: This is not a laughing matter. I should like to know how long ago and for what reason, and who were the Premier and leader of the Opposition when the increases were granted and whether the taxpayers ever approved of those increases. I contend with all due respect to the leader of the Opposition that his position is one that does not require any extra payment for, and if I had my way, and I hope the Government will see with me in this direction, it would be cut off. If these alterations are made, we would save over £15,000 in Parliamentary allowances alone. That is not a very large amount in dealing with millions, but it represents, roughly speaking, 1s. per capita per annum. There is one important factor, it would give 30 members of Parliament an opportunity to do what the Premier is always advocating, produce, produce, produce. If 30 members of Parliament left this particular work and went on the land no doubt they would improve to a certain extent.

Hon. P. Collier: We might start a bakery business.

Mr. BROWN: So much the better. If 30 members were done away with it would prevent 30 members having any trouble with their electors, and on top of that the amount of insult, imputations and innuendo cast would be removed and the result would be that those not here would be amongst the enlightened electors. I hope the Government will give consideration to these suggestions during the recess, and before the election for 1920 takes place, because I do not see there will be any necessity for an election before that time. I am quite prepared next year, if the Government really believe in the necessity that exists for a reduction of members of Parliament, as I believe it does, and as they have more experience than I

have, I ask them to seriously consider the position and come down with a policy in this regard. They will have my hearty support. I hope the Government will seriously consider this because I believe it will not only come in this State, but in every State in the near future. There is one matter which we ought to give serious consideration to. It was referred to by the member for Albany (Mr. H. Robinson), and that is the official housing of public officers. At the present time a most extravagant system is in vogue, and I think the Government ought to have some comprehensive scheme of housing the officials carried out. I consider a very good plan would be to take over Government House and grounds and the whole establishment, and make it the centre of the housing of the whole of the official staff of the State. It may be asked where should we place the Governor. I think it would be good business for the State to buy Lord Forrest's "Bungalow" and make some alterations there. I think there is no likelihood of the position of Governor in Western Australia being done away with for many years. He has to be housed and I consider if Lord Forrest's "Bungalow" was altered to suit the requirements of the Governor, that would suit every necessity. We should have the buildings there for all time and alterations could be made with very little expense. The accommodation for the public service could be gradually increased where the present Government House is in St. George's-terrace. The Education Department could be removed there when the present lease for the building which is now rented for the Education Department expires. At the present time we have a system of housing out civil servants out of all proportion to the value received. People from the country when they wish to visit departments at present have to go north, south, east, and west. I think the Government should bring forward a comprehensive scheme of housing their officials and until that is done the economy which we have a right to introduce and give effect to cannot be carried out. As to taxation I realise the proper form of taxation is to place it on the shoulders of those who are best able to bear it, whatever form the taxation may take. We should not try to tax those who have nothing to tax. In conclusion I hope and trust in dealing with the Estimates—for I see there is no possibility of reducing them now—we might just as well put a rubber stamp "approved" on them, because we have only one-third of the financial year to go now, and we might as well go on with next year's Estimates before the House dissolves.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) 8-14]: I did not have the pleasure of hearing the Treasurer make his speech because I was not here when the Budget was delivered, but I have gone through it carefully and one thing that struck me more than another was the invitation of the Treasurer to members to act as advisers of the Government in putting the finances of the country in a solvent condition. It has been the policy of Treasurers usually in introducing the Budget to state the policy of the Government clearly and definitely, the economies to be effected, the taxation proposed to be introduced, but I am not cavilling at the Treasurer's invitation; I rather welcome it as the first attempt made by a Treasurer in this House to afford private members an opportunity of assisting in the Government of the country. At the same time I should like to say that whilst co-operation might be of advantage to all concerned, there is the fatal objection that private members are not in a position

to advise. Members of this Committee now at any other time have not and never have had the opportunity of securing that inner knowledge of the administration of departments which is so essential to good advice. Therefore I say, that since we do not possess the knowledge to enable us to give the Treasurer sound advice, we have no opportunity of securing that knowledge whilst this system of government remains, I am afraid members of Parliament cannot help the Treasurer very much. The hon. gentleman must depend upon his own resources and upon the assistance of members of the Ministry to get him out of his present difficulties. The belief that Parliament can effect economies—and that belief is held by large numbers of people because members of Parliament when addressing the electors from the hustings assure them that economy will be insisted upon—is a superstition. It does not obtain in actual fact, since in this House members have reduced votes time after time only to find, later, that the votes have been re-introduced and passed because in the opinion of the Government it was necessary they should be passed or that the votes had already been expended. So far as I am concerned, I shall take the opportunity as time goes on to offer suggestions to the Government; and I will expect the Government to be honest enough to give the suggestions a fair trial and also to satisfy the Committee that suggestions which are not accepted are impracticable. That is as much as I can promise; and I promise that in good faith. I do not propose to embarrass the Government. I do not propose to remind the Minister for Works that he spent most of his time, when in Opposition, in censuring the Government. I propose to help him.

Hon. P. Collier: Heaven knows, he needs it.

Mr. TROY: I propose to help him because that time is one when all the assistance that member can render is required to help the State over its present difficulties. The chief matter for discussion consideration, and anxiety is of course the question of the finances. That is the important matter which we have now to consider. We know the anticipated deficit is nearly a million pounds. After all, we have not at any time had a surplus in this State—to my knowledge, at least no since I have been a member of this Assembly. Since 1903, I think I am justified in saying, no financial year has ever closed with a surplus. By a species of dishonest political juggling, when Governments have been about to approach their electors and seek a renewal of confidence, they by withholding certain payments have brought in a surplus. But immediately the financial year expired, the monthly returns showed that the deficit had returned and that the old order of things again obtained. In a country such as Western Australia, where the work of development is in its very initial stages, it is only natural that there should be deficits. There is no question about that. Here, until recently, we had no industry worth speaking of but the mining industry. Happily that industry never was responsible for a deficit, because it is a cash proposition. If the mining industry to-day was as prosperous as it was 20 years ago, our difficulties would not be very great. But, apart from the mining industry, and to some extent the pastoral industry, and later the timber industry, we have had no great industries in Western Australia.

Member: The trouble is that we have no secondary industries.

Mr. TROY: If we had secondary industries, which is a matter I shall discuss later, our position would be happier. But since 1904, when the State began the development of its agricultural industries—and I wish here, without offence to members of the Country party who particularly represent that industry, to say that the agricultural industry to-day is responsible for our troubles—

Mr. Johnston: Not entirely.

Mr. TROY: I think I can almost say, entirely, or I may say, the war, coupled with the fact that we have expended large sums in developing the agricultural industry. At a time when we might reasonably have expected some return from that industry, the war fell upon Western Australia; and of course our circumstances are much worse in consequence. A country which is developing, which is borrowing largely and spending the money in development, cannot possibly show surpluses. It is unreasonable to expect them. And that is the real cause of our present financial position. We had droughts in 1911 and 1914. They were serious droughts, especially in that they came at periods when returns were to be expected from the development which had taken place. But after the expenditure there was no result from the development; and in 1914, when the drought was upon us, the war broke out. That fact was most disastrous, in that if we had had a good season in 1914 we would have secured war prices, which would have returned to the State a large amount of money as the result of export of wheat. In 1915 we had, of course, some return; but in the succeeding years, 1916 and 1917, the returns were less; and to-day our position is that while we can produce we cannot export our product. A country which produces but cannot export, and thus cannot get a return of the money it has expended, has not the money to pay its way. That is the position to-day.

Mr. Johnston: We are getting paid for most of our wheat now.

Mr. TROY: We are being paid at intervals; but the payments we are receiving are not nearly commensurate with the outlay, with the cost of production. The cost of production has advanced by leaps and bounds. The amount we now receive is not sufficient to repay the outlay involved in bringing about the production. I think I can safely say that were it not for our unfortunate geographical position, could we but get rid of the products we have actually on hand, the products which are rotting in the country and on our wharves and jetties, could we but dispose of those products or exchange them for goods in kind, our position would not be nearly so bad as it is, and we should be discussing with less anxiety, or dread, the State finances as we find them to-day. Our position is analogous to that of Victoria in the nineties. The other day I was looking up the Victorian financial returns for that period, and I found that Victoria, which is a compact little State, which at that period had a population more than three times as great as our present population, and where the cost of administration is comparatively very light, had a deficit of not less than two millions in the drought years. And that deficit continued for four or five years. Industrially, Victoria's position was then analogous to our present position. The Victorians were in the happy position—happy relatively to ours—of constituting a compact State with a considerable population. Their agricultural industry was then in its developmental state, just as ours is to-day.

The Victorians had expended large sums of money in building railways for the purpose of placing settlers on the land; and, drought falling upon them, they suffered in consequence. We are now labouring under the same conditions in Western Australia. When we have got over our droughts and are producing, we cannot sell our products; and—let people say what they will—the parlous position of this country is very largely due to those factors. Victoria at that time provided no sinking fund in repayment of its loans, and therefore did not, in comparison, show nearly so well as Western Australia. No matter how rabid a political partisan any person may be, he must realise the fact that our present circumstances are due to the primary industries of Western Australia being in the developmental stage, and, further, to the fact that our other industries are so seriously affected by the war that they may almost be said to have ceased to exist. Take, for example, the timber industry. The value of timber exported in 1913 was £1,098,000. Last year the value was only £310,000, and for the half-year ended the 31st December last it was only £81,000—say £170,000 for the current financial year. That as against an export value of over one million pounds four or five years ago. In itself this is a very serious set-back to the country. The earning and spending capacities of all the workers in the timber industry are practically non-existent to-day; and those conditions naturally affect the country very materially. I adduce these facts in order that members of Parliament may not be unjust, and may not give it out to the people that the State's financial position is due to extravagances on the part of Governments. Again, there is the mining industry, which has always been a most important industry in Western Australia. If to-day we could so encourage mining development as to secure the opening up of another goldfield to carry, say, ten thousand people—

The Colonial Treasurer: Our troubles would be at an end then.

Mr. TROY: Then I make this suggestion to the Minister for Mines and the Treasurer: it would be a very good gamble if the Government offered a reward of £10,000 to the person who made such a discovery as would open up a new goldfield carrying 10,000 people for three years in this country. If the Government offered such a reward to any prospector, it would give a great stimulus to prospecting.

The Colonial Treasurer: It would be very cheap at the money.

Hon. P. Collier: You are setting your demand too high. The discovery of such a goldfield would be worth a million pounds to the State.

Mr. TROY: I do not care what particular proposition the Government agree to; but I do suggest that such a reward would represent a great incentive to prospecting; and in a large State such as ours it might easily result in the discovery of a fine field.

The Minister for Mines: It is the idea you want to suggest, rather than the details?

Mr. TROY: Yes. I am sure something of the kind is necessary. We have not now the number of prospectors that we had in the old days. Thousands of our prospectors have gone to the Front. But there still remain a number of men engaged upon that work, who would be encouraged if the prospect of a reasonably large profit were held out to them; and the Government might easily do that. There is no reason why we



should not find a big silver mine or an oilfield in this State. I think the Government might well gamble on that chance, with considerable advantage to the State. Our gold production decreased by £535,000 last year. Since 1915 there has been a decline amounting to one million pounds. Of course this industry, like others, has been greatly hampered by war conditions. All the costs of mining requisites have increased, and in my opinion the Wilson Government were very unwise in the manner in which they increased railway freights. This has proved a great burden to the mining industry. These freights were not increased scientifically. The further the goods were carried into the back country the higher the rate charged.

The Minister for Railways: It was a flat increase of so much per cent.

Mr. TROY: Yes. I have picked out a few instances of how it works. To Armadale the increase is only 1s. per ton; to a point 100 miles from Perth it is 4s. per ton; to Northam it is 2s. 10d.; to Leonora 14s. 2d.; to Meekatharra 15s. 2d. How on earth can an industry saddled with these charges progress, particularly in view of the fact that all mining requisites to-day are excessively dear because of war conditions?

The Minister for Railways: It is only fair to say that it does not apply to lower freights.

Mr. TROY: No; but it applies to such things as mining requisites, dairy produce, groceries, canned fruits, tinned milk, mining machinery, mining chemicals, cyanide, building material, galvanised iron—nearly all of the essential requirements of mining development are affected. When the present Government re-arrange the railway freights, as I believe they intend to do, I hope they will bear in mind the injustice which has been done to remote portions of the State, where development is essential, and that they will remedy those injustices.

The Minister for Railways: Then you say the freights require adjustment?

Mr. TROY: Certainly. I consider the last increase was most detrimental to the mining industry, and largely responsible for the setback given to that industry.

Hon. P. Collier: It was a stupid rule-of-thumb increase.

The Minister for Railways: I agree with that.

Mr. TROY: In addition to these handicaps on our industries, there is the fact that there has left our shores 30,000 able-bodied producers. Probably that is the greatest setback we have received. The young men, the men in the prime of life, the men responsible for the development of our industries have gone away, and although they are a charge on the community they are producing nothing, while our industries are languishing. In my opinion if it were not for the war the deficit of £900,000 on the year would not be so appalling as some members think. I am convinced that with reasonably good seasons and natural increase in our flocks and herds, together with the development of our industries there would be no occasion for anxiety about the present deficit, or even the deficit which is being funded. Our recuperative powers are so great that with a little taxation and economy we would soon get over the trouble. But in addition to what we are suffering under, there is the aftermath of the war to be considered. We are unable to get estimates of what the consequences of the war will be, but we can be sure of increased taxation to meet interest on the war loans already raised

and those still to be raised. The amount of money to be paid in pensions and repatriation will be a very severe burden on the community. When we are considering the present condition of the finances, we must not forget that in addition to domestic troubles we will have an additional burden fall on us with the rest of the Commonwealth as the result of the war. To date the Commonwealth have borrowed 100 millions for war purposes, and they have loan authorisations of 60 millions. When these loans shall have been raised there will be an annual interest bill of £7,200,000 and that £7,200,000 of interest paid to Australian contributors to the war loan is money which cannot be taxed by either the State or the Commonwealth Government. It is a very serious position. The war pensions already amount to three million pounds, and will probably amount to eight millions before the war is over. The Commonwealth will invade every avenue of taxation, and since the field of taxation is limited because of the manner in which they are raising money at the present time, the burden on those called upon to bear the taxation will be very heavy indeed. This House has before it the task of having to solve the present position. Several remedies have been suggested. The Premier says we must increase production. That was the battle cry of the Nationalists at the last general election—"Produce, produce, produce." If the producers of the country are to produce they must be encouraged, and certainly further taxation imposed on those who have a pretty stiff burden now is not conducive to production, for it takes from those who produce the means by which they are able to further produce. I think the Government can materially assist in this direction; because if, for instance, we are going to ask the miner to produce, we cannot encourage him to produce by increasing the railway freight, nor by allowing the middleman to impose any charge he likes on what he sells to the miner. We cannot expect the agriculturist to produce if we allow persons to increase the cost of production. For instance, we cannot expect the agriculturist to produce if he has to pay £1 per ton more for super than he paid last year, if we allow the middleman to charge increased rates for all requirements. These are some of the factors which the Government must necessarily consider if they are going to give encouragement to increased production. Here in Western Australia the amount which the producer receives for what he produces, whether gold or wheat, is not, in many instances, as great as it was prior to the war; but all the costs involved in the production of that produce have increased nearly 100 per cent. Consequently I cannot see how the Government are going to encourage production, if they do not take some very pronounced steps to prevent the exploitation of producers by other sections of the community. Take the question of assistance to agriculture. If the Government had been wise they would have secured the importation of quantities of phosphatic rock by which the present companies operating in this State would have been able to provide superphosphates at a reasonable rate; and the Government could have easily arranged, as the Industries Assistance Board did, reasonable rates for the importation of bags and twine from India, instead of leaving it to the goodwill of the Prime Minister, who gave his word before the elections, and as usual did not keep it. The Prime Minister of the Commonwealth was to bring into the country all the farmers' requirements. When the elections

were over he handed the question of supply to the middleman. The State Government will be able to sell to the farmers on the Industries Assistance Board their requirements in regard to bags much cheaper than I can buy them through the ordinary merchant channels. These are handicaps which the Government must remove if they expect the producer to produce. I lay the blame on the Government, because the Government and their supporters were largely responsible for the defeat of the Prices Fixing Bill when the Act was operating so advantageously to the State. There is at present a Cost of Living Commission sitting, and it will sit indefinitely. But there is the same old game of plunder going on all the time. People are only too willing to take advantage of the war conditions. The Government could easily have brought in a Bill to meet the position. I must say for the Treasurer that he supported the old Bill when it was introduced. The Government must encourage production, because the future of the country depends on those who are producing but who are producing under the very worst conditions. If we were in the happy position of being able to get 9s. a bushel for our wheat, everything in the garden would be lovely and we could pay any amount of taxation. There is, however, no hope of that unless the rest of the world is in a state of famine whilst we are in the fortunate position of being able to export wheat. If that were so of course we could demand almost any price we liked. The Treasurer and the Government would then be able to secure all the revenue they required for the development of this country. If the Government and members on that side of the House are desirous that we should produce, then they must introduce such measures into this House as will restrict the operations and the plundering of the middle men of this community. It has been suggested that we should indulge in violent economy and violent taxation, and we are assured by the papers that this is a statesmanlike proposal. I could have urged that on any day in the week in this House and could have urged the Government to abolish two-thirds of the public service—without responsibility of course—and I could have counselled the Government to tax up to the very hilt or cut down to the very bone. If that is statesmanlike, then I can be a statesman. But I cannot ask the Government to do that because I have some sense of responsibility. We expect the Government to economise but if I were to insist upon such violent economy as to cut off £250,000 from the Estimates, I might be doing something which would be disastrous to the country. When the Treasurer invites hon. members to assist him, I say I doubt whether I am in any position to assist, but when we come to the Estimates I will suggest economies and will expect that the Government will make these economies if possible. There are certain economies which, in my opinion, can be effected, and these economies should be effected without delay. I cannot, with any degree of justice to myself, proclaim to the country that the Government must indulge in violent taxation and violent economy because I cannot put my finger on the spot where economies to that extent can be effected. There is the question of taxation. The persons who are able to pay heavy taxation in this country are limited in number. If we took those who are in receipt of good incomes, in this country, I suppose we would find that they would include only pastoralists and gentlemen

like the member for Claremont (Mr. Stewart), who is willing to waste thousands of pounds on betting during his election campaign. Gentlemen who proclaim their wealth in this manner are entitled to pay their share to the country which enables them to proclaim it from the housetops.

Mr. Johnston: Is not betting illegal?

Mr. TROY: The hon. member made a wager that he did not make a certain statement. A very large section of our community is comprised of workers and people receiving (on the goldfields) up to £4 a week.

Mr. Lutey: Three pounds ten shillings a week.

Mr. TROY: When the increased cost of living and particularly the cost of wearing apparel, and the necessary commodities of life, is borne in mind, it will be seen that these people have not much left out of which to pay taxation. When one speaks of violent taxation one realises that this may be possible in the wealthy Eastern States, but beyond the squatters and a few business men I do not know where the Government can indulge in violent taxation without imposing very harsh conditions upon the major portion of the community. I shall, however, leave the question of taxation until the Treasurer introduces it and then I am prepared to oppose where I think opposition is necessary, and where I think that heavy taxation is necessary and desirable to give my support to it. It has always struck me here that the heaviest burden of taxation is levied on those industries, which play the most important part in the development of this country, and that other occupations and avocations not so important go scot free. It was not until recent years that we had such taxation as picture show and amusement taxes in this State. In my opinion, if a heavy tax should fall anywhere it should fall upon institutions of that character, and the lightest tax should fall upon those industries upon which this country depends for development and progress. A suggestion has been made to-night by the member for Subiaco (Mr. Brown), and earlier by the Treasurer, that we should begin by reducing the salaries of members of Parliament. The member for Subiaco waxed most enthusiastic regarding this proposal. Whilst I am prepared to pay my share of taxation like any other man in the community, I am not in favour of all that system of taxation. I do not see any particular merit in holding myself up to the community as an example, saying to the people "We have retrenched our own salaries. I am prepared to pay every bit of taxation imposed upon me by this House."

Hon. P. Collier: No member should be called upon to pay any more than any private citizen.

Mr. TROY: I am not going to agree to that. I did not promise my constituents that I would do this, and I have never assured my constituents that I would be their example, but I have always agreed that I would be their Parliamentary representative.

Mr. Maley: You have not been before your constituents for about 14 years.

Mr. TROY: They have always taken me on trust and have accepted my word, and I hope they will continue to do so. I am prepared to submit to the same taxation according to my means and my station as would be imposed upon my constituents and every other member of the community. If the deductions are made from the country member's salary, which must be made in connection with his visits to his constituency and travelling around, and in connection with the donations which he is called upon to make, I say

he does not from what is left receive the salary of an ordinary clerk in a public department.

Mr. Pickering: Quite right.

Mr. TROY: In the case of City members like the member for Subiaco—I am making no personal attack upon him but merely appealing to his fair-mindedness—who live in their constituencies and who have their businesses there, and who attend to these businesses whilst also attending the House, it is an easy matter for them to give their time to their public business without neglecting their private business, and easy to talk about the reduction of members' salaries. I might also instance the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) and the member for West Perth (Mr. Draper) in the same way. Other members of this Chamber, however, have to travel a very long way to attend to the public business, and even have to pay others to attend to their private business whilst they are away. Probably it costs some members hundreds of pounds to be away from their constituencies and from their private interests, whilst they are attending to the services of the country. I am not going to agree to that proposition because I am of opinion that it is not desirable that members of Parliament should set an example, or that they should be called upon to bear a greater share of taxation than other members of the community. I do agree with the suggestion as to the reduction of the number of members of Parliament, and would heartily welcome any suggestion for the abolition of one House of Parliament of Western Australia. It is utterly ridiculous for the Government of a country like this, with a population of 300,000 men, women, and children, to have two Houses of Parliament, when in Ontario, in Canada, where the population is nearly two millions, there is only one House governing the State. In all the States of Canada, except Quebec and Nova Scotia, the whole of the Government is carried on by one Assembly. Lord Knutsford, who was Secretary of State for the Colonies, when Responsible Government was given to Western Australia, advised the Western Australian Council to accept the Constitution adopted by the Canadian States there. I have read that statement, and the excuse given on that occasion by the Western Australian Council was that Western Australia was not on all fours with Canada because the Canadian State Parliament had behind it the Dominion Parliament of Canada. If that was the only excuse there was to offer it no longer holds good because we now have the Federal Parliament of Australia behind the States. I do not care which House it is that is abolished, but I do think the country can be carried on by 30 members of Parliament, who should be paid decent and reasonable salaries, and that Parliament should be elected on the adult franchise. This system has operated to great advantage in Canada, and could be introduced with great advantage in Western Australia. If the Government will introduce that proposition I will heartily support them. In my opinion the State is overburdened at present by expensive institutions. We have overburdened ourselves in our desire to live in a sovereign state by means of institutions, some of which cannot now well be abolished. I think that we had the University before its time, but since education is the most important thing for the community and the very last thing upon which we should desire to retrench, that University must be retained. There are, however, some institutions which might be abolished

or reduced with advantage. Take our Agent General's office. Surely the expenditure of £8,000 is not either necessary or wise at the present juncture.

The Colonial Treasurer: I tried to get the Treasurers' Conference to agree to an amalgamation of the Agents General's offices.

Mr. TROY: What can be the duties of an Agent General at the present time?

Hon. P. Collier: If we cannot do without the Agent General's office we ought at least to cut it down.

Mr. TROY: There is no immigration at the present time and we are not importing that quantity of machinery or goods requiring inspection by an engineer in the Agent General's office. There should be no duties which cannot be performed by one man.

Hon. P. Collier: The work was performed for a year or more by one acting Agent General.

Mr. TROY: When the Agent General's vote comes on I will have something further to say about the manner in which that office was carried on for 12 months by, to say the least of it, an extraordinary official in the office. During the whole of the time the gentleman holding the position of Agent General received two salaries—his salary as Agent General, and his salary as a Brigadier of the British army. I think that gentleman deserves a tap over the knuckles.

Hon. T. Walker: Mr. Moss was there.

Mr. TROY: I understand that Mr. Moss was there and whilst the State had the services of Mr. Moss that gentleman did not draw a salary, but he was allowed to use an office in the Agent General's building free of rent and I understood Sir Newton Moore drew the salary and the State lost the rent which was formerly paid for an office by Mr. Moss. I was speaking of what may happen after the war. I believe that we shall have to hand over to the Commonwealth Government some of our large spending departments which produce little or no revenue. We could hand over to the Commonwealth Government our Education Department. If the Commonwealth should control one department more than another it is the Education Department, because education is a national work and should be uniform in system. The Commonwealth should also take over the medical department and the Charities Department.

Hon. T. Walker: The more you give them, the more they will want.

Mr. TROY: And as the Prime Minister is so desirous of establishing a Commonwealth police force, I have no objection to the Commonwealth taking over our Police Department also. We are approaching the time, I think, when the constitutions will have to be put into the melting pot. We in this State have no secondary industries, and I do not see how we are going to carry on unless something turns up, as Mr. Micawber hoped.

Mr. Pickering: He got it in the end.

Mr. TROY: I am not going to adopt a Micawber attitude: I am looking at things as I see them to-day. I am no star gazer. I am prepared to look at things as they are. The Constitution will have to go into the melting pot and the Commonwealth Government will have to take over many of our responsibilities. It will be their duty to take them over because they have all the avenues of taxation and revenue open to them. In conclusion, I would like to say a few words about repatriation. Much has been said and

many promises have been made all to little purpose. I have heard in this House quite a number of suggestions regarding the repatriation of soldiers, and what struck me was that all the suggestions have been made without consideration for the feelings or the wants or requirements or the likes and dislikes of the soldiers. One member has suggested the establishment of poultry farms. Another has suggested banana raising. I have no doubt the hon. member who suggested banana raising on the Gascoyne river has made a success of that venture himself.

Mr. Angelo: Quite correct.

Mr. TROY: I know as much about banana raising as my friend. I had an opportunity of viewing his little plot on the Gascoyne a few years ago. I was very pleased I had that opportunity to see what he was able to accomplish there, but I do not think—probably I am wrong—that he can tell this House frankly and truthfully that the proposition is a paying one. When we come to consider freights under normal conditions, the possibilities of Western Australia under irrigation producing bananas and competing against Java where no irrigation is needed, is not an encouraging proposition.

Mr. Pickering: There is the handicap of the steamer freights.

Mr. TROY: That is a very small matter. Bananas can be produced under natural conditions at very little cost, whereas by means of irrigation and erecting expensive machinery, it is not possible with our present population to, for a moment, consider the proposition which has been made by the member for Gascoyne.

Mr. Pickering: He does not confine it to banana growing.

Mr. TROY: I can suggest a much better proposition than banana raising and the hon. member will admit the proposition I am about to make is a sound one. The pastoralists hold all the country right into Carnarvon. There are lots of young men who are hungering for a slice of that country on which to make a home for themselves. That country can carry twelve times the population and can produce sheep and cattle in much greater numbers than is the case today. I would suggest that the immense pastoral areas up there be cut up into blocks of 50,000 or 60,000 acres and in that way it would be possible for those areas to carry 5,000 sheep. Would that not be better than banana raising? That is a proposition too, which I make in connection with my own electorate. There is a pastoralist in my electorate who is carrying 3,000 sheep on 20,000 acres and who is making £700 a year. That is a very good living and it is an easy life. The manager of a station told me that on 50,000 acres of land a man could make a good living, and no one should be permitted at most to hold more than 100,000 acres. One of the most unjust things the late Government ever did was to pass the recent Act which provided the regranting of the leases to present pastoralists without consideration of the rights of the people.

Mr. Johnston: The whole House passed it.

Mr. TROY: I opposed it from this very chair. There are also immense areas of land alongside our existing railways which are capable of carrying many sheep.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Have you considered what would be the result of giving the people small areas on the Gascoyne in times of drought?

Mr. TROY: The last big drought on the Murchison and the Gascoyne was the greatest ever experienced, and yet the pastoralists lost fewer sheep than they did in the droughts of 20 and 30 years ago. In the old days the areas were not fenced, and there were no water supplies, but to-day with more paddocks and more fencing and water supplies, they can carry three times the number of sheep. In New South Wales the Government cut up the pastoral areas into 30,000 acre holdings and to-day there are thousands of settlers where there were only hundreds before. That is a sound proposition. Why therefore condemn soldiers to raising poultry and bananas when there are such great possibilities in the direction I have mentioned. Market gardening is another suggestion which has been made by some hon. members. We know that many of the soldiers who have gone to the Front are men from the back country. Many of them have been accustomed to big areas, and do we imagine that they are going to settle down at market gardening and poultry raising, and are we to condemn those people to such existences? The soldiers themselves will not agree to these things. They will have their ideas also. We look for bigger and fuller opportunities, and these men who are at the war will do the same when they return. I will conclude my remarks with the suggestion, that we on this side of the House expect the Government, when they are effecting economies by retrenching, and when they are proposing taxation, to take into consideration the rights of all sections of the community. I shall resist any attempt to overburden the people I represent as I feel they were overburdened by the last increase of railway rates. At the present time we are handicapped by the fact that while we produce in this country we have no means of getting rid of our produce, and what the Government might well do is that, in anticipation of the war ending at no distant date, and in anticipation of the multitudes on the other side of the world requiring our produce at reasonable rates, to prepare those works and those facilities which will enable us to get our produce in their markets. In this connection it is necessary that the freezing works at Wyndham should be persevered with. Because, whatever may be said regarding extravagance, it would be lunacy to stop operations now.

The Minister for Works: They are likely to cost considerably less than was anticipated.

Mr. TROY: So I understand. Then, freezing works are required on the Gascoyne and at Geraldton. Our flocks and herds are increasing at a rate in excess of any previous figures. We have 7,000,000 sheep now, and all the agriculturists are going in for sheep, and more grazing areas are being taken up. We are enjoying a very fine season, and I see no reason why we should not be carrying 10,000,000 sheep two years hence. We must keep our eyes on this increased production, because that is where we are to get our future wealth from, and we must attend to the marketing of that increase as something which will put the State in a solid position. The Government have no reason to complain of insufficient support in carrying out their enterprises, because they have in the House a majority which will enable them to fulfill all their purposes. I will conclude by hoping that wherever economies are effected they will be such as the State can afford to have made and that taxation will be equitable and fair to every section of the community.

Mr. DURACK (Kimberley) [9-17]: In due deference to what must be the feeling of most members in respect of bringing the debate to a conclusion, it is not my desire to keep the Committee very long. I do not presume that I can add very much to what has been already expressed by that multitude of counsellors which preceded me, and out of whose collective wisdom I trust the Treasurer will have conceived some ideas which will lift him out of the financial entanglement which is so much the concern of all of us. It is often said that new members, imbued probably with a certain amount of what the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) would call new-born zeal, very often are led to imagine that they have been sent to reform, not only methods of Parliament but the world and mankind in general. It is in no such belief that I address the Committee to-night. Even were I desirous of doing so, I understand that this is not just the opportunity when new members are allowed to give full flight to their imagination. I believe there is a number of new members and old members as well, actuated by the honest intention and earnest desire to see that the drift and waste that has been going on for a number of years—I might call it wanton drift and waste—is checked as much as possible. If one were to be guided by the expressions which fell from the lips of many members in the opening stages of the debate, one might be justified in inferring that the Government were in for a rough passage. Whilst honest criticism is good for the Government—it is not well that they should imagine they have a sinecure—I think that when all things are taken into consideration, and seeing that the Government are practically new in office, very little of this criticism has been justified. I agree with the member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) when he tells us that it is an easy matter to find fault and smash up things as it were and be hypercritical. Destructionists, like the poor, we have always with us. For my part I would rather listen to something of a constructive nature. I have heard a good deal with reference to the word "policy." The Premier and Ministers in general have been twitted with having no policy. The word has been so harped upon that I began to think there must be some magical meaning in it. If "policy" is to be defined as the exercise of prudence and wisdom in the management of Government and private affairs, then I say, in view of the announcements the Government have already made in respect of measures they purpose bringing forward, the Government have given us a policy; but if, on the other hand, policy is to be defined as a blatant flourish of trumpets and a fanfare of platitudes concerning projects which it is impossible to carry into effect, then probably it may be said the Government have not given us a policy. It seems to me that if the Government had resorted to what I think has been the practice of most new Governments, if they had resorted to camouflage, probably they would not have been so roundly criticised. Many will agree that if members cannot be altogether considerate, they should at least be fair. Some people seem to think a Government, on entering office, have nothing to do but with a flourish of some magic wand press a button as it were, and *hey presto* prosperity will immediately spring into existence. Such people seem to forget that the country has been saddled with an incubus, and they have to bear the burden of the last 12 or 15 years wanton drift and reckless profligacy. The member for York (Mr. Griffiths) remarked

that he would prefer to see the cheery optimism of Lord Forrest. I am not going to take up the role of either optimist or pessimist, but I would rather look at things from the optimistic point of view, because we know well that while the hopes and anticipations of optimists are not always realised, the pessimist never or rarely ever attain anything. So, while I realise that we are at present placed in a critical financial position, I would rather look at it from the point of view of a business man summing up the situation. If we take the broad point of view, what do we find? We find that we have in the State a total area of 624,588,800 acres of land of which 21,916,367 acres is alienated or in process of alienation leaving a balance of 602 million unalienated. I understand that our public debt in round figures amounts to £35,000,000. Consider these figures, divide the one by the other, and we find that the State is carrying a liability of under 1s. 2d. per acre. Who in the House would not be a member of a corporation having this acreage of 600 odd millions carrying a liability of only 1s. 2d. per acre? I think that in those circumstances the fortunate ones would consider their position a very sound one indeed. Apart from that, we have 3,500 miles of railways on which the total amount debited to capital represents some £17,000,000. I therefore take it that our railways and tramways represent a capital of 18 or 19 millions. Added to this we have our harbours, jetties, water supplies, and sewerage, which reach just on £9,000,000. Then we have many public buildings. The post office, I understand, we have not any longer, but I believe we are paid three and a half per cent. on that.

The Colonial Treasurer: We have another million pounds worth of public buildings which were constructed out of revenue.

Mr. DURACK: Then in addition we have our State hotels, workers' homes, sawmills, steamships, ferries, brick yards, implement works, and quarries, representing over a million, and we have our wealth in other ways. We have in this State undeveloped a large quantity of minerals which, sooner or later, will be of untold wealth to the State. When we look at that position we cannot for a moment say that it is at all a hopeless one now, because of this position. I do not mean to say at the present time that we must not exercise economy in the administration of our affairs. It is up to every one of us to see that the Government exercise economy in every possible way. If the Government are given a reasonable time in which to carry out their policy, and if despite this they fail in their purpose, I do not see that we shall be justified in supporting them any longer. But we have to realise that this is a new, undeveloped country and in exercising economy we have to realise that that economy must be tempered with discretion. I do not for a moment consider that the position of the Government is at all a hopeless one, nor do I think that we shall find violent taxation or any drastic measures in that direction, of much avail. The member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) declared the other night that we required a somewhat serious surgical operation. But it must be remembered that surgical operations are sometimes followed by disastrous consequences. I do not think it would be wise to go in for drastic taxation. With a certain amount of care and wisdom we shall pull through. Of that I have no doubt. A good deal has been said about production, and we are told that the salvation of the country lies in the policy, "produce, produce, produce." The member for

Perth remarked, and rightly so, that our progress in this direction must be very slow, that we can expect very little salvation in this respect in the immediate future. Speaking more particularly of agriculture I will go further and say that agricultural production in this State has been to a great extent arrested, in consequence largely of the great scarcity and the high demands of labour. Indeed we seem to have reached that point at which the returns from agriculture are altogether out of proportion to the cost of production and marketing. I regret to say that, at present, agricultural production is apparently no longer profitable. Even with our industries which are of a profitable nature, the stimulus to expand and develop those industries receive very little encouragement, in which the producer or the entrepreneur takes all the risks attendant on production, and the War Time Profits Act takes all the profits, or 75 per cent. of them. That is in respect to the profitable industries. I now come to a question which has been talked of a lot in this House, a question which is dear to the heart of the Premier, and that is education. The Premier told us that he would rather see the State drift on to the rocks with education than without it. I do not see why we should hasten this, I hope, improbable catastrophe by continuing to build up this system of education. Probably my views in regard to education would be regarded as exceptional, but apart from the problematical advantages to be derived from the building up of this glorified State system, we have to remember our circumstances. I do not wish to decry education and regret that possibly we may be called on to reduce the education vote. We must consider that this is a new country and we have to deal mostly with primary and secondary industries, and it is in those avenues our labour is mostly directed, and in which we wish our labour to be directed if we hope to achieve prosperity. It seems to me we have gone far enough, if not too far, in this respect. When speaking of education in England, in the United States, in France, and in Germany, and the large increased grants made, we must remember the circumstances are entirely different in those older countries with the multiplied ramifications of those countries. Students turned out of their schools find employment suitable to their education. But that does not altogether apply to this State. There may be a certain amount of intellectual waste going on as far as we are concerned, and we are no more justified in allowing this waste than we would be in allowing any other waste, I do not say our education should not expand to the agricultural areas with respect to primary education. Secondary education is all very well for those who will pay for it. It often has occurred to me whether education has all the advantages that are claimed for it. I am speaking of higher education. To my mind it has often appeared that higher education destroys a certain amount of confidence in the individual. He has an opportunity of seeing so much on both sides of the question that he very often finds himself on the horns of a dilemma lost in a labyrinth of doubt, afraid to move one way or the other. I am led to these conclusions by the facts that are around us. What are the facts as far as we have seen in the history of Australia to-day? Who are the men who have been responsible? Who are the leaders of thought in Australia since its foundation? They have not been the men turned out of the higher academic

institutions. We only have to go to New Zealand and New South Wales, not to mention one prominent name in Western Australia. The leaders of thought in Australia, the men responsible for doing things and placing laws on the statute-book are men who started out with nothing more than primary education.

Hon. T. Walker: And pursued it through life, educating themselves.

Mr. DURACK: I now come to matters in connection with my own electorate and I compliment the Government on the appointment of an Honorary Minister for the North-West. This is a step in the right direction. It shows an earnest on the part of the Government of their intention to deal practically with the problems of the North. Every member realises the great estate we possess in the large area which we own in the north of Australia. The large portion which I have the honour to represent extends from the 19½ parallel of latitude in the South as far as Cape Londonderry, north of the 14th parallel and from 121 degree longitude on the West side to the 129 degree of longitude on the boundary of South Australia, an area exceeding that of the combined areas of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. It exceeds the area of those countries by 90 square miles. It embraces 121,268 square miles. I feel sure every member realises our great responsibilities in this possession, and everyone inside and outside the House must be seized of the seriousness of a position that finds us in possession of this vast unoccupied area. It seems to me we should do something to justify our right to hold this country. The pressure of the existence of the human race will not allow us to go on occupying it without doing something to turn it to account for the benefit of mankind. This is a big national question and if this Government—I know it has not great means at its disposal at the present time—cannot give us some encouragement by way of subsidy or otherwise to develop the North then we would be justified in calling on the Commonwealth or asking the Commonwealth to come to our assistance in this direction. As to the North, I have often thought that possibly the interests of the people and the country would be better served if we drew a line right across Australia from about the twentieth parallel of latitude, and this northern area was placed under the administration of men, giving them a good latitude of power subject to the Commonwealth Parliament. There is a possibility that thereby there would be something better done for the development of the country.

Mr. Lambert: Did you read their "Administration of the Northern Territory"?

Mr. DURACK: Yes.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): He is talking of administration on the spot.

Mr. DURACK: It is impossible to administer this vast northern area from the South, distant some 2,000 miles. However honest the intention of the Government may be, they cannot deal fairly with that area. To a great extent we are often misunderstood. I remember reading in one of the Press wires which we get every morning in Wyndham that the Minister for Works stated that too much notice must not be taken of the people in the North, they were naturally of an unsettled disposition and they had lost all sense of due proportion. I feel sure the Minister does not intend to cast any reflection on those toilers who are honestly endeavouring to

assist and develop the North, but I thought at the time he might have qualified those remarks.

The Minister for Works: Are you sure it was this Minister for Works?

Mr. DURACK: The hon. member is reported as saying so. Whether we have lost our due sense of proportion or not, I cannot say. I may be irrecoverably lost for I have lived there for 30 years. We have in the north of Australia, lying between the ports of Derby and Wyndham, a distance of 500 miles, some of the finest and best harbours to be found on any coastline of Australia. We have been told this by men who have travelled the world and they have informed me that the harbours there are not only capable of holding the combined British Navy but the combined fleets of the whole world. There is great value in the waters there—the pearl shell, fish, dugong, and so on, all sources of wealth. I have not travelled much on the eastern side but I am told, on the evidence of the late Mr. Brockman, who surveyed that country some years ago, that there are something like four million acres of magnificent country and that country is at present unoccupied. This brings me to the question of the Wyndham Meat Works and I see in those works one of the factors that is going, in some measure, to bring about a certain development in that country. The question of the construction of these works is one that concerns very much the taxpayer of Western Australia and rightly so, because a large sum of money is involved in the construction of the works, and possibly I am prepared to admit a good deal of waste has been caused in the construction of the works. I do not know whether the present Government, or a previous Government, could be held entirely responsible for this, but I wish to say, in compliment to the Labour Government, although they were late in going on with the work, the Labour Government were the first to make an honest attempt to start those works. The people of the North owe them a deep debt of gratitude. If any Government should be held responsible for delaying the works it is the Liberal Government previous to the Labour Government coming in. At the time a good deal of pressure was brought to bear through the Press and private individuals, and it must be within the memory of the Minister for Works, for I think he was in office at the time, but at any rate it is within his memory, the Liberal Government promised us that they would go on with the works. I remember one day meeting the member for Northam in Adelaide and I asked him what was being done about the works and he assured me they were going on with them, that everything was in train, and I ventured the remark that possibly the Government would go out of power. He said it did not matter if the Labour Government came into power, for they were committed to them, and they could not be stopped. The Labour Government did come into power, but the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) told me the other night that the Labour party had repudiated the engagement.

Hon. P. Collier: That is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. DURACK: I am prepared to believe that. I believe it was a mere sop, and that there was something like £52,000 sandwiched in for a number of other propositions, such as freezing works at Albany and at Fremantle, and abattoirs at Kalgoorlie. Hon. members can see how far £52,000 would go on all these works. Whilst these Wyndham works have cost a great deal of money at present, we must realise the position. We know that the cost of freight is high, with something

like 2,000 miles to get the material there. The cost of material has also gone up. Whilst I am prepared to admit that possibly we might have some difficulty in paying interest on those works for the first few years, as to the justification for the works themselves I have not the slightest doubt or misgiving. They are fully justified, and should have been started years ago, when they would have been of great benefit to the country.

Mr. Pickering: Are they over-capitalised?

Mr. DURACK: I believe they are. We cannot afford to stand idly by and see this large area going to waste without making some effort to develop it. We could not afford to see opposition works starting in the Northern Territory close by, and see those works getting cattle which should be dealt with at their geographical port, as would have been the case if the works had been started before. I have heard views expressed as to our supplies. I have here figures which are reliable since they are drawn from the most authenticated sources, and from what I know of the localities concerned I say there is no justification for the allegation as to shortages. The figures go to show that we have within a radius of 250 miles of the port of Wyndham some 320,000 head of cattle. These supplies are entirely exclusive of Vestey Bros' supplies, which must eventually, I have no doubt, come into the port of Wyndham. These people cannot continue to send their cattle at the present time 200 to 300 miles further on in order to get them to their own works, than they would have to send them if they came to Wyndham.

Mr. Green: Are not several of the large properties in the Kimberleys now owned by Vestey Bros.?

Mr. DURACK: Yes. If we go outside this 250 miles radius and come to the supplies within 350 miles, we can easily add another 100,000 head. A distance of 350 miles is not too far to drive cattle, for they are driven a much greater distance than that in Queensland.

Mr. Pickering: Does not that upset your contention in regard to Vestey Bros.?

Mr. DURACK: They have in some instances to drive cattle 600 miles into Port Darwin. I should like to take comparative figures with respect to Queensland, to show what they are doing in that State. My information is taken from the statistical figures for the year 1914. We find that Queensland had a cattle supply in that year of 5,455,943 head. Out of this they treated for canning 540,987 head, or equivalent to ten per cent. In addition, they put through 229,000 head, for local consumption, which is equivalent to another four per cent. Therefore, Queensland put through for canning and local consumption 14 per cent. of her total cattle supplies. I am not going to assume that we will put out that percentage for the present. We may reasonably assume, however, that we can do eight per cent. of our total supplies on this big discount. That is only a small discount. We could do eight per cent. of those cattle within 250 miles of the port, and this would give us 25,000 head for treatment at the works. When the holdings become more improved we will be able to do a much bigger percentage. There will also be extra areas of country taken up, which will increase the numbers still further, and still further increase the output due to improved conditions of various holdings. A station working on a proper basis generally puts out annually about

six per cent. of its stock, and this six per cent. would be added on to the eight per cent. I have already mentioned. In a few years, therefore we should be able to reach this 14 per cent. I feel sure that the works are going to give a big stimulus to the industry. We have had many indications of the future settlement of the northern areas of the State, in that through our agency in Perth we have had many inquiries respecting properties in the North, brought about by the establishment of these freezing works, and we will have a number of investors coming here, and two or three stations have been sold at a good profit during the last four months. It is people of this class that we wish to encourage from the Eastern States. The original holders of stations will be selling out and taking up areas elsewhere, and no doubt a great many of them will settle in the South-West. The South-West has already benefited to a large extent by the influx of squatters from the North-West. We must encourage people with capital to come from the Eastern States to settle upon our lands.

Mr. Green: They have spent a good deal of their money in the South-West already.

Mr. DURACK: The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) remarked that we should advertise to the world our areas of the north. The best advertisement we could get would be for the Government to show us that they are giving the producers fair prices for their cattle and fair treatment. I do not wish to make any reflection upon the Government as a whole, but I must make some remarks in connection with individual Ministers. It is bad enough for the producers to be told that the Government are not concerned about the market prices ruling in the world, and that their only concern is as to what is a fair price for the producer to receive as compared with the starvation prices of 20 years ago, but when that ultimatum is further accompanied by a threat telling the producers that if they do not accept the Government prices the Government will not start these works, the position becomes very much worse. I do not think this is the right attitude for the Government to adopt. To my mind it is playing it a bit low down. In fact, I do think producers might be excused for showing some feeling about the matter, especially when one of our well-known journals on the 15th February referred to this action of the Government as one of a tyrannical nature. This organ states that no such high-handed action has ever before been attempted in the meat trade of Australia. I think the producers are justified in offering some resentment to that action of the Government. I understand that negotiations are now under way by which an understanding with prospective producers will be arrived at in respect to prices. Producers do not admit that the price offering is at all equitable, or that it can be compared relatively with the prices in the Eastern States, but as the Government are up against a tough proposition, and with a desire to see those works started, they have been prepared to accept the offer of the Government, that is for 2½d. per pound at present, in the hope that the producers will receive their due reward in the years to follow. The Government in their discounting process should remember that they are in a great measure discounting their own resources. They are also retarding to a great extent the development of the country, because we know well that financial institutions are influenced by the prices which are prevailing with respect to this industry. We know, too, that

institutions here would be prepared to advance money to a considerably greater extent, but for this action on the part of the Government in paying to the producer a price not in keeping with that paid in the Eastern States. The result is that these institutions are not inclined to go as far as they would otherwise go. The export price at present is 4½d. per pound, but according to the latest advices the price the retailers are paying is 6d. per pound in the Eastern States. The difference between the price the producers are receiving to-day, and that which is obtaining in the Eastern States works out at from £5 to £7 per head. For the Government to ask the producers to accept that discount in price is tantamount to admitting that they are not capable of carrying on the works.

The Minister for Works: How would it do for the Government to freeze the cattle for you and allow you to dispose of them?

Mr. DURACK: Possibly that might be managed on a co-operative basis. I know that the question of the management of the works is causing serious concern to the Government. It seems to me, in the interests of the north and the producers who are most concerned in these works, that it might be better if the works were put under the management of a board. So many Ministers seem to be dealing with this question.

The Minister for Works: There will be only one Minister dealing with it as soon as the work of construction is over.

Mr. DURACK: At present quite a number of Ministers are dealing with the matter, and it is only natural to assume that what is every Minister's business in general is no Minister's business in particular. If we had a board consisting of four or five members, I think much better results would be obtained. Of course, the Government would want a full voice in the control of the business managed by the Board, but I do think that on that board both the east and west Kimberleys should be represented. The best means undoubtedly for carrying on these works always would be on some co-operative basis, but then the question would come in as to writing down the capital cost.

The Minister for Works: Why?

Mr. DURACK: I think the capital cost should be about £250,000.

The Minister for Works: The capital cost is nearly a quarter of a million less than the cost of Vestey Bros.' undertaking for practically the same work.

Mr. DURACK: I understand the capital cost of our works will run into £500,000 or £600,000.

The Minister for Works: Vestey Bros.' undertaking cost three-quarters of a million.

Mr. DURACK: So I believe. But I hope the capital cost of these works will not be set down at a greater figure than, say, £250,000. Next, I come to the pearling industry, an industry of much more importance to Western Australia than our people have hitherto realised. Of course those hon. members who have travelled up the North coast are aware that there has sprung into existence, as the result of this industry, the model little town of Broome. The export of shell from Broome previous to the war represented something like £400,000 per annum, and the Customs revenue of Broome was about £31,000 per annum—£19,000 direct Customs revenue and £12,000 indirect. I have here comparative figures which will surprise the members for Albany and Geraldton. The Customs revenue of Broome for the six months



ended 31st December, 1916, exceeded that of Albany by over £1,000 and that of Geraldton by about £2,000. In the pearling industry, it seems to me, there is a possibility of doing something for the returned soldier. The amount of capital required for the purchase of a boat represents about the same amount as that intended for each soldier, £500 or £600. The average catch of shell for last year was six tons per boat. If the Commonwealth or this State could take over the pearling industry and guarantee the price of shell at, say, £200 per ton—

Mr. Pickering: What is the average price?

Mr. DURACK: It has run up to £400 from £100 odd. The Government would be assured of obtaining the guaranteed price, since Broome has two-thirds of the world's output of pearl shell to-day. With a capital cost of £600 or £700 for a boat, there would be a good field for the returned soldier.

Mr. Pickering: What are the running expenses?

Mr. DURACK: About £600 or £700 per annum. Apart from the shell, there is the return from pearls, which of course is problematical. Among our returned soldiers there must be many of seafaring tastes who would care for the pearling industry. The work is not hard, consisting mainly of supervision. We know that the industry has been largely exploited by Continental Jews, and that a great deal of money has been made in it. We know too, that much money now goes out of the State, and the industry is exploited also by the coloured labour employed in the industry. I think there are good possibilities in the taking over of that industry by the Government. Let me touch briefly on the postal service of the North-West. Though I know that service does not concern the State Government, I cannot refrain from adverting to certain disabilities under which we of the North-West suffer in this respect. Were it not for the Press messages received in the North—the cost of which is borne by the residents of the North—we would be left without news for three months at a stretch, owing to the want of a mail service. In the course of my election campaign I came across a notice from the Postal Department asking the station holders and others interested in the service to reimburse the department to the extent of an estimated loss of £302 17s. 4d. There is a curious precision in these figures, and one wonders how the department could forecast their loss to the 17s. 4d. The notice intimated that if the residents would not undertake to make up this anticipated deficiency, the department would cut them down from a fortnightly to a monthly service. This does not seem to me a right attitude for the Federal Government to adopt towards the pioneers who have borne the heat and burden of the day in developing the North. Centralisation seems to be raising its head again. Someone of high estate has told us that large cities are the festering sores of civilisation. But Australian legislators do not seem to take that view. Everything is centralised in the cities. I suppose votes count. Our voices in the North are merely voices crying in the wilderness. However, the Commonwealth Government might easily have curtailed a few of the hourly services in the cities instead of throwing the burden of paying for mail service upon the residents of the North-West. If I may be permitted a little disursiveness, I would say that in viewing Western Australian politics, as I have mostly done, from a range of 2,000 miles it has always seemed to me a very tangled state of affairs, difficult at

times to follow, and mostly made up of a game of ins and outs. It has appeared to me that the outs regard it as their bounden duty to attack whatever measures the Government propose, whether right or wrong. Apparently "no good thing can come out of Nazareth." It might equally be interpreted further, that the ins regard it as their special right to criticise the defeated party. Reflections and recriminations prevail on both sides. In my opinion that is not a right attitude. Every man elected to a seat in this House is, I take it, out to help his country so far as in him lies. I think we should get away as far as possible from personal and party strife.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Those who are in, always say that.

Mr. DURACK: To my mind there never was more occasion for good feeling and fellowship than at the present time, and also for common sense and human sympathy on both sides. These remarks apply especially beyond the walls of this Chamber, where we have large industrial organisations to deal with. We shall never attain social and economic salvation as a nation until we learn to reconcile, in one way or another, those jarring elements of labour and capital. We as members of this House have been nominated to certain positions of trust by our constituents, and in that nomination I take it we are supposed to be possessed of a certain amount of common sense. We have been elected to give intelligent expression to the wants and views of our constituents; and, if there is to be a happy, prosperous, and contented condition of affairs in this country, or amongst the people of this country, it should find its reflection in this House by our example of tolerance, human sympathy, and open mindedness, supplemented by the fullest desire to help one another in the trying and stressful time through which we are now passing.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [10-12]: It seems to me that we in this Chamber are to-day living in a glass house, and that before we throw stones of economy at the public service we should pluck the beam out of our own eye. For this reason it is my intention to support the domestic proposals of economy outlined by the Treasurer. I do not think the war is entirely responsible for the condition in which we find ourselves to-day. That position I believe was bound to have come sooner or later, if only through the action of this Legislature in establishing an artificial standard of work and an artificial standard of living in the community which is mainly in the cities. If arbitration awards could fix the standard of a man's winnings from the soil—which is the source of all wealth, having due regard also to the caprices of Nature, then a sure foundation would prevail to justify the extension of arbitration awards to other sections of the community. The Treasurer, in outlining what in his opinion had brought the State to its present condition, ascribed the responsibility chiefly to our railways and the deficit. We find that for the year ended 30th June, 1917, the balance sheet of the Commissioner of Railways showed a loss of £214,834: and it seems only logical to infer that this condition has become intensified in the interim. Yet we find one of the servants of the State—that is to say, the Arbitration Court—calmly binding another servant of the State, the Commissioner of Railways, who is the largest employer in the State, to pay his employees an additional £50,000 per annum. If this were not so serious, it would appear Gilbertian. The hon.

member for Guildford in referring to this award of the Court congratulated the railway service on having received it. Personally I would sympathise with the Commissioner of Railways and the people of the State for the added burden which has been imposed on them. I asked some questions in this Chamber with regard to the experimental farms, and I considered those questions to be pertinent rather than impertinent. It is essential that the State should maintain at those farms good sires and dams of both horses and cattle so that a beneficial influence might be felt throughout the surrounding districts. It is lamentable also to see the class of animal which is being allowed to perpetuate itself in many districts throughout the State. The member for Gascoyne said the other night that in his opinion the great agricultural industry had become such a burden on the State that it was advisable to cut it out. A reasonable inference to draw from the hon. members remarks was that this country should be given over to a few squatters and the blacks, and in almost the next breath the hon. member stated that approximately a hundred wealthy squatters, all constituents of his, had gone cap in hand to the Minister with a request for a sum of £2,500 to be expended on a new stock route from Gascoyne to Ajana, and it was pointed out that the expenditure of that sum of money would cheapen the transport of his constituents' stock to the rail head at Ajana, and would open up an additional area of three million acres of good grazing land for selection. If the inducements are such as were held out by the hon. member, one can only wonder at the absolute selfishness of the hon. member's constituents in asking the Government to do something for them which they should have done for themselves. The agricultural industry has suffered a cycle of four years of drought and a superabundance of rain, while on the other hand the pastoral areas have been blessed with four of the most glorious seasons they have ever experienced. The flocks of this State have been increased to approximately eight millions, and the increase since December, 1914, the year prior to the breaking of the drought, has been approximately, three and a half millions, allowing, of course, for home consumption. Unless facilities for export are immediately provided at Geraldton, Carnarvon, Fremantle and Albany, it is obvious that there will be a glut of stock. It is imperative that freezing works should be established so that our producers may, when the war ends, have the opportunity of meeting the demand for meat from the food-stricken countries of Europe. This is a question which will help us to a great extent to rise from the slough of despond into which we have drifted. That slough of despond has to a great extent been brought about by the policy adopted in the past of settling people on the land for the purpose of merely growing wheat. I had the honour recently of introducing a deputation to the Minister for Railways at Ajana of all the settlers in that area who had taken up land since 1910 and developed it with the assistance of the Agricultural Bank. Those settlers are all within easy reach of the railway head. From 1910 to 1917 the total area cropped by those settlers—seven of them—was approximately 5,000 acres, and their total yield for the seven years of the settlement was 10,933 bags of wheat. The average works out at 6½ bushels to the acre. When we consider that 12 bushels to the acre is the minimum on which a farmer can

expect to make a living, and these unfortunate settlers got an average of only 6½ bushels for the whole of the period, hon. members will understand that they had a genuine grievance. The prayer of the petition they presented to the Minister was that if the Government could not see their way to throw open some grazing land in their vicinity and make it available to them, and also enable them to purchase sheep, they would have to quit. The position of these men unfortunately only illustrates the position of hundreds of other farmers in this community. There are many people on the land whose stock consists of merely the draught horses required in connection with the farming implements, and I estimate that it is possible to place on the farms of the State well over a quarter of a million sheep. It should be the duty of the Government to find ways and means to purchase sheep for the settlers, and I think the proposal could be carried out with the co-operation of the pastoralists. The constituents of the hon. member for Gascoyne are so wealthy that they should have some regard for another section of the community which has carried a heavy burden for so long. If this assistance were given, the selectors could repay the Government by allowing the Government to take from them one half of the annual proceeds from the sales of the wool and skins, and at the present prices, in three years' time a settler would have paid back the initial cost of probably a couple of hundred good ewes and in the meantime he would have had some decent meat with which to supply his family. The farmers would also be supplied with what was so essential on a farm, namely the sheep to feed off and keep the farms clean. It is apparent to anyone who has travelled through the agricultural areas of the State in the last year or two, that the heavy rains have caused the cultivated lands from Mullewa in the North to Bunbury in the South to be over-run with Cape weed. No new development has taken place during the past four years, and the old system of scratching in a crop on new land which is fairly clean will be prevented, and our farmers will have to adopt much more efficient methods to ensure a crop than under the old system when the land was clean. In this connection the supply of sheep is an absolute necessity. It should be the duty of the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt, under the circumstances, to almost confine his operations to bringing about a better method of cultivation throughout the agricultural districts. With regard to the Industries Assistance Board, I regret that in many cases the methods adopted by the Board have undermined the self reliance of many of the settlers, but I commend the policy it is proposed to adopt of cutting off those who do not display any evidence of the effort to make good. There is always this fact to consider in relation to those people in that condition that in many cases they have been placed by the Government in the position in which they find themselves, and some sympathy should be shown them. I do not say that they should be carried on any longer, but I do contend that before any steps are taken in the direction of removing them from the land adequate inquiries should be made. Personally, I do not quite agree with the attitude the Minister for Industries adopted when placing the position of the board before the House some time ago. I then pointed out by interjection that he would have to advance against the whole area proposed to be cultivated during the coming season, and that

these amounts would naturally increase by the proportion put under cultivation. Personally, if I were under the Industries Assistance Board, I would hesitate to leave it, if it so came about that I had recovered my obligations due to the board. For this reason only: The operations of the Industries Assistance Board absolutely eliminate all those abominably high charges of credit that were made by the private firms in this State to farmers for their requirements in the way of super, and jutes. Credit had to be sought from the firms supplying these articles because the farmer has a return only once a year, namely at harvest time, and he has to tide over the whole year. If the farmer wanted credit for those items he was accommodated at rates ranging on bills anything up to, and perhaps above 20 per cent. I do not know whether any members have ever received invoices from those particular firms, with a rubber stamp attached at the bottom notifying that if extended terms were required, the rate would be one penny per dozen, or 1s. per ton, per month, which ranges up to 20 per cent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Government stopped that in 1914.

Mr. MALEY: Concerning other subjects discussed by the Committee, I do not propose to venture my opinions, because I realise that I am new to the House and to the methods of Government. The House vests in Ministers certain powers of administration. If those powers are not sufficient to enable Ministers to effect economies, I, as a representative of a constituency which sent me here in support of economy, am prepared to assist the Government. If in this respect Ministers are hampered by any restrictions which the House may have put on them in the past, and if they ask for the removal of those restrictions, I am prepared to give them every assistance within my power. On the other hand, if they cannot properly administer the affairs of the State it is their duty to get out and make room for others who will effect economies. In regard to taxation, I agree with the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) in his suggestion to tax liquor, which, after all, is essentially a luxury. If I may suggest one avenue of taxation which appears to me justifiable, I should say that every married couple in the State not carrying out their obligations to the State should be mulcted in a very heavy tax. In respect of the education vote, I am of opinion that the member for Perth only wished to fix the attention of members when he proposed that it should be cut down by £150,000. I feel sure that the hon. member is perfectly sincere in his desire for reform in that direction. He has contested two elections on the question and, to my mind, it would be somewhat of an anomaly if we were to see the Minister for Education go before his electors shortly, as one proposing large increases in the education vote, and return successful from the encounter. One of the arguments by members who say "hands off this education vote" is that we must not impair our children for the commercial battle which is to ensue after the conclusion of the war. I would point out the very great sacrifice that has been made by young men of ages of from 17 to 22 who have gone to the war from practically all the universities of the world, just when they were completing their educational careers. They heard and obeyed their country's call, and they made their sacrifice before the conclusion of their educational course. In my opinion this has been a greater hardship on those young fellows than we would put upon the children of this State when

we ask them to be content, for two or three years with an education less full and complete than we should freely give them in other circumstances. I take it the whole of these higher educational establishments of the world have been emptied to meet the call to duty and I say it is our duty to cut down some of the vote provided for education in this State. I think our children should be compelled to make this temporary sacrifice.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10-40 p.m.

## Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 27th February, 1918.

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

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

### MOTION — HARVEY IRRIGATION SCHEME, TO INQUIRE BY ROYAL COMMISSION.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [4.33]: I move—

"1. That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into, and report on, the Harvey Irrigation Scheme, particularly with regard to the inception, construction, and working of the same up to the present time. 2. That in the event of the Government agreeing to this motion, the following be nominated as the Commissioners: Hons. E. M. Clarke and A. Sanderson, Messrs. E. C. Money, W. Nairn, S. Munsie, and the mover. 3. That all members of the Commission should act without remuneration."

I came to-day prepared to place before the House reasons for the appointment of this Royal Commission. I am pleased to say that before I entered the House the leader of the Government intimated to me that the Government had no objection to the Commission provided that its operations were postponed until the report, which is now being made by the Engineer-in-Chief, is placed before the Minister for Water Supply. I understand that the report will be ready during the next week or fortnight, and in these circumstances I have agreed to be very brief in my remarks and also to the adjournment of the debate at the conclusion of my remarks. I want clearly to place before the House this position. I had intended first of all, at the wish of the Harvey people, to ask for a Commission of