

Mr. TROY: I appreciate the view put forward by the Treasurer, but in the public service there are officers whose services have been of distinctive merit. One man gives remarkable services; he pioneers the country north and south and does that pioneering well. Another renders ordinary service and in doing that he is in comfortable surroundings in Perth, runs no risk, and has nothing of an arduous nature to undertake. Who then is the better servant and who should be considered most? Certainly the man who renders the most signal service to the country should receive the best recognition. The distinctive features of the services of the late officer in question, I regret to say, have been overlooked, and should even now receive recognition. This House has not always been so considerate in the way of establishing precedents. In the case of the late Mr. Illingworth, a member of this Assembly, the House voted £1,000. Mr. Illingworth did not render the country any distinctive service, and in the case of another late member, the House voted the widow a sum of money. In those instances the House did not consider that it was setting a bad example; they considered the services which had been rendered and the circumstances of the time being. Sir Newton Moore, I think it was who moved the motion granting the £1,000 in connection with the late Mr. Illingworth. Much as I admit the apparent soundness of the Minister's reply, I feel sure there are precedents. If hon. members knew the late officer in question as well as I knew him they would support my proposal. He was a man who would not take anything from anybody, who kept aloof from clubs, and gave the State of his best. I have always felt that an injustice had been done him, and that therefore I should make some reference to the matter in the House.

Schedule put and passed.

Schedules G, H—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

House adjourned at 11.28 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 11th April, 1918.

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE, MEMBER.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary, Hon. J. Nicholson was appointed a member of the House Committee in place of the Hon. H. Roan.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.33]: I move—

“That for the remainder of the current week so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable Bills to be taken through all stages in one sitting and to enable Messages from the Legislative Assembly being taken into consideration forthwith when received.”

As I explained last evening, this motion is moved in consequence of the resolution carried by the House not to sit for the period of four weeks prior to the biennial elections. That means that we must complete the business we have to do before adjourning, by not later than Saturday next. The business that, to my mind, it is essential should be completed, is the passing of the Appropriation Bill, without which money cannot be legally paid under the Governor's warrant.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: It cannot be spent until it is passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Not legally, but I am afraid it is sometimes spent. I think it will be admitted by hon. members that it is desirable the Appropriation Bill should pass.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: You have no supply, then?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No. I have no wish to hurry the discussion on the Appropriation Bill, but without the suspension of the Standing Orders hon. members will realise that when the Bill comes to us, as it will in the course of a few moments, it would be competent for me merely to move the first reading and then adjourn the debate until to-morrow. I wish to proceed at once with the second reading, and continue it just so far as hon. members feel disposed, and so on with the other stages of the Bill, and, in the terms of another motion, of which I have given notice, to continue sitting if necessary until all stages have been completed. Then we have the Employment Brokers Act Amendment Bill, consideration of which has practically been completed. I take it that there is no objection to finalising this measure so that it can go back to another place. There is also the Rabbit Act Amendment Bill, which has been fully discussed. If we are going to adjourn for a month it is advisable that this measure also should be finalised, and sent on to another place. There is, too, the Wheat Marketing Act Amendment Bill, which it is

desirable should pass, but if hon. members think that the time at their disposal between this and the end of the week is not sufficient to enable them to deal with it I am not going to press the matter. I hope hon. members will agree to the motion, on the understanding that its object is to complete the Employment Brokers Act Amendment Bill, the Rabbit Act Amendment Bill, and to pass the Appropriation Bill, and to make such progress with the Wheat Marketing Bill as hon. members feel disposed to do.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [4.36]: It would help the position very substantially if the Colonial Secretary would give us an idea as to whether he wishes to close or not before we adjourn for the biennial elections.

The Colonial Secretary: Do you mean, to finish the session?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Yes.

The Colonial Secretary: That is not possible.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: If so, there is no immediate hurry for these things in these circumstances. I might say that this was what gave rise to my action yesterday with regard to the Wheat Marketing Bill. I understood there was no possibility of closing before we adjourned for the month. As this is such an important Bill, and as I thought that many hon. members might not like to state their opinions until they have heard something of how the public would receive it, I proposed that an adjournment should be taken yesterday for a week, which in the circumstances meant four or five weeks. Many people have appealed to me to find out what the Bill is like. I echo the words of the Honorary Minister when he says that this is a most important Bill. He says that the Government have been for five weeks getting it ready. At the same time, I would remark that he put the Bill and the papers on the table only the night before last, and hon. members, let alone the public, have had no time in which to deal with it. Yet he asks us to put it through in this way.

Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister): Here are only two amendments to the Act.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: There are many very important amendments, and there will probably be more important amendments before we have done with it. I want to show that my reason for moving the adjournment is that the debate was that the Bill deals with the money of the public. It does not belong to the Government, but is the money of the producers, and the financial men who are behind the producers. To rush this Bill through, which only came before this House the night before last, in about a day, is, to my mind, absurd. The Minister seemed quite indignant at I should desire to take this step. There are many hon. members who are not aware of the intricacies of this Bill. It is not what may be called an expert Bill, and deals with one of the largest producing departments of the State. It is infested and infected all round with a lot of expert views and dealings that the ordinary laymen cannot be expected to tackle. In the circumstances many

men in the town have asked me to try and secure an adjournment to enable them to see the Bill. I feel sure that the Honorary Minister, when he sees the importance of this, will not endeavour to pass it through. That was my reason for asking for the adjournment of a week. I do not intend in any way to oppose or block the Bill, but merely desire that we should be enabled to thoroughly understand it. The leader of the House has stated the position clearly. We shall be glad, I am sure, to assist him in the programme he has put before us, as far as we possibly can. If he will take the first reading of the Appropriation Bill, and then give us the second reading, so that we will have time to consider it to-morrow, it will satisfy me and I think most of my colleagues. We are quite willing to fall in with the other part of the programme. With the Wheat Marketing Bill, I must trespass on the patience of the Minister to ask him to give us, and the public, a little longer time so that we may discuss and examine it.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.40]: I support the motion of the leader of the House, on certain conditions. The conditions are these: let us take the Wheat Marketing Bill first. We got this yesterday. I have looked at it. There is an agreement between the Hon. C. F. Baxter and the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. I am certainly not going to permit any agreement between the Honorary Minister and that association, if I can help it, to go through without the fullest discussion.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Hear, hear!

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I shall use every means that you, Sir, will permit to see that the Bill is thoroughly discussed, as well as the agreement.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Hear, hear!

Hon. A. SANDERSON: With regard to other matters that the Colonial Secretary dealt with, I quite appreciate what he said. I can see the force of what he said, and to the best of my ability I am glad to help him. I would like to put this point to him in regard to the Estimates and Appropriation Bill. I am under the impression that he told us, when I took upon myself to discuss one or two financial measures which came up, that it would be very much better to leave the discussion of the financial position until we had got the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill. In those circumstances, although I am not going to take advantage of that proposal, I think it is a little hard, both upon myself and other hon. members, that we should be asked to push the matter through as quickly as possible, while, at the same time, we have been told that we ought to postpone the discussion until after we have had these Estimates and the Appropriation Bill. I said as much as possibly the House desired to listen to in regard to the financial position on the occasion to which I referred. I can myself see no good purpose in discussing either the Estimates or the Appropriation Bill within a space of, say, five minutes. It is a little hard that I should have to come and sit here, and listen to a full dress debate from the leader of the House in introducing the Appropriation Bill,

hear him make a financial statement of some length, which I presume he will do, and tie myself down not to speak on it at all. I will not speak on the Estimates at all, in order that he and his colleagues may get the necessary money. He can see now the reason for the attitude I took up, in discussing Bills dealing with the financial position, on previous occasions. With regard to the Rabbit Act Amendment Bill, I wish to be guided by the attitude of hon. members who are more fully qualified to deal with the matter than I am. With regard to the Employment Brokers Bill, I can see no necessity for saying anything more about it. In connection with the Wheat Marketing Bill, so that there shall be no possible mistake as to the attitude I shall take up, I wish to say that if I find any attempt to push the Bill through under the suspension of the Standing Orders I shall afford it my most uncompromising opposition, on the ground that it is a Bill which should be fully discussed and understood, both by ourselves and by a great many people outside the Chamber.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [4.45]: I have already stated that I do not intend to use the suspension of the Standing Orders for the purpose of getting the Wheat Marketing Bill through. So far as the Appropriation Bill is concerned, I desire that the Standing Orders shall be suspended in order that I may be able to move the second reading to-day. If, when I have finished, any other hon. member is prepared to go on with the debate, I shall be glad, but if the adjournment of the debate is desired until to-morrow I shall offer no objection to it.

Hon. A. Sanderson: Do you want to get it through to-morrow?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes. I desire to inform hon. members that I have simply exercised what I deem to be my right of choosing my own time for discussing the financial position generally.

Question put and passed.

BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS' ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL — RABBIT ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommendation.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister) Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 4 and the consideration of a new clause.

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair, Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 31:

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I move an amendment—

“That in lines 6 and 7 of proposed paragraph (a) the words ‘an inspector or other person acting with the authority in writing of the Minister’ be struck out, and the following words inserted in lieu—‘he shall be reported to the Minister, who may in-

struct that an inspector or authorised person.’”

My object is to try and rectify what I think was a mistake. The paragraph as it read did not provide for any redress on the part of an owner if he objected to the orders he received from an inspector. The words which I suggest will be more suitable than those in the paragraph. The inspector will have the power of doing considerable harm, and the least we can do is to give the owner the opportunity of appealing to the Minister. I trust the Committee will agree to the amendment.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move—

“That the following be added to stand as Clause 20:—1, It shall be unlawful for any person who has been supplied with wire netting under the principal Act or this Act to sell such wire netting, or dispose of it otherwise than for the purpose for which it was supplied (whether such wire netting shall have been paid for or not) without the consent in writing of the Minister. Penalty, £100. 2, If any wire netting supplied under the principal Act or this Act is not applied to the purpose for which it was supplied within such time as the Minister may deem reasonable, or if such wire netting is not properly applied and maintained, the Minister may annul the contract for the supply of such wire netting and resume possession thereof: Provided that in such event the cost incurred by the Minister in supplying such wire netting with interest as prescribed shall be charged to the person to whom the wire netting was supplied, and credit given for the amount of the payments (if any) made on account thereof, and for the value (to be fixed by the Minister) of the wire netting of which possession is resumed, less the cost and expenses incurred by such resumption, and the balance shall be payable to the Minister on demand by the person to whom the wire netting was supplied. 3, The property in any wire netting supplied under the principal Act or this Act shall continue in the Crown until the cost thereof with interest as prescribed has been paid.”

The amendment deals entirely with the supply of wire netting to settlers. The Government have been supplying and probably in future will continue to supply wire netting for fencing purposes. This netting will be supplied cheaply and on long terms, and at a low rate of interest. There is no protection for the Government in any way in the direction of preventing a purchaser from disposing of the netting, and there is nothing to compel the purchaser to make use of it. It is proposed to give the Government power to hold a mortgage over the netting until the cost of the netting and the interest have been paid. The new clause also gives the Government power to see that the netting is used for the purpose for which it was supplied, and in those cases where the netting is not used,

the Government will be able to again possess themselves of the netting and dispose of it to another person. It is necessary that this amendment should be passed, otherwise there will be no protection for the Government.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I have no objection to the proposed new clause. Yet it appears to me there has been laxity on the part of the Government in supplying wire netting, together with galvanised iron, wire and other like commodities, on a rising market. If the Government have put out considerable quantities of netting and wire without fully protecting themselves, it seems to me to indicate a lack of business capacity. Again, seeing that netting is almost unprocurable, I think it would be wholly advantageous if the Minister were to approach the Price Fixing Commissioner and have the price fixed, thus keeping the market fairly even. It has been brought to my knowledge that fairly large quantities of wire netting and wire are dumped in various parts of the wheat areas without any attempt being made to use it. Most certainly this should not be permitted.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

“That after ‘of’ in line 4 of subclause (1) of the proposed new clause, the words ‘or use’ be inserted.”

If the Minister will look into this amendment I am quite sure that he will readily agree with it.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I have no objection to offer to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed; new clause as amended agreed to.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Bill again reported with further amendments.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

All stages.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.8] in moving the second reading said: For obvious reasons I do not intend to discuss in detail the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure which accompany this Appropriation Bill. Should I merely put forward the general remarks of Ministers made in introducing the Estimates of their separate departments, I should be accused of unnecessarily wearying hon. members; whilst to follow the course of the debates in another place, in which the Estimates were reviewed item by item, would be an almost endless process. Members, I suppose, are reconciled to the fact that for all practical purposes the passing of this Appropriation Bill is merely a matter of form, for the very simple and sufficient reason that already nine-twelfths of the year have expired and that proportion of the money has been spent. It is no doubt deplorable that the Estimates should not be presented at a sufficiently early stage to allow Parliament an effective opportunity of controlling public expenditure. The present Government have promised that in future the Estimates shall be brought down as

early as possible in the financial year. But I would remind the House that the Federal Parliament, although elected several months before the Parliament of Western Australia, has not yet approached the consideration of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the current year and apparently does not intend to do so, a Supply Bill having been submitted to meet requirements for the remainder of the year.

Hon. H. Millington: The Federal Government take no notice of the Parliament.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: However, although this year the details of expenditure are to a large extent beyond the correction of this House, I take it that hon. members desire an opportunity of expressing their opinions on the financial position of Western Australia generally. I take it they do not feel at liberty to pass lightly and without comment a budget that contemplates the staggering deficit for the current year of nearly a million sterling and that foreshadows the imposition of additional taxation upon the people. Although the Estimates point to this large deficit, there is good reason to believe that the deficit will be very much smaller. However, I will deal with that later on. It is therefore my duty to place the position of the finances in outline before members, all of whom, I am willing to believe, are keenly anxious to assist the Government in what everyone recognises are circumstances of unexampled difficulty in this State; indeed not frequently, has any State in the British Empire been confronted with a more serious position. In the course of the debate on the Address-in-reply to His Excellency's speech the Hon. Mr. Sanderson spoke at some length on the very important matter of the financial relationships between the States, Western Australia in particular, and the Commonwealth. I did not reply to the hon. member's remarks at the time, not because I disrated their importance, but because it seemed to me that the more appropriate occasion for such discussion was on the financial policy of the Government, as outlined in the Estimates and the taxation proposals. Moreover after the hon. member spoke on the Address-in-reply, no other hon. member seemed desirous of continuing the debate, and I thought it was not for me to continue it when obviously it was desired to bring it to a conclusion. Mr. Sanderson, quoting from an interview furnished by me to the “Sunday Times” on the question of separation, somewhat severely castigated me, ignoring, with studied care, my statements at the outset of the interview setting out the arguments against separation and particularly stressing the need for the closest unity at the present juncture. My attitude on this question is that Australia as a whole can prosper only by the successful development of all the Australian States and that the present interpretation of the Commonwealth Constitution is such as to make the successful development of Western Australia almost impossible. I believe the hon. member entirely shares my view to that extent. If I am unable to follow him in his desire to get out of the mess by a complete surrender of all our rights of local self-government, and the adoption of a policy of unification—an attitude of despair and an abnegation of responsibility quite unworthy of the hon. member—I can only assure him that I refuse to follow

him because I consider that to do so would be to step out of the frying pan into the fire. But I do wish to impress upon members of this House, upon the Press, and upon the people of Western Australia, the imminent importance of at once taking up with vigour and purpose this question of the financial relationship of the State and the Commonwealth. No intelligent consideration of our public finances is possible without a thorough understanding of this matter. The great need for present close investigation of this question, and for such a movement as I have indicated, lies in these facts: 1, Already there have been two alterations from the method of distributing surplus revenue adopted at the outset of Federation. 2, Each of these alterations has been prejudicial to Western Australia, as compared with the more populous States of the Commonwealth. 3, A further alteration is to be made in two years' time, to take effect as from the 1st July, 1920. To my mind this alteration will be a life-and-death matter so far as the independent existence of Western Australia, as a sovereign State, is concerned. If the alteration is made on equitable lines, giving full recognition to the spirit of the Commonwealth Constitution, the resources of Western Australia, aided by sound government, should enable us to retrieve our position. If the third alteration is to follow the lines adopted in the two alterations already made, if Western Australia is to be still further prejudiced, then it seems to me that threatened State bankruptcy may well drive us into one or other of the two desperate alternatives—separation or unification. Any agitation for either of these two courses would be strongly resisted by the large States of the Commonwealth, because the present arrangement suits them so admirably. It is worth while remembering, in this connection, that the larger States are profiting by our present disadvantages. In order to make the position quite clear, I have had a careful analysis made of the distribution of Commonwealth revenue in the three periods covered by the three different methods of distribution. I have followed this matter from the outset of Federation, and I knew in my own mind that I was on solid ground, but I was determined to obtain statistical information in support of my view. For the first five years of Federation the distribution was controlled chiefly by three sections of the Commonwealth Constitution Act: Section 87, the Braddon section, limiting Federal expenditure to one-fourth of the net revenue from Customs and Excise; Section 93, the book-keeping section, under which the consuming State obtained credit for the duties collected on goods originally imported into another State, and under which the distribution of surplus revenue was based on the collections in each State; and Section 95, the special permit to Western Australia to impose duties on a diminishing sliding scale. These three sections governed the distribution of the surplus revenue of the Commonwealth under the Constitution itself. For the second five years the Braddon section was still operative. The book-keeping section operated for portion of the period, but the Western Australian sliding scale was out of office. For the succeeding

period, since the lapse of 10 years after Federation, the financial agreement has replaced all the Constitutional provisions regarding the distribution of surplus revenue. It is interesting to see how we and the other States fared under each of these methods. The first striking fact is that our per capita return from the Commonwealth has declined from £6 5s. per annum in the first completed year of Federation to £1 16s. per annum in the year ended on the 30th June, 1917. For the first five-year period, in which we enjoyed all the safeguards inserted by the framers of the Constitution, our per capita return averaged £5 5s. 7d. per annum. For the second five-year period, in which, as I have already explained, some of those safeguards obtained, our return averaged £2 19s. 1d. per head per annum; whilst for the remaining period of seven years, during which surplus revenue has been distributed, subject to one or two strange equivocations on the part of the Commonwealth Treasurer, according to the provisions made by the Federal Parliament under what is called the financial agreement, our return has averaged only £1 16s. 8d. per head per annum. On the face of it, is it not obvious that we are bound to encounter tremendous difficulties when our per capita return is reduced from £5 5s. 7d. per head per annum to £1 16s. 8d. per head per annum in so short a period?

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: I thought we got only £1 5s. per head now.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No. We have still a slight financial advantage, a small special contribution to Western Australia, which is rapidly disappearing. Thus, from start to finish, our returns have steadily dropped, until the present figure is £4 9s. per head per annum below that at which we started. Taking our population as being 300,000 people, it will be seen that that reduction amounts to something like £1,300,000 per annum. In the meantime, how have the larger States of the Commonwealth fared? I am stressing this point, not on the plea that the Commonwealth does not give back sufficient revenue to the States generally, in view of the heavy obligations that the States have, though I think such a proposition might easily be established. I am stressing it on the ground that the different States are entitled to equitable treatment in the spirit of the Federal Constitution itself. Both New South Wales and Victoria actually received a larger per capita payment during the second five-year period than during the first, whilst the reduction sustained by New South Wales, comparing the first completed year of Federation with the year ended on the 30th June, 1917, is only 10s. 6d. per head per annum, and that suffered by Victoria is only 6s. 9d. per head per annum. Whilst our return from the Commonwealth, during the period, has fallen by £4 9s., that of New South Wales has declined by only 10s. 6d., and that of Victoria by only 6s. 9d. per head per annum. For the three periods, the figures for these two States were: New South Wales, first five years £1 17s. 7d., for the second five years £2 1s. 7d., for the third seven years

£1 4s. 2d.; Victoria, first five years £1 13s. 4d., second five years £1 14s. 10d., third five years £1 4s. 7d. For the third period New South Wales and Victoria got a little less than £1 5s., because we received a little more, and those two States, of course, have to make up some of the difference. Boiled down, the outstanding fact is that, whereas the framers of the Constitution recognised that the circumstances of Western Australia demanded special treatment in the matter of revenue distribution to the extent of giving us three times the per capita return paid to the larger States, the interpreters of that Constitution in the Federal Parliament have seized on the first possible opportunities of removing all our safeguards and reducing us to practically the same per capita return as the larger States. And we have this position, that in a period of a few years, allowing no substantial opportunity for the development of this State, or for alteration in the difference between the smaller States and the larger, Western Australia has suffered £4 9s. reduction in the annual return per head of population. It will be argued that the intention was that complete uniformity should ultimately prevail. I admit it, but I contend that the intention was that such uniformity should be brought about equitably and gradually, not unfairly and suddenly. I contend, further, that it was in the expectation that this would be the case Western Australia entered upon Federation. To one other point in this connection I desire to make reference. Both the Braddon section and the bookkeeping section were mandatory upon the Federal Parliament for a fixed period "and thereafter until Parliament otherwise provides." The assumption clearly was that the Federal Parliament would make substitute provisions in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution, and in order that the interests of the smaller States might be protected in the matter each State was given equal representation in the Senate. The point is this: Without the consent of the Senate the Braddon clause could never have been removed from the Constitution, the provision being that it should stand for 10 years and thereafter until Parliament otherwise provides. Without the concurrence of the Senate neither the Braddon clause nor the bookkeeping clause could have been set aside, and no alternative could be put up in their place without the concurrence of the Senate. Unhappily when the time came for the consideration of these matters the representation of the smaller States in the Senate had passed largely into the control of a party machine that had no recognition of State rights, and the result was that Western Australia was very lightly sacrificed. I suppose it will be readily conceded that one of the weakest features of our present position is the sparsity and the slow growth of our population. I have already put forward the contention that Australia as a whole cannot prosper unless each of the States composing the Commonwealth is given an opportunity for successful development. Has Federation afforded that opportunity? It is interesting to glance for a moment at the population statistics. Let us

go back for a considerable period. From 1800 to 1860 Australia's population increased by leaps and bounds, each ten years showing an increase of from 100 per cent. to 190 per cent. Then things steadied down a little and the next 10 years showed an increase of 44 per cent., the following ten years 35 per cent. and the following ten years 41 per cent. This brought us to 1890 and to the long series of industrial troubles that for the time being hung up Australia's industries and shattered her commerce and credit. The ten years from 1890 to 1900 showed an increase in population of only 19.48. Then came Federation, which was going to make such advances in population and our resources, and the growth of population for the first ten years under Federation was only 17½ per cent., absolutely the lowest on record for any ten years in Australia's history.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The Federal Parliament saw that war obligations might come in.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Possibly that was the case. No matter to what extent they may have increased the Commonwealth revenue and decreased the return of the States, that was no reason why the clause should not provide for suitable treatment between one State and another.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Was it due to Federation?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am suggesting it was partially due to the fact that the States for some reason or other were not developing their resources as they ought to. I am not saying it is due to Federation. Let the hon. member find the reason.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The States were responsible, not the Commonwealth.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Certainly. In the same period of ten years—whilst Australian indebtedness was rapidly increasing and its population was almost stationary—the Prairie provinces of Canada, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta—actually trebled their population, increasing from 400,000 to 1,200,000. What further evidence is wanted in support of the contention that there was something wrong in Australian methods? And I suggest that one of the things that was wrong was that the different States of Australia were not afforded under Federation the fullest opportunity for the development of their resources. One reason, and it is a very strong reason, for the unsatisfactory progress made in the development of our industries seems to be that we are lacking the ever powerful driving force of necessity. For years past, before and since the war, Australia has been revelling in a spurious prosperity due to the lavish expenditure of borrowed money rather than to the development of industry and the increased production of wealth. A country, as well as an individual, may be corrupted by such means. Even before the different States embarked upon the financial orgy that characterised the last few years before the outbreak of the war we had the unenviable distinction of having a bigger proportion of our population in the capital cities than any other country in the world. In 1906 the percentage of city population to the total population of the Commonwealth was 35.49, and when the war

came along it had increased to 39.43. This increase was shown in every State of the Commonwealth with the single exception of Queensland, and the most notable increase of the lot was in this State of Western Australia, where in the short space of eight years the city population grew from 20.55 per cent. to 37.89 per cent. of the total population. For so brief a period this is to my mind an amazing development and considered in conjunction with the enormous loan expenditure of the latter portion of the period it may well be regarded as an instance of cause and effect. The abundance of borrowed money in circulation has made for the aggrandisement of the city and has made it almost seem as though great masses of people could live "by taking in each other's washing." If the perilous growth of our city population had been accompanied by a considerable increase in secondary industries there would be a credit as well as a debit side to the ledger. Unhappily this is not the case. That brings me to the second point. The growth of Australian secondary industries generally has been painfully slow. Since Federation the number of persons employed in the different manufacturing industries throughout the Commonwealth has increased from 190,000 to 331,000 (the latter figures being for 1914 just before the outbreak of war). The wages paid rose in the same period from twelve millions sterling to thirty-four millions, and the horsepower employed in the factories from 180,000 to 490,000. This over the whole of Australia the output of our manufacturing industries was nearly trebled, but in Western Australia the progress made was almost negligible. From 1900 to 1913 there was a 50 per cent. increase in the number of men employed in all forms of manufacturing industries throughout this State, but the bulk of this was in the forests, sawmills, and the railway and tramway workshops. Chaffcutting, flourmilling, and fertiliser works practically accounted for the whole of the remaining increase. Many industries showed a decline in the period. For instance, in 1900 there were 284 men and 58 women employed in our boot factories in this State, but by the time the war broke out, notwithstanding the enormous increase in importations and the steady increase in price, the number of employees had decreased by one half. It is only one of many instances in which the Federal Fiscal policy whilst saddling our primary industry with ever-increasing costs has increased the difficulties of establishing Western Australian secondary industries. Since the outbreak of war the condition of our Western Australian secondary industries had gone from bad to worse. That is one of the reasons for our present unfortunate financial position, but what of the larger States. The figures for New South Wales for 1917 were published recently and they are worthy of consideration. The number of persons employed in New South Wales was 117,732 as compared with 90,286 in 1914, the wages paid were £14,196,607 as compared with £12,654,446 in 1914; the value of the output was £35,454,138 as compared with £68,208,744 in 1914. The average wages paid

were £147 for males and £57 for females, as against £131 for males and £52 for females in 1914, and the value of the output per person employed—and this to my mind is one of the strongest indications of the great prosperity enjoyed there, and as to their position as compared with ours—which in 1914 reached the figure of £586, a wonderfully high figure, had increased in 1917 to £751 per head, which is something like a world's record. What a contrast with Western Australia! And remembering, as we must, that the whole problem of State finance is necessarily bound up in the condition of our industries, what wonder is it that the burdens of the Treasurer of Western Australia are staggering by comparison with those carried by Treasurers in other parts of the Commonwealth?

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What are the Western Australian figures in regard to the output per person?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have not got those figures for 1917. They are not at present available. While the number of the persons employed in our factories and secondary industries had increased slightly from 1900 until the opening of the war, since then it has declined, and we have no more people employed in our manufacturing industries, including the timber industry, than we had in 1900.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: What is the percentage of war expenditure in this State, as compared with the Eastern States?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The percentage of war expenditure in this State as compared with others is very small indeed. Not only did the Eastern States get practically the whole of the war expenditure in connection with the manufacture of articles, but our soldiers are taken to the other States for training, and even the doubtful blessing of having a large number of interned persons in our State, and any small profit there might have been from feeding them, have been taken away from us.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: They even send them to New South Wales from other parts of the world.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is impossible, and entirely undesirable, at this stage to consider our finances without taking into account how our financial position is going to affect the very important work of repatriation. It would be discreditable to any country that soldiers who fought for it, on their return, should find their country be unable to do anything for them. Our returned soldier is not going to depend upon this or that scheme. Let it be any scheme that may be put forward, it will be of restricted value. The well being of the returned soldier is going to depend upon the prosperity of our industries generally. If our industries are all right the soldiers will be all right, but if they are not, everything will be all wrong. To find a way out of our present financial and industrial difficulty is the first step towards repatriation. When we have found that way out we have solved the problem, and until we have found that way out none of the schemes that are put forward are going to avail us, to more than a limited extent. The first thing to do is to adapt the laws of the country to the requirements of its in-

dustrics. The laws governing the industries of Western Australia are made by the Federal Parliament in Melbourne, and so far from being suitable to the development of our industries they have proved actually detrimental. As a State we have tried to get out of the difficulty by large borrowings. There can be no doubt about that. Although I condemned the financial policy of the preceding Government, I recognise that they were in difficulties in the handicap placed upon them by the Federal authorities, and that they resorted to borrowing as a way out. We tried that device, but it has failed as it was bound to fail. The only hope is to try to get back upon sound lines, sound lines politically, by a just arrangement between the State and the Commonwealth so far as the finances are concerned, and sound lines industrially, meaning a decent and equitable understanding between employer and employee.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: If the Commonwealth continues as it is at present, is there any hope of the present Government getting us back upon sound financial lines?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, not under present war conditions. No Government could do so, because I take it that the only way we can do it would be by imposing very heavy taxation, which would simply mean wrecking one industry after another, until the last state of the country would be worse than the first.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What is going to happen then as in that case the present huge deficits must continue.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the hon. member will allow me to place the whole position before members, I shall be very glad. No doubt the hon. member will have a great deal to say when I have sat down, and I will endeavour to reply to any point that he raises. I do not think the debate will be facilitated by any attempt on my part to jump from one point to another, in order to answer queries which may from time to time occur to the hon. member's mind. I have already expressed the opinion that a far more serious matter than the extent of the deficit for the year is the position of the industries of the State, for the simple reason that if our industries were in a flourishing condition it would be an easy matter to restore the condition of our finances. A flourishing condition of industry would mean increased revenue to our railways, water supplies, and other undertakings, and would also place our industries in such a position as to be able to bear a certain measure of taxation. Briefly, what is the position of our leading industries? Our gold yield for last year was the lowest of any year on record, since the complete development of the industry. There has been a decline of half a million sterling as compared with the preceding year, an alarming decrease for a small community like this. The yield for the expired portion of this year is less by nearly £10,000 a week than that for the corresponding period of last year. We read of big mines being in difficulties, and being compelled to close down. I noticed a report in the paper, I think in connection with the Associated mine. The figures for the month showed that £8,200 worth of gold had been obtained from the mine. The cost of production was, however, £8,400, or

£200 more than the value of the gold yield. This is a state of affairs which, to my mind, cannot continue. A little while ago it was announced that the Sons of Gwalia mine, which has been the backbone of our outback districts for years past, has for the first time in its history been compelled to suspend its usual dividend. The Great Fingal, on which the community at Day Dawn is almost entirely dependent, seems likely to close altogether, with results that cannot be other than disastrous to a large number of people. So far as anything in the way of new mining ventures are concerned, or the development of our mining areas, and also so far as mining for base metals is concerned, we are up against the Commonwealth legislation. There is no doubt that some alteration to the present war profits taxation is essential if we are to get any relief from those directions. I should be unwilling to see anyone make a profit out of the war, but we know how any young industry will be affected by the present conditions arising out of the war profits taxation. For instance, a person might have been developing some industry and making nothing out of it prior to the war, but since the war he might have made £10,000 or £15,000, whereas a man who had been making a big income all along would entirely escape. These things must be put right, and it is essential that some alteration should be effected in order that our mining industry, especially as applied to base metals, shall have some chance of development. I do not think it is necessary to say much regarding the present position of the agricultural industry, since it has been discussed at great length from time to time for some years past. I would, however, like to point out that the State of Western Australia, by comparison with the other States, has really done great work for the development of this industry. I am entirely confident that when we get back to normal conditions we shall get a reward for our expenditure on the agricultural industry. I would like to give some comparative figures which may be of interest. These are comparisons of Government loans, and the number of holdings in the different States upon which the loans are made up to the year 1914. Since that time I daresay the position has altered, but, if it has, it has not done so in the direction of decreasing the comparative assistance rendered by Western Australia as against that rendered by the other States. In New South Wales the balance outstanding on money advanced by the Government to farmers was £2,297,000, in Victoria £1,500,000, South Australia £1,264,000, Tasmania £36,000, and Western Australia £2,331,000. The Western Australian advance is far larger than in any of the States except New South Wales. In calculating the loans advanced per holding, we find that New South Wales has advanced £24, Victoria £22, South Australia £59, Tasmania £2, and Western Australia £149. It cannot, therefore, be suggested that past Governments have been niggardly in the matter of endeavouring to secure the agricultural development of Western Australia. I say that they have acted wisely, because in view of the evident decline of our mining industry, and because of the apparent

impossibility of quickly building up new industries, that is to say, secondary industries, there was nothing left for Western Australia except to push forward to the utmost with the development of its agricultural industry. I venture to say that had it not been that, when the policy was put into force, we were confronted with a series of exceptionally bad years, followed by the war, we should already have had a substantial return for the money expended in that direction. Our timber, fruit, and pearling industries are all more or less hampered by war conditions, and this fact must be taken into consideration in any present attempt to square the finances of the State; because it must be obvious that taxation imposed upon industries that are now struggling would have no other effect than to defeat its own object. Coming now to the estimated loan expenditure for the current year, as set out in the Loan Estimates, which form part of the matter attached to the Appropriation Bill, I wish to give the following figures:—From General Loan Fund, it is proposed to expend £851,748, from Trust Funds £220,000, and from Land Improvement Funds £142,000, or a total of £1,213,894. Included in that amount are the sums of £90,000 for State smelters, £30,000 for water supply and sewerage, £75,000 for the Agricultural Bank, £65,000 for repatriation, and £125,000 for the Industries Assistance Board, making a total of £436,000, which, provided of course the advances are always properly secured, will be returned. This leaves an expenditure on works of £775,000 for the year. Up to the end of March, the expired period of nine months, instead of spending the full proportion of the £1,213,000 from loan, the Government had actually expended only £419,819. I may add that in connection with all the items of loan expenditure, with the exception of three, representing a total of £10,000, appropriation had previously been obtained. It is now a matter of carrying on works already approved by Parliament. When it is remembered that until a few years ago, the annual loan expenditure was at the rate of £3,000,000 per annum, it will be realised that the present Government, and the Government which immediately preceded it, in cutting down the loan expenditure to three-quarters of a million per annum, has been in a difficult position, particularly from the point of view of making drastic reductions in revenue expenditure. There is a very close relationship between loan and revenue expenditure, and there can be no doubt that when drastic reduction in the former is practised, it greatly increases the difficulty of cutting down expenditure on revenue account. As I have previously stated in this House, much of the present difficulty in regard to finance is due to the heavy burden of interest and sinking fund on unproductive loans. In fact this, with the unfair distribution of the Federal revenue, constitute the whole of our difficulty. At the end of 1911 the interest and sinking fund was not costing the taxpayer anything; the whole of it was paid by the surplus revenue from the different undertakings on which money had been invested, that is to say, they paid working expenses and handed over to the Treasury a balance sufficient to pay interest and sinking fund. At the end

of the pre-war period this condition of affairs had been altered to such an extent that upwards of £600,000 per annum was required from direct taxation in order to make up the interest and sinking fund account. Had the war not broken out, I am quite prepared to believe that that shortage of £500,000 would have been a diminishing quantity because a good deal of the money had been spent in developmental work which would ultimately have proved profitable, and therefore that amount would have decreased. But the war has interfered with all our industries and necessarily the revenue has dropped, and we have drifted from bad to worse, until to-day we have to make up by some means a million of money for the purpose of paying interest and sinking fund on our loans. Turning to the general Estimates, it will be seen that a deficit for the year of £930,000 in round figures was anticipated. But against that, the Treasurer expected to achieve certain savings, and also to impose some new taxation which together would reduce the deficit to a little over £800,000. This morning I discussed the matter with the Treasurer and he told me that I would be quite safe in assuring Parliament that the deficit would, as a matter of fact, be considerably less than is shown upon the Estimates. I think that is satisfactory, because £930,000 for one year seemed to be very large. For the expired nine months of the current financial year, there is a deficit of £612,000. As compared with the corresponding period of last year, this shows an improvement of £81,000, and this notwithstanding the fact that our revenue has fallen below that of last year by £90,000, and our interest and sinking fund payments have increased at the rate of £10,000 per month, or £90,000 for the expired period. So far as the remaining three months of the year are concerned, there is no reason to suppose that the conditions will vary greatly from those which prevailed in previous years, in which the revenue during the last three months has held its own with the expenditure. The month of June, as hon. members are aware, is a long month for revenue purposes, extending until 10th July, and for that reason the revenue for July itself is deplorably small. There is always a big jump in the deficit in July, while there is a substantial surplus in June because of the extra period for the collection of revenue. Therefore, there is no reason to believe that the closing three months of the current financial year will differ materially from the closing three months of the financial year immediately preceding, that is to say, we may hope to hold our own during the closing three months. At the end of the financial year, the deficit instead of being £930,000 as shown on the Estimates, or £500,000 as expected by the Treasurer, it will not, consequent on economies and taxation, greatly exceed the present total of £612,000. This result has been accomplished without much increased taxation for the reason that most of the taxation proposals have not yet been considered. So that there is no doubt had the taxation proposals been passed, the estimated deficit would have been still further reduced. As it is, it is safe to say that the deficit for the current

year will be something between £600,000 and £700,000. I told hon. members at the outset it was not my intention to go into details, although I said I would welcome criticism of any department of the Government. I shall endeavour to reply to any points that may be raised by hon. members during the debate that may ensue. There are one or two points, however, regarding which I desire to anticipate criticism, not with the idea of stifling it if hon. members are not satisfied with the point of view I put forward. But I think it is desirable in view of discussions in another place, that I should say a few words on one or two details of the Estimates. When economy is talked of, one of the first items usually attacked is the vote of His Excellency the Governor. People say that we ought to do without a State Governor. I am not going to debate that point; all I want to make clear to hon. members is that whether or not we do without a State Governor is not a matter for the Government at all. The Imperial Parliament gave to Western Australia a Constitution, and under that Constitution it set out the form of government, and that form included a Governor and two Houses of Parliament. The Government immediately preceding the Government at present in power, made certain representations to the Imperial authorities when the period of office of the previous Governor was about to expire, and it was clearly intimated to the State Government that it was not regarded as desirable at the present time to alter the constitution of Western Australia. I am not going to question whether that is wise or unwise; I simply want to make the position clear that this is not a matter for the State Government to decide. The next office which is usually attacked is that of the Agent General. We are told that this office is quite unnecessary and that if we had a commercial agent he could do all the business that was necessary and we could allow the larger affairs of State to go through the office of the High Commissioner, by which means we would be able to save £500 or £1,000 a year. In my opinion it will be a fatal day for Western Australia when we abandon our independent representation in London, when we throw ourselves entirely into the arms of the Federal Government. We had an instance the other day of what might happen under such circumstances. The Federal Government told the Imperial Government they were agreeable that the Imperial Government should take over the State steamer "Kangaroo." The Prime Minister when asked for an explanation—I may say he offered the "Kangaroo" to the Imperial Government without ever mentioning the matter to the State Government—said that the only excuse he had to offer was that he had overlooked the fact that the "Kangaroo" belonged to the State Government, a confusion of ideas between mine and thine which has been a fruitful cause of trouble to lesser men than Prime Ministers since the world began. What would have happened if we had had to present our case to the Imperial authorities through the High Commissioner? What did happen was that the Agent General went directly to the

Secretary of State and the matter was settled at once.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: There is no reason why they should not have the "Kangaroo."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Imperial Government said they could not take the steamer under such circumstances. The saving effected will pay the Agent General's salary for many years to come.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Before tea I was referring to attacks frequently made on the office of the Agent General in London. Whilst I would be the last to deny the necessity for making small savings in order that a large number of small savings might eventually mean the saving of a considerable sum, I repeat that it would be doubtful wisdom on the part of the State for the sake of £500 or £1,000 a year to lower the standing of its representative at the heart of the Empire. To do anything of the sort might easily result in the loss in one year of far more than we would be likely to save in nine or 10 years. The economists, as a rule, when they finish their attack on the State Governor and the Agent General, turn to the Education Vote, and declare that that ought to be substantially reduced. I wish to refer to this vote for three reasons: the first because it has been attacked, secondly, because it is a vote regarding which I might be expected to know something, and thirdly, because it is what may be considered a typical vote. There are certain things the State must do for its people. We must have police, gaols, asylums, and things of that sort, and I take up the attitude that one of the things the State must do for its people is to provide educational facilities for their children. I hold very strong views on this question, and I do not hesitate to put forward a progressive policy of education as one of the things that will ultimately help us out of our difficulties. In referring to the education vote as a typical vote, the idea I wish to put forward is this: that any State which finds itself unable to perform the fundamental obligations it owes to its people might as well admit bankruptcy at once. In Australia there has been a general disposition to boast about our educational system. People have nursed themselves into the strange delusion that in Australia we are more advanced in point of education than are most of the other civilised countries. Nothing of the kind. There could be no greater illusion imaginable. We are a long way behind other countries. It will probably surprise hon. members to learn that in the city of London more money per head is spent on education than in the whole of Eastern Australia. And it must be readily realised that in a congested population like that of London far more value can be got for the money expended than is the case here. The wages of the teachers are much lower than they are here, the schools are larger; they have every advantage. Yet in London, indeed in most of the big English cities, more money per head is being spent on education than in Western Australia.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Spent by the State?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Generally speaking, in England the local authority makes the expenditure, with generous assistance from the central Government. And that probably, to my mind, is one of the reasons why Australia has fallen back in education, namely, the question of expenditure has been taken too much out of the hands of the local authority. In those places where it rests with the local authority, they always say "We must find the money," but in Australia, where it is a matter dealt with by the Government, and the local authority has but little concern in it, we seem to have been niggardly in this expenditure. In most of the Canadian States they spend on education twice as much per head of the population as we spend in Western Australia, and in the Canadian States the expenditure is controlled by the local authority with a generous subsidy from the State Government. In America the expenditure is much larger than it is with us, and in America it is looked upon as a national question and the Federal Government advance considerable sums to the States, particularly for secondary and technical education, a system which might be adopted with great advantage in Australia. When members can show me that expenditure on education in any country is in inverse ratio with that country's strength and prosperity, I will be inclined to reconsider my attitude. My belief is that nothing can help us out of our present difficulties unless we have a higher standard of education amongst the people generally, and consequently a greater efficiency, not in the classes but in the masses. It is a principle on which I am prepared to stake my political existence, a principle upon which I am prepared to be judged by the test of any civilised country in the world. In the bad old days of Ferdinand VII. of Spain, a reactionary Prime Minister decided to close all the universities and substitute a national school of bull fighting. Even in Spain of 150 years ago it was not regarded as a patriotic or wise proposal. It did not work well for the people or the Prime Minister, or for the king himself. I do not doubt there are in Western Australia people who would insist that our Education vote should be pared down rather than there should be any interference with the great national sport or industry of horse-racing, or that we should make any deep inroad on our national expenditure on tobacco or beer. By those who admit in a general sort of way that education is a moderately good thing for the rich and an immoderately bad thing for the poor it may be said that surely the present time is not a time in which we are justified in increasing education expenditure. But in this expenditure we cannot stand still. The number of children in our State schools is increasing at the rate of 2,000 or 3,000 per annum, and we have to increase the expenditure in proportion with that increase, or abandon the principle of free education. Apart from this natural increase, I admit there have been certain increases in the education expenditure during the past year for which I have been largely responsible, responsible to the extent

that I urged these things upon Cabinet and secured Cabinet's approval. What do these increases mean? In every case it has been an increase that aimed at giving to the country children some of the facilities at present enjoyed only in the City. During my speech this evening I made reference to the blighting effects of centralisation. I am satisfied that a pregnant cause of centralisation is the lack of educational facilities in our country districts. Most men and women value the future of their children more than their own immediate prosperity, and one of the obstacles in the way of men going into the country is the difficulty they find in their obtaining educational advantages for their children. When the war came upon us we had a regulation providing that a school should be kept open for not fewer than 10 children. There commenced a considerable removal of population from the country to the City. In very many instances the husband enlisted, and his wife and children went to live in the towns or in the City. It was quickly found that this movement would have the effect of closing up a large number of remote schools if the regulation continued in force. Consequently I approved of the amendment of that regulation to provide that a school should be kept open for an attendance of not fewer than eight children. As a result a large number of schools have been kept open which otherwise would have been closed. But I recognise that it is an expensive matter to keep schools open for eight children. At the same time I hold that it would have been false economy to close them up. Provision has also been made for a small number of payments to country children who, by examination, win their places in the Modern School. In the past certain scholarships have carried a monetary allowance, but apart from that the Modern School has been filled each year by competitive examination, which was of value to only the City children who won it, because country children could not take advantage of it, unless their parents were sufficiently well-to-do to be able to afford their maintenance in Perth. In view of this, I resolved upon a slightly increased expenditure, calculated to give those country children £30 per annum as a maintenance allowance. Another small increase is entailed by the establishment of continuation classes in some of the larger country centres, Katanning, Wagin, Narrogin, and York. By means of those continuation classes something like 400 boys and girls are at present receiving education beyond the leaving age of 14 years, boys and girls who otherwise would have had to relinquish their education. The only other increased expenditure for which I have been responsible represents the establishment of high schools at Northam, Geraldton, Albany, and Bunbury. Previously the State provided secondary education only in the City and at Kalgoorlie. Now we have these high schools which I have mentioned. They are not separate institutions, they are conducted very cheaply, and are carried on with a small increase of staff, and a very small increase of expenditure. Those four schools will shortly be providing educational facilities for children over 14 years of age to the total number of 400. I am prepared

to stake my existence on this, that the provision of additional educational facilities such as high schools, continuation classes, and the other schools I have mentioned is well worth the expenditure incurred. The whole of these small increases, I might say, represent not more than £10,000 per annum. In regard to the City, I regret that we are unable, because of lack of funds, to do all that we ought to do; we must continue to endeavour to do more. When we opened the Technical School in St. George's-terrace after the Christmas holidays we were forced to turn away hundreds of children of between the ages of 14 and 17, who desired to spend their time at that school rather than waste it in play or at picture shows. If we have any regard for the future, we cannot afford to say to those children, "Although you are anxious to learn and to improve yourselves so as to become better citizens, the State cannot afford it; you had better go away and play." I am sure it is entirely false economy. I agree altogether with those who insist that we should get the best possible value out of the money spent on education. In that direction reforms are in hand, reforms out of which I expect important results. One of the weakest features of our system is represented by the small country schools, where one teacher has to teach 18 or 20 children in different classes. For some years before I went to the department enthusiastic officers of the department were developing a system whereby those schools could be made more efficient. As a result we have at Toodyay an observation school for the purpose of instructing country teachers how to conduct their country schools, and I am confident, having had some opportunity of looking into the matter myself, that the result of that observation school in the course of a very few years will mean a tremendous improvement in the country schools throughout Western Australia. There has also been an honorary committee composed of members of the Senate of the University, and of representatives of the Agricultural Department and the Education Department, inquiring for some months now as to improvements which may be made in our educational methods in order to apply them more closely to the requirements of the industries of the country. The report of that committee is now being completed. It was delayed for some little time because the chairman of the committee, Sir Walter James, who has taken a great interest in the matter, desired to make certain inquiries during his recent visit to the Eastern States. Sir Walter James has now returned, and I expect that the committee's report will be furnished very shortly.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: What is the cost of the University?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: About £13,000 per annum.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Thirteen thousand five hundred pounds.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have heard the argument used that at the present time we ought to close up the University, following the example set by the eminent Spanish Prime Minister to whom I have already alluded. But if we closed the University we should not save £13,500. Do not let hon. members

harbour any such impression. The professors are there under agreement and those agreements would have to be honoured, and the salaries of the professors would have to go on. Again, I would point out that the University is not a matter for the Government. It is outside the control of the Government altogether. It is by Act of Parliament the University is established, and is controlled by a Senate; and it is by Act of Parliament money is paid every year by the Government for the support of the University. It is not a matter in which the Government have any choice whatever. Now, if we close the University we save a proportion of the £13,500 per annum. And what do we lose? The University of Western Australia is not occupied by those who because of the accident of birth are enabled to obtain educational advantages superior to those enjoyed by the children of other people. The University of Western Australia is occupied by those who in competitive examination have proved that their minds are best worth cultivating. Therefore, if we close the University, we are going to turn out, and prohibit from further study, some 200 of the best minds of their age to be found in Western Australia.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Two hundred and fifty-two.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What is going to be the result of that in the future? Are not the difficulties that Western Australia is bound to face after the war going to be carried by those who are now at the University and in the upper schools? I venture to say that Western Australia would not be in her present unfortunate position had her educational facilities of 20 or 10 years ago been not such as we have at the present time, but such as we shall have in the very near future if the people of Western Australia are fully alive to the importance of the subject. In England at the present time, notwithstanding the enormous expense of the war, the education budget has been increased by no less than four millions sterling for the one purpose of increasing the salaries of the teachers, because it has been recognised that the first step, at all events in the case of England, towards a decent educational system must be to attract better people to the profession of teaching. And so in one year, in one war year, the educational budget of Great Britain has been increased by four million pounds for salaries alone. And, following upon that increase, a new education Bill has been introduced in England, an Education Bill which practically insists upon the best possible development of the minds of the children from the age of three up to the age of 18. We learn that this Bill is to remove all the old exemptions and all the old half-time attendances. In many parts of England exemption is very freely granted between the ages of 12 and 14, or 12 and 13, as the case might be—in some instances the compulsory age does not go beyond 13. These exemptions were granted as a rule because of the poverty of the parents and the necessity for the children earning money to eke out the family income. But British statesmen have recognised that the system of exemptions merely perpetuates poverty. The new

English Education Bill, the second reading of which, we learned by cable, was passed by a large majority only a week or two ago, sweeps away all the exemptions and affirms that there must be no child in England up to the age of 14 that does not get full-time education. And after 14, the Bill provides, every child that does not go to a recognised secondary school must attend continuation or technical classes for a period of not less than eight hours per week, from the age of 14 to 18; and in order that this may not fall upon the child it is insisted that the period of continuation education shall be in the daytime, in the employer's time. Having read very carefully, and more than once, the report of the departmental committee on whose recommendation this reform was initiated, I am glad to be able to say that the most enthusiastic advocates of this system were the employers of labour themselves; because they, with their eyes opened by this war, were the first to recognise that it was going to pay them to give the children, the boys and girls in their employ, eight hours per week for study, since the boys and girls would be of so much greater value to them during the period of employment. So that, even in her financial difficulties, England, with the millions and millions of pounds she has to supply for war purposes, does not hesitate, not merely to increase her educational expenditure and to revise educational methods, but to aim deliberately at this, that every mind in the community shall be developed to its greatest possible extent. That is an entirely sound and entirely humane proposition. I refuse to believe that any child is sent into this world with any other object than that it should be developed to the full height of its beauty, its strength, and its intellectual capacity. Another feature of the Estimates to which a good deal of attention is likely to be paid is the railway service. I would counsel hon. members to bear in mind that it would be altogether unfair to blame the Commissioner of Railways because our railways do not pay. Our railway policy has always been dictated by political considerations in the matter of constructing railways which it was known would not pay for a start, but which it was expected would ultimately pay, and prove of advantage in developing industries of the country. In addition, many kinds of traffic have been and are being carried on the railways at losing rates for the same purpose, namely, to assist in the development of our industries. I do not for a moment doubt the wisdom of this course in a great many instances, if not in all—I have no intention of particularising; but it is not the fault of the Commissioner that he is called upon to carry many kinds of traffic at losing rates. It is not the fault of the Commissioner that he has to use a certain fuel for the very worthy purpose of developing a local industry. It is a sound policy to use the local fuel, but it is not sound policy to blame the Commissioner for losses possibly resulting therefrom. It is also well to remember that not only the wages but also the working conditions of the railway service are fixed

by the Arbitration Court. Therefore, whilst we recognise the unhappy position of our railway system, it would be entirely wrong to say that that position is evidence of incompetence on the part of the Commissioner. I am not suggesting for a moment that reforms cannot be brought about. It is the intention of the Government to leave no stone unturned to improve the railway policy. As I have already intimated in answer to a question asked in this House, the Government are now considering whether it would not be wiser for Western Australia to adopt the course followed in many other States and do away with the present system of having only one Commissioner.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: And sell the railways.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is a matter of policy which has not yet been considered by the Government. As regards our tramways I propose to say very little. I have never for one moment regretted the strenuous opposition that I offered to the purchase of the tramways by the State. I am still convinced that in the purchase of the tramways we gave away a quarter of a million of the taxpayers' money in excess of the value of the trams. I am still convinced that by the State purchase of the Perth trams, an act of gross injustice to the city of Perth was committed, and I am still convinced that because of the price paid by the Government for the tramways it will be impossible, for many years to come, for the public to get the concessions they were promised, unless they get those concessions at the cost of the State generally. Then, as the result of the purchase of the tramways, we have another big undertaking which I criticised at great length in this Chamber—the Perth power house. Again I say that I do not regret or recall one word that I uttered regarding the Perth power house when speaking from the seat which I was then occupying. It is one of the most extraordinary cases that I have ever come across in my life. What happened? Mr. Merz was in Melbourne reporting to the Victorian Government on a proposal to electrify the Melbourne suburban railways. He was telegraphed to by our Government and asked to quote a fee for reporting upon the matter of providing a power house for our tramways. He wired back asking a fee of 1,000 guineas. A further message was sent to him stating that he was asking too much and that evidently he thought the Government required something more elaborate than they really did require. So Mr. Merz brought his fee down to 500 guineas, and he sent an assistant over here to investigate. Later he came himself. He was here for one week—Christmas week, just between boats—and during that week he submitted his report. The essential features of his report were these: that by the end of June, 1914—this was in 1912, and the date of completion is important, because it is prior to the outbreak of war—he could complete the erection of a power house at a cost of about £150,000; and that this power house would produce a unit of electricity at .52d., or

a little over ½d. On the strength of that report an agreement was entered into, on one sheet of foolscap, which was almost entirely a printed form, all the writing that was on it being filled in in Mr. Merz's own handwriting. That agreement was not seen by the Crown Law Department, nor by the technical authorities of the railways, nor by the electrical engineers whom the Government held at their disposal. This agreement made no reference whatever to the report on which it was presumably based. It was not an agreement or contract to build a power house at any specified price. It simply gave Mr. Merz and his partner a contract to build those works, and their remuneration was to be out-of-pocket expenses, £1,000 per annum for an engineer, and five per cent. on the total cost of construction. Now, instead of being finished on the 30th June, 1914, the works are not yet finished. The war, of course, has caused a further very long delay. Instead of the cost being £150,000 it is going to be three times that amount. Instead of the unit of electricity being produced at ½d., the cost is going to be considerably higher. As I mentioned when discussing this matter on a previous occasion, because of that estimated cost of just a little over ½d. per unit an agreement was entered into by the Government with the Perth City Council to provide them with all the current which they required for the metropolitan area for 50 years, at ¾d. per unit. That agreement looked like providing a substantial profit to the Government in the shape of the difference between the ½d. representing the cost of production and the ¾d. which the City Council were to pay. But the unit, instead of being produced at ½d. and thus allowing a profit of nearly ¼d. on the price quoted to the City Council, will cost a considerable advance on that price of ¾d. to which the Government have committed themselves for a period of 50 years under the agreement with the City Council. The gentleman who entered into this agreement comprised in a sheet of foolscap will receive five per cent., not on £150,000, but on upwards of £400,000; and his engineer, instead of receiving £1,000 per annum for two or three years, will get it for double that period. I say I have no reason whatever to regret one word I uttered in regard to the purchase of the Perth tramways or the establishment of the power house. So far as public service economies by the present Government are concerned, they have been chiefly in the direction of amalgamation. I believe that that is the soundest method by which one can carry out administrative economies. One cannot take away facilities that the public require in order to enable them to carry on their business. But one can turn two or three departments into one department and thereby get rid of a good deal of expenditure. And I desire to add that in my opinion it is impossible to economise effectively in the civil service, to bring it up to a standard of, I will not say, cheapness because that might involve a wrong implication, but of comparatively small expenditure and high efficiency, until we do away with all the rab-

bit warrens in which the officers of the Government are at present housed. It will be a sound business move on the part of the State at the earliest possible opportunity—and the opportunity will probably arise when our soldiers come back from the war and when it may be necessary to find City occupation for them pending their absorption in the industries of the country—to build up-to-date Government offices on modern lines, so that the best possible may be got out of the civil service. The loss at the present time merely through the scattered location of departments must be enormous. Files have to wander all over the City. The amounts paid for rents of outside premises are very considerable indeed. But over and above all these things are the inefficiency and the waste that arise from the lack of suitable office accommodation. Business men who are acquainted with business methods know what I mean. You cannot get good work when officers are situated in little rooms here and little rooms there. When we get modern office accommodation we shall be able to carry out more economy in the service. In the meantime amalgamations have taken place with savings, and I submit with increased efficiency. In the Works Department important amalgamations have taken place in regard to water supplies. They are saving money, and the public are not prejudiced but are, on the other hand, advantaged. And further economies may be found easily possible by adopting the principle suggested by the conference which recently sat of local governing bodies so that there shall be as little overlapping as possible between the State and the Federal Governments, and also between the State and the local governing bodies. In the Lands and Agricultural Departments amalgamations of the same character have taken place, making for economy without destroying efficiency. In the departments under my control similar amalgamations and economies have been effected, and the same thing has happened. The office of the Registrar General has been associated with another office, which will bring about economy and give us increased efficiency. In that connection the publication of statistical information has been cut down tremendously, and, I venture to say, cut down without sacrificing anything of interest to the public. We have tried to prevent the overlapping of Federal and State publications. We realise fully that we should give useful information to the public but we are doing it now at a vastly decreased cost. In the Charities Department similar amalgamations have been carried out. In the State hotels, so far as the management is concerned, large savings have been effected, and I have no hesitation in predicting that by the end of the next financial year the alterations will be found to have been to the advantage of the service, and I say that without expressing an opinion as to whether it is wise for the State to carry on hotels or not. So far as the other trading concerns go, I do not wish to say much about them. The State steamship undertaking is going to be a profitable one, because of the vast earnings in the running of the "Kangaroo." I am pleased at that, because some time ago I opposed

the purchase of the steamer "Kangaroo," and under similar circumstances I should oppose the purchase of such another steamer. But the extraordinary circumstances since the outbreak of the war have enabled the "Kangaroo" to earn profits that have been fabulous, and which a private company could not earn; because they would have been deprived of those earnings by the Commonwealth Government. I had under my control several small trading concerns. There was an interesting little venture known as the fish supply, which was losing money at the rate of £10 a day or 3,360 golden sovereigns a year. I found on inquiry that that undertaking was established on the understanding that if it did not pay it would be done away with, so I closed it up and prevented this loss of £10 a day. Then we had the South Perth ferries. These boats were being run by a private company and earning a profit of £2,000 a year. They were taken over by the State and immediately the profit was reduced to £1,000 per annum, still a very substantial profit. Then a vessel was built specially for the trade, and directly that vessel, which was built specially for the trade, commenced running the profit disappeared entirely, and in its place there was set up a loss of over £300 per annum. The South Perth council came to me with an offer to purchase the undertaking, which stood at the value of over £9,000 in the books of the department. The South Perth council, because of the admitted uselessness of the boat which was built specially for the service offered to give the Government £5,500 for the South Perth ferries. I told them that I was unwilling to submit such an offer to Cabinet, and thereon they increased their offer to £6,000, which would have shown a loss of over £3,000. I thought I would see what better I could do, and I called in to my assistance a gentleman who was then a Government employee, but who had previously been employed by the company which was then running the South Perth ferries during its profitable career. He gave certain advice which we adopted, and we have made the ferry service payable. The boat which was built specially for the trade we keep tied up at the wharf. The South Perth council to-day are offering to the Government not the £5,500 which they first offered, or the £6,000 which they offered in the second place, but the full book value of the undertaking, over £9,000. So that in that respect we acted wisely in seeking the advice from the people who ought to know. I have no doubt there are other trading concerns which members will wish to have something to say about, and I promise to afford them all the information that I have in my power. I feel I have discharged an important task—quite inadequately—but I have refrained from entering into details which would have needlessly prolonged the debate. I wanted to direct attention to what appeared to be the larger issues. Let the public fully recognise these and it will surely be the first step towards reform. I am not alone in my advocacy of a review of the condition of affairs obtaining between the Federal Government and the States. A prominent member of the Federal Parliament, not a member representing this State, is urging the submission to a convention of the whole question of the

future relationship between the States and the Commonwealth, and is urging it because the present arrangements are not suitable to the healthy development of the component parts of the Commonwealth. It is to my mind a good suggestion, and one which is worthy of our consideration and support. I trust that I have not wearied members but I felt that there were certain dominant factors in the situation which were not sufficiently understood. I have endeavoured to give to these their due prominence, but I am free to admit that I have spoken with a feeling of, shall I say, possibly futility under the overshadowing conviction that the financial problem of Western Australia—a big problem to us because it is our problem—is in reality one of the least of the issues that is being fought out to-day on the battlefields of France. I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I move—

"That the debate be adjourned."

Motion put and negatived.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan Suburban) [8.10]: I only desire to speak for five or six minutes, and it would hardly be too much if I devoted all that time to my warm congratulations, both personally and politically, to the leader of the House on the speech which he has made. I warmly congratulate him, but I say to myself what I say to you, Sir, is it not too late? I have been waiting for five, six, and seven years for a speech like that from a responsible Minister of the Crown in Western Australia. What I have been fighting for is a ministerial analysis of the financial position of the Federal problem. I have no wish to label the Minister with secession any more than he desires to label me with unification. I frankly admit it may be too late. Three, four, or five years ago we had something to negotiate with, the representations made and the analysis made by the Colonial Secretary might have brought forth fruit. But the terrible difficulty is that we have got unification. We cannot get a penny piece from the loan market without the express permission of the Federal Government, and with regard to taxation we know what stand has been shown by the Federal Treasurer. May I give an invitation to the Colonial Secretary to come round with me in my election campaign for the Metropolitan-Suburban Province. If he is unwilling it is possibly because he is unable through the pressure of business. But I promise him this, that what he has given us to-night will be repeated on every platform which I go on, as the most masterly analysis of the position we have had from a Minister of the Crown in Western Australia. Let the Country party, let anyone else, come up and let the people decide. I am quite prepared to meet them. The leader of the Government said this was a formal motion, and so it is. A discussion of the position of affairs in regard to education and any other department, I leave entirely on one side. With regard to the present Government and the denorable administrative weakness that has been shown, and that was not analysed by the leader of the House, I propose to analyse on the public platform.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: As closely as he could.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Yes. We recognise his position. I am going to use it. It always saves trouble when we use other people's language, and I shall use the speech of the leader of the House on every public platform. Let me give this analysis of the present Government from what might be looked at as a very favourable organ. In the "Pastoralist's Review" of the 16th March, the Perth correspondent writes "The financial position grows no better." This is written from Perth:

The present National Government which is unquestionably the weakest administration in the history of Western Australia, had no better solution of the financial problem to offer than an invitation from the Treasurer to furnish suggestions.

I am going outside to furnish suggestions. I tell the Country party it is to them I look as the weak portion of the Government. They have brought the Administration of Western Australia to the lowest point we have ever seen in the history of the State. I am not attacking individuals, but the Country party as a whole, and their policy has been to squeeze the Labour party dry, and now they are seeking to squeeze the Liberals.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Would it not be better for the hon. gentleman to apply himself to the question before the House, that is the second reading of the Appropriation Bill?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The only reproach I can bring upon myself is that I have taken seven minutes when I promised to only take five in the remarks that I had to make. I think it is fair to give this criticism from an outside source, because it adequately represents my views. As I began, with congratulations, so let me end. I think we might warmly congratulate the leader of the House, and ourselves for having heard it, upon his most interesting and masterly analysis of the financial position of Western Australia. It is the most masterly analysis that we have heard from any responsible Minister of the Crown for the last seven years.

On motion by Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom debate adjourned.

BILL--WHEAT MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES (North) [8.16]: I should like the Honorary Minister to give us some information as to who is responsible for the handling of the wheat now. Quite recently, in going down the line, I saw at Spencer's Brook a wheat stack quite as long as this building, and about six feet high, left out in the weather. At the same time the authorities were building a shed. The uprights had been erected, but there was no rafters on the building. Alongside this there was another shed with no wheat in it, but with rafters on. In my opinion there is gross mis-management on the part of either the wheat board or other people, in that the wheat had not been housed when accommodation was there for it. At Katanning the millers have four silos erected to carry 35,000 bags of wheat. At the time I

was there they were anxious to get the wheat in before the wet weather. The wheat was only six feet high in one silo instead of the four being full. There is mis-management here on the part of either the Railway Department or the wheat scheme, in that this wheat has not been sent forward to Katanning long ago. There are other points in connection with this scheme which should be dealt with. I hope, therefore, that the Honorary Minister will not try to rush this Bill through before the adjournment. The Bill should be adjourned for a month to enable members, who have taken some interest in it, to get a better grip of it. In the meantime, I shall vote for the second reading.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [8.18]: I move—

"That the debate be adjourned to this day week."

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister—East) [8.19]: I am not in favour of an adjournment. Reference has been made to important parts of the Bill, and to time being needed to thoroughly digest them. As a matter of fact, the Wheat Marketing Act under which we are working, has been in operation for three years. One would think we were working under a new Act, or that the Act had failed. It has not failed, and time and again has been re-enacted with very little amendment. There are only two amendments to the Act in this Bill, and these are practically of no importance at all so far as the working of the Act is concerned. Why more time should be required to consider this measure I cannot understand. When the Act was re-enacted there was very little objection to it, and no amendments of vital importance were brought forward. One of the amending clauses of the Bill refers to the fact that we want authority for something which has already been done, and to enable us to legalise a repayment being made. The other amendment is of minor importance. Outside of the amending clauses we have in the schedules of the Bill two agreements. The whole of the discussion, which took place on the Wheat Marketing Act last December, arose through the Government desiring to enter into these arrangements. We thus secured authority to enter into these agreements, so that, although the agreements may be discussed, they cannot be altered, because we already have had authority to enter into them. It is simply a question of these schedules being brought before the House for the information of hon. members.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Not on the authority of the House?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister): Certainly, on the authority to enter into the agreements with the acquiring agents and the millers.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That was under the 1916 Act, and not under this measure at all.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister): It was under the Act under which we are at present operating for the handling and acquiring of this year's harvest, and also in connection with the millers' agreements entered into by the Government.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the debate be adjourned to this day week. The

Honorary Minister should confine himself to that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister): I am endeavouring to explain that no strong reason has yet been put forward for the adjournment of the debate. Hon. members have had plenty of time to deal with the Bill, and should be prepared to go on with it. If they had any amendments to propose, surely they should not have waited until the Bill was presented before putting them on the Notice Paper. They must have known what amendments they intended to bring forward.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: We never saw the Bill.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister): That excuse does not hold good. There is nothing in the Bill. It is merely a re-enactment Bill with one or two small amendments.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: We desire to put something into the Bill.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister): If hon. members desired to put something into the Bill they had plenty of time to do so between last December and this evening. I must oppose the adjournment. One small speech has been made each evening on this Bill, and this is not making a legitimate attempt to get on with the business before us.

Hon. J. A. GREIG (South-East) [8.24]: I support the motion for adjournment. The Honorary Minister said that if we had amendments to bring forward we should have got them ready before we saw the Bill. That is a peculiar attitude for the Honorary Minister to take up. Seeing that the leading farmers, representatives of this State had interviewed the Minister and asked to have amendments put into the Bill, and seeing that the Chamber of Commerce and the leading financial people of the State had also suggested amendments, we had every reason to believe that the Honorary Minister would have included them in the Bill. When we see the Bill put before us without these amendments, we naturally want time to thoroughly consider the drafting of these amendments. I hope hon. members will take that point of view into consideration when considering the motion. There is no hurry. The agreement has been signed, and the scheme is going on and everything is in order. So long as we are in time for next year, it will be all right.

Motion put and passed; the debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [8.26]: I move—

“That the House at its rising adjourn until three p.m. on Friday.”

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [8.27]: The Colonial Secretary spoke of meeting on Saturday. On a few previous occasions this House has met on Saturday, but whenever it does so it sits in the forenoon so as to give members, who desire to catch a train, an opportunity of doing so. There are no trains on Sunday, and I assume that if it be necessary to sit on Saturday the House will meet in the forenoon.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: (Hon. H. P.

Colebatch—East—in reply) [8.28]: The only business I have for the House to-morrow is the formal completion of the third reading of the Employment Brokers' Act Amendment Bill, the Rabbit Act Amendment Bill, and the completion of the Appropriation Bill.

Hon. A. Sanderson: That is all.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I understand there is one short Bill which has to come from the Assembly, but I do not know much about it. I have no desire to sit on Saturday at all if it can be avoided. If we meet to-morrow at 3 o'clock, and it is found necessary to sit on the following day, we shall certainly sit at such time as is most convenient to hon. members.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.29 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 11th April, 1918.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.0 p.m., and read prayers.

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

QUESTION—WAR BOND PRIZE LOTTERY.

Mr. BROWN (without notice) asked the Attorney General: Has his attention been drawn to an advertisement in to-day's “West Australian” in connection with Boan Bros' £500 war bond prize lottery, and if so what action does he intend to take?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: I have not seen the advertisement, nor has my attention been drawn to it prior to this.

BILL—GRAIN ELEVATORS AGREEMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th April.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [3.5]: We in this Parliament have very little say in regard to the matter. The whole position is forced on us by the Federal Parliament. I have stated that in this Chamber before, and it has been denied. The Federal Parliament has passed legislation dealing with this question, in which it is provided that the money to be used for the construction of these works is to be under the control of the Federal Government, and that any silos erected must be of a design that meets the approval of the Federal Government, and the commission to be created. Therefore, it will be seen that we have very little say in the matter. Speaking in the House of Representatives on the 18th July, 1917, before the approval of the Wes-