

In consequence of the high freights prevailing, many of the steamers departed for the Argentine, but not before they had exploited the people of the North-West. That is the kind of thing the Government should prevent and it is possible to prevent it by employing State steamers on that trade. With regard to the question of conscription, the House will probably adjourn within a fortnight to assist in the referendum campaign. Personally, I intend to vote yes; but I do not propose to advise the people to do what I myself am not able to do. I am over military age and, on account of that disability, I have no doubt, if I went before the military authorities, I would be turned down. I shall, however, advise those in my constituency who are able and fit to enlist, provided, of course, that ample provision is made for them on their return. Our experience teaches us that there is always plenty of enthusiasm at a time like the present, and that people can always be induced to subscribe liberally to funds. In the electorate I represent over £2,000 has been subscribed towards the various patriotic funds, but the time will come when the war will be finished,—and I hope that time is not far distant, and that we shall be successful, as I have not the slightest doubt now—and all our attentions will have to be devoted towards caring for those who have returned maimed and wounded. Up to date I am sorry to say practically no provision has been made for returned soldiers. I know of a young man in my constituency who came back partly disabled, and who is getting a paltry 5s. a week. Is that an inducement for any young fellow to go to the front? Something should also be done in connection with the foreigners who are in the State. What do we find at the present time at Day Dawn? That it is practically full of Italians, who have no intention of fighting, and who are satisfied to remain there. I consider that machinery should be provided to conscript these subjects as well as the people of the State. On their return there should be ample provision for the men conscripted and also for their dependants. Those are my views on the referendum, although, as I have said, I shall vote yes. If any announcement is

made that capital and wealth, or income over and above a certain amount sufficient to live on, will be conscripted, I shall do my level best to induce the members of my constituency to vote yes.

On motion by the Minister for Works debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 11.24 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 28th September, 1916.*

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

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Trans-Continental Railway.—Correspondence between Federal and State Governments during the last twelve months. (Asked for by Hon. A. Sanderson.) 2, State Children Act, 1907.—Amendment of Regulations. 3, Health Act, 1911-15.—Plantagenet Road Board.—Adoption of Model By-laws. 4, Dog Act, 1903.—Regulations to come into force on 1st day of January, 1917.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by COLONIAL SECRETARY leave of absence for the remainder of the session granted to Hon. A. J. H. Saw (Honorary Minister) on account of military service.

On motion by Hon. W. KINGSMILL leave of absence granted for six sittings to Hon. A. G. Jenkins on the ground of ill-health.

On motion by Hon. W. KINGSMILL leave of absence granted for six sittings to Hon. C. Sommers on the ground of urgent private business.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Seventh Day—Amendment.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (North-East) [4.36]: It has been suggested by some who have already spoken that there is no need for a lengthy discussion upon the proposals of the Government. I do not agree with this view; in fact the criticism already offered by even those who support the Liberal Government is, I think, quite sufficient justification for those who have been opposed to that party to continue the discussion and the criticism. I do not think the Colonial Secretary really expects us to curtail our remarks. Right through his political career, even during the time of the war, he was the most vindictive critic of the Labour Government. If there were nothing in the actions of the Government to criticise, that hon. gentleman relied on his imagination, and on various occasions invented criticism, presumably with the object of relieving the monotony. He was one of the severest critics of the late Government, and having sat alongside of him for two years, I am convinced that he is quite prepared to accept all the criticism we can offer in turn, and that he is perfectly well able to put up a pretty fair reply to any such criticism. In the past I and my colleagues have been strong supporters of the Labour Government: now it is our duty to offer criticism and advice to the present Government. Since I last spoke in this Chamber the position has been entirely altered. We now have in control in another place a party which numbers 17 members out of 50. This in itself calls for some inquiry. It is a unique position, considering there has been no election, and considering further the attitude taken by that party and their contention that they have a mandate to form a Government, that the country has called

upon them to straighten out the finances and administer the affairs of the State. Many references have been made to the methods adopted by them in assuming office. Owing to the previous acts of administration by the Liberals, especially when Mr. Wilson was Premier for the first time, the unpopularity of the Liberal party was very apparent; in fact the opinion was general that not only the country, but even the party he was leading, had not entire confidence in that gentleman. So apparent was this that the more conservative section of the Liberal party broke away and formed a separate organisation, known as the Country party. For some time they carried out their intention, which was to criticise the Liberals and stir up the Liberal representatives of country districts, asserting that they had not done their duty and had not watched the interests of the primary producers. "Primary producer," according to the interpretation placed upon it by the Country party, means the farmer. Of course they say it includes all primary industries, but undoubtedly they have particularly watched the farming industry. We were under the impression that the Labour Government had given a fair deal to the Country party. I have never heard any acknowledgment of what has been done by the Labour Government in the interests of the farming industry. For some reasons or another the Country party seemed to think it was good policy to suppress any feelings of gratitude they may have entertained, and they confined themselves to violent criticism of the Labour Government, blaming them for every trifling offence by departmental officers, and insisting upon attempting even to sheet home to the Minister in charge the most trifling errors of tuppenny-ha'penny clerks in the Industries Assistance Board or some other department. We were not surprised at the attitude adopted by that party. What was done by the Labour Government was done, not with the object of gaining votes or securing the gratitude of the Country party, but purely with the object of meting out justice to that particular section of the community, irrespective of its political effect. The members of the Country party were not satisfied, and although I cannot say that as a party they took action, yet a conference was brought

about by one of the Country party engineers. The outcome was an agreement with the Liberals. I do not take violent exception to those two parties having formed an alliance. The point I take exception to is that, having agreed upon certain concessions as the basis of co-operation, and having finally decided among themselves what should be done, they quietly sent in the account for the State Treasury to pay. As I say, I take no exception at all to their co-operation; but I maintain in charging the State with the cost of this alliance, political corruption comes in; and to that I do take exception. In fact, when I hear Mr. Sanderson objecting to the State trading concerns, I am almost inclined to agree with him as regards the greatest of our State trading concerns, namely the railway system. If the State railways are to be used for political leverage, there is no doubt in life that Mr. Sanderson will be able to make out a pretty good case. However, it appears to me that even the Liberals and the Country party are not opposed to a State trading concern which had the effect of increasing the value of their properties and of assisting them in carrying on their business. It is only when, as may perhaps happen in some instances, a State enterprise does not directly benefit these gentlemen, or they cannot see the benefit of the enterprise as they can in connection with the railways, that they object. However, be that as it may, I still say the Government have to show justification for using a railway system which is not paying—and they know perfectly well that it is not paying, for, no matter how any loss may be charged, it must eventually be borne by the general taxpayer—to carry fertilisers at a loss for such men as Mr. Hedges of Bruce Rock, who cultivated last year about 3,000 acres; Mr. Parker, who, I believe, is cultivating about 6,000 acres; and Messrs. Monger & Burges, of York, who are wealthy farmers; and lastly, Mr. Mitchell of Northam. If the Colonial Secretary can tell me why the general taxpayer should suffer in order to carry fertilisers below cost for those men, I am prepared to listen to the hon. gentleman. Of course, that is not the way it is put to the people. In all cases of this description, it is the poor farmer that is used as a stalking horse. The Gov-

ernment, it is said, are doing this in the interests of the poor farmer. But, so far as the poor farmer is concerned, this reduction in fertiliser freights will not affect his position appreciably. To the poor farmer, using 7 or 8 tons of superphosphate per annum, the reduction will mean about £2 or £3. Knowing, as we do, the poor farmer in this State, we must know perfectly well that this amount is a mere trifle to him and cannot in any way affect his position or determine whether he shall be enabled to continue his occupation of farming. It is merely a sop, worth nothing to the poor farmer, though I admit it has the desired effect. In this respect the general farmer throughout the State has undoubtedly been misled. To those farmers who do not require the reduction, it means a gift of £20 or £30 a year. I dare say the greater proportion of the money is really given to such men: because we know there are many wealthy farmers in this State. It would be as logical to say "We are going to assist the mining industry by carrying cyanide at a loss over the State railways, of course with the object of assisting the poor prospector." The benefit of such a reduction, however, would go to the big mines such as the Ivanhoe and the Great Boulder. These are things not for the members of the Labour party to explain, but to be explained by those who made the agreement. I presume the reduction in fertiliser freights represents one of the Government's methods of squaring the finances. While I do not know how it will act in the matter of finance-squaring, it certainly has had another effect which, from the party point of view, is just as good, namely the effect of squaring voters. Mr. Carson told us that he is not a strong party man, and I hasten to state we never suggested he was. So far as that goes, I would not take any strong exception to a man on the score that he declared himself a strong party man, even in this Chamber. What we take exception to is the highly odoriferous action of the Country party—such action as will undoubtedly, in time, when the people recognise the force of it, meet with their strong disapproval. Next, in regard to the terminal charges. From what has been said one would think the terminal charges were something introduced by the Labour Government in

order to outwit the farmer. In point of fact, it is well known to everyone that the terminal charges, or at all events the old terminal charges, were introduced by the previous Liberal Government. They were taken off by a Labour Government, but subsequently reintroduced because there was no other possible means of obtaining revenue than that of increasing the charges for services rendered by the State to the people. Even during the last four years the railway system has been a losing proposition to a very serious extent. Therefore people must not run away with the idea that the farmer has been overcharged on the developmental railways. In fact, the returns show that those developmental railways, even allowing for the terminal charges of which so much has been made, are losing propositions. In 1912 the loss on developmental railways was £36,488, in 1913 £61,814, in 1914 £46,000 odd, and in 1915 £52,000 odd; or in four years a loss of £197,000 odd on those railways. The figures do not look as though, from a business point of view, the farmer has been overcharged for goods carried over the developmental railways. When considering these figures we have, of course, to bear in mind the ability of men to pay. At the same time, I maintain that some system will have to be evolved whereby we shall be able to separate the benevolent part from the business part of our railway system. I am aware, and I think it is agreed on every hand, that railways are built for the purpose not only of carrying commodities as a business proposition, but also for the purpose of developing industries and more particularly the farming industry. Still, there should be some system of accounting introduced to show which railways are paying and which railways are not paying, instead of the loss being debited to the railway system as a whole. I have spoken on this subject to responsible officers of the Railway Department, and they are of opinion that some system of this description should be introduced. The Commissioner should make out a schedule of rates under which the system would pay; and then, if it is the policy of the Government to carry goods under cost, that should be noted and a special grant in aid of the particular industry benefited should be paid to the Railway Department. By

this means the position of the railway system would be placed in such a light that it would be possible to see how much actually has been granted by the State to further any given industry. At the present time we do not know; we simply know that the railways are not paying; and the excuse is that they are to a certain extent run as a business proposition and to a certain extent as an assistance to various industries. Thus, we have no hope of finding out where reform should be instituted. In connection with this matter, to show that the Labour Government were not guilty of any favouritism as regards railway freights, I may remind hon. members that railway freights to the goldfields, including the Murchison, were increased so as to bear more hardly on the goldfields people than on any other section of the community. In common with other members of the Labour party, I received letters of protest from municipalities and roads boards on the goldfields—I think I had no less than six such letters. I should mention that the districts affected were represented entirely by members of the Labour party. Before replying to those letters we obtained from the Minister for Railways a statement on the subject, and instead of backing up the protests made, and encouraging the people affected to protest further against freights which consideration and examination proved to be just, we, to a man, supported the action of the Government. We accepted all the risk attaching to that attitude. At the same time we maintain that, no matter whether our constituents or any other people were affected, we would not be justified in using the railways of the State to carry goods at under cost or at rates not payable to the Department. Therefore we have never attempted to use the railways for the purpose of placating our own particular constituents. Now, just a word on the State trading concerns. Hon. members do not seem to be unanimous in regard to these much debated concerns. As regards the shipping venture, for instance, we find several pronounced Liberals supporting the State Steamship Service. More especially is this so in the case of Liberals who know the districts affected and who have not come under the influence of the more practised Liberals in the metropolitan and other

areas. They are men who consider the position entirely from the point of view of their particular districts, and we find that they, without exception, favour the State Steamship Service for the North-West. In fact, they look upon that service much as the farmers look upon developmental railways. They state that, although the service does not pay, it is absolutely necessary for the development of the North. I do not know that at this stage I need trouble to justify the State Steamship Service, but I wish to illustrate by another State trading concern why it is that such strong exception is taken to the Labour party's policy in this respect. I refer to the State brickworks. In order to show the quarter from which opposition comes, I will quote some evidence given in the Arbitration Court by an owner of a brickworks, on the 15th July, 1915. The case was one in which the Coastal Brickyard and Pottery Works Employees' Union of Western Australia instituted proceedings to have an award altered. Evidence was given by Henry James Coulthard, manager and part owner of the Cardup brickworks—

Dealing with the subject of the price of his own bricks he said that in 1911, at the time the industrial agreement was entered into, the price of steam-pressed bricks was perhaps lower than 42s. per thousand. The increased wages paid under the agreement caused the price to be raised, and it went to 50s. The price now was 45s. per thousand. The operation of the State brickworks had caused the drop. The price charged by the State enterprise for bricks was 38s. per thousand.

To show how this worked out, Mr. Somerville put a question to the witness, Mr. Coulthard—

What did the increase by the 1911 agreement over the old conditions amount to? Mr. Coulthard replied—

A difference of between 3s. and 4s. per thousand in the cost of production.

Mr. Somerville then asked—

The price of bricks, you tell us, went up 9s. per thousand, from 42s. to 50s., and the increase that you were called on to pay amounted to 3s. or 4s.?

The answer was "yes." Now, it will be seen that Mr. Coulthard admits that, although the increase granted by the

Arbitration Court was only an increase of 3s. to 4s., they took the opportunity of raising the price of bricks a matter of 8s. per thousand, the excuse given, of course, was the increased cost of production. Yet when they came into competition with the State brickworks, who were selling bricks at 36s. to 38s. per thousand, they reduced them by 5s. per thousand. As far as these men are concerned they are in opposition to State trading concerns. The State trading concern is a commercial proposition, but what I fail to understand is the opposition of those who are the users. You can imagine why the people, who are in opposition or in some way or other have to pay for the increased prices of these commodities, being opposed to State trading concerns. The increased price, as far as bricks are concerned, must have an effect on the general householder in Perth, and yet it appears to me that the position is so misrepresented that he has a grievance against the State for starting a State trading concern. I can understand opposition coming from the man who is in competition, but I cannot understand it coming from those who gain an advantage. Just a word in connection with the recent election. Somehow or other the Liberals managed to read the results to show that they had come back to favour. But the results of the recent elections do not bear out their contentions. In the case of the Central Province, Mr. Patrick is an old representative member of this Chamber, in addition to which he is representing both the Liberal and the Country party, and is a man highly qualified, to whom no one could take any exception. With regard to Mr. Hickey, although an out and out Labourite, holding the same financial views as the Liberals, with the disadvantage of restricted franchise, the unpopularity of Labour, he had a very nice victory over his opponent, despite all these disadvantages. In regard to the North-East Province we had two elections, one gained by considerably increased majority of two to one over what we had previously, and in the other, caused, unfortunately, by the death of the Hon. Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Cunningham, having a walk-over, it does not look as though we had gone back as far as the goldfields are concerned. Again, Coolgardie—I admit there was not a man prepared to get going

at Coolgardie as a direct supporter of Mr. Frank Wilson. You cannot insult a goldfields Liberal more than to say he is associated with Mr. Frank Wilson, unless you suggested that he was of the same political faith as Mr. Connolly. The goldfields man takes the greatest exception to being associated with either. So that as far as the goldfields and the Central province are concerned I think we can claim that we have not gone back in popularity. In connection with the Canning election, there are people who say that if you have been defeated, you should take it in a gentlemanly manner. To a certain extent I agree with that. I am always satisfied after a fair contest to allow the electors to decide the issue and keep quiet, but it does not always follow that a man who is prepared to accept a verdict in a fair contest that he is the man to sit down quietly when Hun methods are being employed. So far as this election is concerned, I maintain that we have just cause for complaint. Whether the Liberal party is responsible I do not know. The fact remains that there was never an election in this State where such despicable methods were used as in the Canning election. On that account we have the right to protest here, and we have the right also to say that, although the Liberals were successful on that occasion, we have the right to demand an explanation of those methods. I am pleased to say that very seldom in elections in this State are such methods resorted to, and in justice to the Liberal party I must say that the greatest exception we take is to the tactics of the All-British Association. I believe also there was an attempt—one of those lies by suggestion, not a straight out charge but one of those suggestions that are allowed to work among the people, and I must say it had the desired effect. We do not mind a straight out political contest. We do not mind how much you criticise the policy of the Government and the Administration, but I maintain that when we get down to tactics of charging the Labour candidate with disloyalty, trading with the Germans and being in sympathy with them, we are plumb-ing a very low level indeed. However, I am afraid all these tactics did influence the Canning election, and those responsible may

think that there was some shame attached to losing it, but I maintain that there was more shame attached to such a victory than to a defeat. So far as the roads and bridges are concerned, we admit that in the direction of roads and bridges the Liberals can beat us out of sight. Not having any definite policy and depending entirely upon that method, having made a study of it for centuries, we have not got a hope in the line of suggestions and promissory notes that will fall due after the war. As far as those tactics are concerned we do not mind, but we do object to the despicable tactics of the All-British Association. The Liberal party having come into power by securing the Country party's support—they did not buy it—they are now proceeding to put into operation the Labour party's policy. It must be almost amusing to those who know the real position. The Colonial Secretary takes credit for the policy he is going to adopt in connection with education. He made an elaborate statement in regard to the cost of education in this House. It is costing about £1 per head, a family of five, £5, and other elaborations. One would think that the present expenditure and the present system of education was something initiated solely by the Liberal Administration, but, as a matter of fact, this is entirely wrong. If you wish to know what the idea of the Liberal Administration was before Labour came into office in regard to education I may state that the best year as far as the Liberals were concerned in the matter of expenditure on education, amounted to £197,000, whereas the year ending June 1915 under the Labour Administration amounted to £309,000. The Liberal party's then policy was entirely different to the present one, which the hon. Mr. Colebatch proposes to continue, but he will find that in continuing this from the standpoint of the Liberals it is an entirely different thing to carrying it out on the old system. He will find now that he will not be able to sweat the employee and pay him a miserable £60 per annum. Under the system instituted by the Labour Government a minimum of £110 was fixed in the Education Department. Although he is not prepared to give the Labour Government any great credit for this, if he decides to go back on the policy instituted by them he will have to pay

that minimum through the department. That justifiable increase will have to be carried on and they will find the difference now in having to adopt a system under decent conditions and new methods. They will find that not only is the expenditure increased but that the system has been improved. We do not expect the Liberal party to give the Labour party any credit for it, but we are going to take it. Also the financiers will find that the cost of this department to keep it going at the pace set by the Labour Government will mean an additional £100,000 a year. They will have to find this amount unless they propose to go back to the old system, but according to the Colonial Secretary's statement they will have to keep to the Labour party's system in as far as expenditure is concerned. The same thing may be said in reference to hospitals and charities and to the increases to the lower paid men of the railway service and the Police Department. In straightening the finances I do not think for one moment they can institute the old Liberal idea of what is a fair thing. They will find that the Labour party once in power have set a pace they will have to keep up to, whereas under the old system of the Liberals they were able to rub along by sweating methods and working the men under rotten conditions. They were able to run them cheaper than when the Labour Government was in power, but now that a different system has been instituted they will have to carry them on on different lines. I am satisfied that the Colonial Secretary does not wish to go back to the old conditions. They are not good enough in these days, and the people will never submit to going back to those conditions again. Therefore in straightening the finances I do not think they can look to very great saving as far as this department is concerned. They cannot go back to the old standard, but will have to pay the rates under the new system. The only item of flattery I can discern in the speech of the Colonial Secretary is the fact that he has been sufficiently flattering to the Labour Government to adopt some of their proposals. With reference to the question of redistribution of seats, one would think from the statements which have appeared, that the Labour Government had been responsible

for the jerrymandering Bill which resulted in the wrecking of the Liberal Party. It is said to be perfectly well known that they refused to introduce a measure for its abolition; the exact opposite is the position. It is well known that a measure for a redistribution of seats was introduced. I do not know the lines upon which the new measure to be introduced by this Government has been drawn; but so far as the proposals contained in the Labour Government's Bill are concerned, no one could take any exception to them. This Chamber was responsible for wrecking that bill by introducing into it impossible amendments. If the new Bill is to be on the lines of those amendments which were moved in this House by the hon. the Colonial Secretary I can assure him that it will have a very lively time when it is before this Chamber. So far as we were concerned, the Labour party adopted a straightforward attitude in reference to this matter. We condemned the redistribution which had been previously made and gave Parliament an opportunity of placing a just measure on the statute book. I would like to point out the true position on the goldfields in connection with the question of redistribution. Taking the districts comprised within 10 State seats, the latest reports show the total number of electors enrolled to be 29,000, thus giving an average, or quota, of nearly 2,900. We have lately heard a good deal about Northam. Taking the latest roll, the one used at the recent election, it is found that the number of voters enrolled for Northam is 2,300. Therefore the quota on the goldfields, in spite of statements to the contrary, is far above that of Northam. When our opponents talk about goldfields pocket boroughs it would be well for them to remember this fact. It is quite true that in the out back portions of the goldfields there has certainly been in many places a decrease in population, but though the population has decreased, the necessity for representation has not. When it comes to places so far removed from the capital, a better case cannot be put up in favour of their representation in Parliament, except perhaps for those living in the out back portions of the North-western part of the State, than can be shown for outback goldfields. Those men resident

out back are of immense importance to the State, and are well worthy of representation, and they are entitled to have a representative in this House. All these points can be better argued when the bill is actually introduced. Referring to the taxation proposals of the Government, the Colonial Secretary has told us that all amusements are to be taxed. If this be so, I can tell him he has taken on a pretty tough proposition. There is one form of taxation, a little thing, which is quite easy, namely the taxing of those amusements patronised by the general community, such as picture shows and races. But the greater portion of the community take their amusement in other forms. The Colonial Secretary tells us that amusements of all kinds are to be taxed. Is it intended by the Government to tax the steamer tickets of persons going out of the State on a pleasure trip? That is just as much an amusement to the person who can afford it as is a holiday by people of the poorer class who can afford only to go to say, Cottesloe Beach or a picture show. Then again there is the amusement of the man who keeps a motor and uses it for pleasure only. The Government will realise that it will be a matter of the greatest difficulty to prove that such a man is not using his motor for business purposes. Undoubtedly, it will be found a much easier matter to tax the poorer elements in the community on their amusements than it will be to collect the tax on the amusements of the wealthier classes who are equally entitled to be taxed. The Colonial Secretary will find some difficulty in collecting that tax. The taxation proposals foreshadowed are exactly the class of taxation we might expect. When they come before us we will see what the ideas of the Government are in reference to the raising of money with which to straighten out the finances of the State. I intend to say something about the great question of all questions, that is the patriotic question. In this connection I wish to refer to the attitude of certain employers more especially on the goldfields. For many years past the Labour party has been agitating with the object of limiting the number of foreigners to be employed both in mines and in connection with any industry. As the hon. Mr. Dodd has already pointed out,

this House objected to such a proposition; and I will say that not only this House, but my experience on the goldfields tells me, that many employers also are opposed to it. I remember that some years ago the Kurrawang Firewood Company contracted a habit of inserting an advertisement in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* stating that no wood cutters were required at Kurrawang. Frequently, on the very day that that advertisement would appear in the paper, a truck load of Austrians or Italians were sent up and these men immediately got work on the line. I had occasion to visit that line some three or four years ago in connection with an industrial dispute, and I found that the position was that there were 250 odd Austrians employed, 130 were Italians and 90 Britishers. That was the proportion then employed; yet to-day we find that these very people who then had one consideration only, namely, to give preference to foreigners, are to-day intensely patriotic. Those who to-day are doing all the howling about patriotism were not patriotic enough during times of peace to give a Britisher even an equal chance with a foreigner for employment. It has also to be remembered that foreigners employed here send out a great proportion of the money they earn to Austria; and I suppose some of that money has since been used for the purpose of providing means of fighting against our own boys from Australia. At a time like this, when an attempt is being made to show that the Labour party in particular is not doing its duty in the matter of patriotism, it is well to point out to those who are now making so much noise that apparently their patriotism was in a state of suspended animation before the war. It has always been the policy of the Labour party to give preference to our own workers, and when we hear these people expressing opinions as to duty it is well to ask whether they did their duty in the past so far as the Empire is concerned. As one of the younger members of this House I am somewhat diffident about touching on the question of conscription; yet at a time like the present it is not possible for one to remain silent. Other members have given opinions on this point, and I may say that I have not arrived at a decision in the matter hurriedly. When I spoke at the Kalgoorlie

labour conference on the question of defence, I stated that it was a matter upon which I felt some diffidence in speaking, that although I was opposed to the principle of conscription I was not prepared to say that there were no conceivable circumstances under which conscription would not be justified. At that time I expressed my confidence in, and stated I was prepared to leave the decision to, the Federal Government. The executive has since considered the question and have decided that Australians shall decide this question for themselves. I wish to make it clear I am not going to compel any man to go when I do not go myself. I maintain that no man, unless he can say that he has done his whole duty in connection with this matter has a right to say to any man what his duty is. I am not connected with any anti-conscription league and have not spoken at any meetings, but so far as I am personally concerned I am opposed to conscription. I am aware that this is a question which does not concern this Chamber, but I have a right to express my opinion, and this in one of the correct places in which I should express the opinions I may hold on public questions. I do not intend to dodge the question which is now before the people; but I do hope that those who vote in the direction of saying that some other man shall go and fight, will first be quite certain that they have themselves done their duty. This is the most serious question upon which any man can be called to vote, and I repeat that before voting in favour of conscription every man should first feel satisfied that he has himself done his whole duty so far as the Empire is concerned. I am quite prepared to respect other people's opinions on this question. It is not a matter upon which there should be any quibbling; and I hope that freedom of opportunity to express opinions will be given whether those opinions be for or against conscription. With regard to the actions of those who have taken a certain course in opposing the free expression of opinion, although I have nothing whatever to do with it, I hold that it is a question of sufficient importance to be placed before the people of Australia fully and fearlessly. Unless this be done, in time to come it may be said that although

a referendum was taken an attempt was made to bludgeon into deciding the people in one direction. I trust fair methods will be adopted by both sides. I have no sympathy with those who have adopted bludgeoning methods, as I hold that every man has a perfect right to express his own opinion, and I think that we are likely to get a better expression of the true feeling of the people on this question by the adoption of free speech. I have not yet congratulated the Colonial Secretary upon his attaining office. I must say that I also have formed a high opinion of Mr. Colebatch; and I would have been disappointed, and more than surprised, if any other member of the Liberal party had been chosen for the position of Colonial Secretary. Mr. Colebatch had secured such a status and such a reputation that his selection for the leadership of this House was a foregone conclusion. I think, further, that he has many of the qualifications required, not only for carrying out the duties of the office, but for explaining the rather peculiar policy of the party the hon. gentleman represents here. There is no one in the Liberal party so capable as Mr. Colebatch is of explaining the intricacies of Liberal policy. Undoubtedly, Mr. Colebatch also possesses another qualification, which I am told is essential to a great statesman. Undoubtedly, he possesses imagination, and in a marked degree. It is said that no statesman can be truly great if he lacks imagination. We have had instances of this. Indeed, were imagination the sole qualification of a statesman, then, in my opinion, no man in Australasian politics could rank with the Colonial Secretary. I expect great things from him, and I am sure he will accept my congratulations in the spirit in which they are offered; that is to say, he can interpret that spirit. I am not quite clear as to how members stand in regard to the debate on the Address-in-reply. I have been speaking to the amendment moved by the Colonial Secretary.

The PRESIDENT: The question before the House is the amendment, that the words proposed to be added, be added.

Hon. E. ROSE (South-West) [5.33]: As a newly elected member for the South-Western Province, in succession to the Hon. E. McLarty, I recognise that I have a hard

row to hoe. Mr. McLarty was a representative of the South-West Province for some 22 years, and represented it ably and well. A busy man, and a man of great capabilities, Mr. McLarty possessed the entire confidence of his district, as is shown by the fact that he was almost invariably returned unopposed. Unfortunately, his health failed him latterly, and he was thereby debarred from engaging in an election contest. I am sure the whole House sympathises with Mr. McLarty, and that every member wishes him a speedy restoration to complete health, so that he may for many years enjoy his hard-earned leisure. It seems to me that a member who has represented a province or an electorate for so long a period as in Mr. McLarty's case, should receive some recognition of his services from the Government. Although it may be said that members of Parliament are remunerated for their services, the fact remains that every little centre expects donations to one cause or another and that thus the Parliamentary allowance is absorbed. I suggest that any member who has sat in Parliament for 20 years should be allowed to retain his free pass over the railways. The free pass might be considered a sort of medal commemorating his services. It is not much to ask; and I hope hon. members will not consider that I, a new member, am in too much of a hurry to make requests. I desire to congratulate the Colonial Secretary on his attainment of the leadership of the House. In my opinion, the country may well be congratulated on the personnel of the Government, in whose hands the interests of Western Australia are perfectly safe. The Ministry comprise some of the ablest business men to be found in the State. No doubt Ministers have before them a difficult task in straightening out the tangle into which public affairs have got during the past few years. The subject of finance has been touched on by so many members that I need hardly dwell on it. I am pleased to know that the Government are assisting the agriculturist, and the primary producer generally. I do not agree with hon. members who say that money given, or lent, to the agriculturist is money wasted. The last speaker referred to the fertiliser reduction as representing a gift to the large land owners; but it must be borne in mind

that every ton of fertiliser going into the country, even though at a small loss to the Railway Department, means a tenfold return in back freight. Every ton of fertiliser means employment, and also increased value of our lands. Indeed, I think the railways might assist more in this direction. I am pleased, also, to learn the steps which have been taken by the Government with regard to lime deposits in the South-West. Four years ago a promise was obtained from the then Minister for Lands—I think it was Mr. Bath, replying to a deputation at Harvey—that if the Government found themselves unable to construct a line of railway to the lime deposits at Lake Clifton, private people would be permitted to build the line, although it was not the policy of the Government to give such permission. The lime, I should mention, was to be sold to farmers at prices agreed on with the Government. All this is four years ago. We know that lime is required for agricultural purposes, that our lands are starving for lime; and yet the promise remains unfulfilled. With fertiliser, lime, and irrigation the South-West will go a long way towards overcoming the trouble which has been experienced in dairy farming; and the dairying industry is one to be encouraged, in view of the many thousand pounds' worth of dairy produce annually imported. The South-West is not asking for monetary assistance, such as the farmers of the Eastern districts have been compelled to obtain from the Agricultural Bank and from the Industries Assistance Board. I am certain the Government would act wisely in establishing an agricultural college in the South-West, so that boys and young men may be instructed in the principles of agriculture, fruit-growing, dairying, and so forth. I consider that everything possible should be done to open up the great South-West of this State; but I am not so narrow-minded as to think that only one part of this country should be developed. I consider that every part of the State should have done for it what is necessary in this respect, so long as it does not run away with too much public money. A subject which has been frequently mentioned during this debate is education. I am indeed pleased that the Government intend to proceed with higher education. Many of us who

were brought up in the back country years ago, sadly feel the want of the education which is now offered to the rising generation. A good deal has been said with regard to the late Government. The previous speaker said that the present Government were following in the footsteps of their predecessors as regards education. If that is so, I think it is a very good thing, although it does not seem to me as if present Ministers were altogether copying those who have just left office. If that were so, we should find the present Government going in more largely for socialistic enterprises. As regards those socialistic enterprises, I consider that if the money spent on them—spent on tramways and power houses and such things—had been devoted to the development of the agricultural industry, Western Australia would be in a much better position to-day. Very few indeed of the State enterprises are at present paying interest and sinking fund. With regard to irrigation in agricultural areas, schemes were initiated and numerous surveys were made in 1911; but up to the present only one scheme has been carried out. Had the other schemes been proceeded with, the State would have been in a position to supply the whole of the agricultural and dairy products required by the people of Western Australia. I am strongly of opinion that the various ports should be improved, so long as money is available for the purpose. I believe in giving every chance to the ports of Bunbury, Geraldton, Albany, and so on; so that, when the war is over and much shipping will be done, several ports of shipment will be available for our wheat, coal, timber, tin, fruit, and other products. I am not so parochial as to think that there is only one port in Western Australia, though some hon. members appear to think so. I hold that all our natural ports should be opened up, to assist the primary producer to get his produce to market at the cheapest rate. Bunbury is a port which will before long hold a leading position in Australasia. I heard one hon. gentleman say that expenditure on harbour improvement at Bunbury and other out ports ought to be stopped, and the whole of the money expended in the development of the Fremantle harbour. I thought centralisation had died out, but evidently there is one hon.

member who still favours the centralising of all our export trade at one port. Bunbury is, of course, the natural port for the produce of hundreds of miles of the surrounding country. Two hundred thousand bags of wheat are lying there now awaiting export, and no doubt a few years will see a large increase in the export of wheat from that port. Again, much shipping will be required for coal and timber. Bunbury as a port justifies the demand that it should be rendered fit to accommodate the largest steamers coming out to Australia. At present boats drawing over 23ft. have to be sent from Bunbury to Fremantle to top up. But this is a source of expense not only to the owners of the boats, but to the users of the ships. If we had three or four deep water berths ready after the war is over, when all the timber is required and the bunkering of coal is being done, it will be of great assistance to the South-West and to Western Australia generally. With regard to the Collie coal, we have had a Royal Commission sitting, but I do not know when we are going to have the report from these men. I do think, however, the Government should assist the Collie coal industry by using that coal not only on the railways in the South-West but by seeing that the State steamers use it more often than in the past. Besides that, we are importing coal to Bunbury. We often hear the expression "To carry coals to Newcastle," but they are bringing at the present time Newcastle coal to Bunbury to use on the railways. Across from Bunbury to the Collie coalfields is one of the steepest grades in Western Australia where Collie coal is only used. There is no reason why we should not run our railways with Collie coal; so far as the sparks are concerned I have never had a fire from sparks. Mr. Paterson of Pinjarra is of the same opinion as myself, that so long as he has got breaks ploughed there is practically no danger from fire, and he also says he has not experienced any losses from fires at all. I maintain that if the Government insisted upon having proper breaks ploughed there would be very little danger of fires from Collie coal, and the effect would be to assist to develop the Collie coalfields. I do hope that the Government will do something to insist upon farmers having their breaks

ploughed. With regard to the North-West Province, which Mr. Miles is representing, the freezing works at Wyndham should have been erected years ago. I regret, however, to see that they are costing so much money, something like £450,000. It will be years and years before they get the principal and interest on the outlay on these freezing works. I am greatly in favour of erecting freezing or canning works, but to go to the expense that they are going to at Wyndham is too much for a country like this. I think that the position would have been met by erecting works costing not more than £200,000 as planned by the Liberal Government in 1911. This would be of great assistance to the North-West. The only way to cheapen meat is by having freezing works erected right throughout the North. We should have them in Geraldton right up to the north coast to Wyndham, so that we could export our surplus meat or supply the local markets. It seems to me ridiculous that with the amount of stock we have in the North we should have to pay what we do at the present time for beef and mutton. I maintain that if the Government carried out the intention of the previous Government we should never have to pay the price for meat we are doing now. Another matter which has been touched on is in connection with the bonus for the destruction of dingoes. This is a question that interests so many of the pastoralists that we should certainly discuss the matter in this House, in this Chamber, and in another place. These pests have been the cause of the loss in the South-West of thousands and thousands of sheep, and if it were not for the dingoes we would have had thousands more sheep there than we have at the present time, with the result that it would have reduced the price of meat to-day. As it is a number of pastoralists have had to give up grazing on account of the pest. While on this point I would like to suggest to the Colonial Secretary that the tax on tame dogs might be increased. We have licenses for dogs but the tax on a number of them could with advantage be doubled or trebled. We have endeavoured as a roads board to get Ministers to amend the Act to empower the chairman of the board to destroy unlicensed dogs in his district, but we have failed and I do hope the present Gov-

ernment will take that into consideration and devise some means by which the owners of tame dogs pay a double tax and give the secretary of the roads board the authority to destroy unlicensed dogs. The present Act does not permit of the destruction of dogs until after a report has been forwarded to the police. It is impossible to adopt this course effectively in the remoter districts, and I do think we should do something to assist pastoralists in the way of having these dogs destroyed, or compel the owners to pay a double license. The man who is going to keep dogs for pleasure should pay a license of four or five pounds per year. I certainly would do all I could to assist the pastoralists in having this pest done away with. I have heard a lot about the Esperance railway and the cause of its being delayed for the time being. I think the Government is perfectly justified in stopping the work there owing to their not having the rails to go on with, and I think them right in appointing a Commission. The Liberal Government is in the habit of dealing with conscientious men and they have no doubt in their minds, as some people seem to think, that the personnel of that Commission is biased. I do not think that hon. members are accustomed to dealing with honest men, and they trust them, apart from any personal interests, to carry out their duties in a straightforward manner. With regard to Mr. Dempster, he is a man who will give a fair and unbiassed opinion. I consider that this Commission will do a lot of good. With regard to the Agricultural Commission, my idea is that we should have a permanent Commission with the Minister for Agriculture as chairman, an agricultural member from the South-West, one member from the wheat area, a representative of the fruit industry, and one representing the pastoralists. It would go a long way towards assisting the Minister for Agriculture in connection with a lot of the detailed problems he is called upon to deal with. This Commission need not be a paid commission. We can have an honorary commission, the same as we have at the present time on the Agricultural Board. This would cost the country nothing, and I think we could get good men for such a commission who would be only too pleased and willing to give up

their time to assist the Minister for Agriculture in many of the important matters which he has to deal with. I agree with the member for the North-West Province that the pastoral lands in the North should be classified. There is a tremendous lot of country there at the present time lying idle that if there were better facilities for getting stock to market would be taken up. The North-West should be carrying hundreds of thousands of sheep more than at the present time. I do not quite agree that it will carry millions of sheep more, but there is certainly room for hundreds of thousands more sheep, and instead of the country lying idle, as it is, it would be bringing in revenue to the country if it were being properly utilised. There is a tremendous area of land requiring to be opened up, and I think before long this question of classification should receive serious consideration. Another matter which I would like to bring forward is that of the poison plant in the Eastern District. It is not in my Province, but I am looking at the question from the point of view of the whole of Western Australia. I think the Government should devise some means of eradicating the poison in the Eastern District, because we have thousands of acres there infested with York Road and Box poison. If we could get some chemical to destroy the plant it would assist us very greatly. If this could be done at a cost of a thousand or two a year, it would be a very great benefit to the whole of Western Australia. At the present time these lands carry no sheep owing to the poison plant. In the South-West, which I am representing, we have the timber areas and the tinfields that require a lot of attention. The regulations regarding the timber industry there have been in force for years and are a great mistake. We have timber cut down and lying there, not only destroying the present timber but logs which are cut are also wasted. I certainly think we should insist upon these logs being cut up. There has been a lot said about the amusement tax the Government intend bringing in. I notice by this morning's papers that we are too late again. This seems to be a common thing. I notice that the Commonwealth Government is bringing in the same tax that we are arranging to put into operation in Western Australia and

thereby robbing us of one of the means of raising revenue. There are a number of other matters I could speak on, but I do not desire to take up the time of the House as a new member. I would, however, like to say a few words regarding the question of conscription. I am an out and out conscriptionist. I am very sorry it was not brought in at the beginning of the war. We who have our sons and brothers at the war find that a number of them have hardly had a rest, and it is only right that we should insist upon those who are able to go to do their share in the fight. There are thousands who have gone and made a name for Australia, but I do think that the people who are here, more particularly in the city, should be compelled to go and assist in this great battle that is being fought at the present time.

#### MESSAGE—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT ACT CONTINUATION.

Message received from the Legislative Assembly acquainting the Council that it had passed the following resolution:—"That the Licensing Act Amendment Act, 1914, shall continue in operation for a further period of 12 calendar months from the 30th day of September, 1916, that is to say, until the 30th day of September, 1917."

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, a message was returned to the Assembly acquainting them that the Council had already passed a similar resolution.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Debate continued.*

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [6.3]: Before taking up the even tenor of my way and addressing the few remarks I have to offer on the Address-in-reply, I wish to present to you, Mr. President, my congratulations on being again in your place. I also desire to extend congratulations to the new members of this Chamber. One cannot but be struck by the fact that in this House the harvester Death has made considerable inroads. Since this session began we have suffered the loss of another of our members:

I refer to the late Hon. F. Connor. I had not known the late member for a long time but I learned to admire and respect him, and I will remember his kindness to me on my entering this Chamber as long as I live. I desire also Mr. President, to personally congratulate the hon. Mr. Colebatch on attaining to the position towards which he has worked so long and strenuously in this House. I congratulate him in a personal sense. He now occupies a position to which any man might aspire, and a position which it is an honour to any man to fill. I think it is the second highest honour that could be conferred on a member of Parliament. I am sure the leader of the House will not be in any way offended if, now that I am in opposition, I, as a member of this House, proceed along similar lines to those which he himself adopted on the floor of this House previously. It may be necessary, I think it is, to make a brief reference to the facts preceding the hon. member's elevation into his present office. The hon. Mr. Sanderson put the position in a nutshell last evening when he said that the Liberals had come in on the backs of the Country party. I cannot be accused of inconsistency in so far as the Country party is concerned. Since the day the first member of that party entered the West Australian Parliament I have expressed my opinion. I then characterised the Country party as a new joint in the tail of the Liberals. The hon. Mr. Sanderson, dealing with this party last night, referred to the Country party as having become the backbone of the Liberal party. That is how I regard that party, as the backbone of the Liberals without which the Liberal party could not stand up. When, later on, other members of the party entered this House I characterised the Country party as political bushrangers; and if the manner in which they persistently stick up the Liberal party is not typical of bushranging methods in politics, I do not know what is. It has been stated by members in another place, and also by the ex-Premier, that the concessions made by the Liberals to the Country party will cost the State £50,000 a year. Speaking in another place last evening a gentleman for whom I have the highest admiration, a member of the Country party, and

the ex-leader—I refer to Mr. James Gardiner—likened the attitude of the Country party to the attitude of the Labour party in 1901-2, away back in the days of the James Government. The Hon. Mr. Kingsmill was a member of that Government.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Of the Leake Government.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, a member of the Leake Government. And I think I am correct in saying that there was no monetary assistance given by the Leake Government to the Labour members, no reduction of railway rates, no concessions of any kind for political support. I give the Leake Government credit for having been the first Government in Western Australia to grant the workers of this State a just measure of conciliation and arbitration and for the passing of the Workmen's Compensation Act.

Member: Was not that passed before the Leake Government?

Hon. J. CORNELL: It was given to the workers by the Leake Government and it embraced all the workers in the community. One may go through the records for many years during which the Labour party supported the Government, and one will not find a single instance to show that any concession was given to Labour members for services rendered except by way of legislation which made for the betterment of the industrial conditions of the workers. Coming to later history, and referring to the recent election at which it was decided by the Labour party to run the late Premier against Mr. Robinson, however much Mr. Robinson may have transgressed the recognised rules of political warfare he can be forgiven to some extent, inasmuch as he stood to lose much personally by the result of the election. And I will give Mr. Robinson this credit, that his attitude throughout the campaign compared more than favourably, although he had the most to lose, with the attitude of some of his colleagues. It is with extreme regret that I refer to this matter. When I entered this Chamber I said that so long as I remained a member, I would say what I had to say on the floor of the House. I have kept to that undertaking. During no political campaign have I ever said one word against a political opponent that was in-

tended or calculated in any way to disparage him in the eyes of the country or of his fellow citizens. During that campaign I heard the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, in dealing with the power house contract, endeavour to convey, and he did convey, the impression that the Scaddan Government, in letting the contract for the power house to Merz and McLellan, did so with the sole intention of trading with a German firm.

The Colonial Secretary: I never made any such suggestion.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I heard you say it, on more than one occasion. You never once referred to Merz and McLellan unless you were asked by direct question; you referred always to "Carl Merz, that fine old Anglo-Saxon name." Yet it is on record and is an undisputed fact that Carl Merz is not a German. Although his British ancestry may not go so far back as that of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, his family has been for at least three generations British born. I am not defending Merz, but am endeavouring to show that the Colonial Secretary had one object in view when he made the statements he did, and that was to twist a wrong interpretation into this contract business during a strenuous time. His colleague, Mr. George, went further, and has not publicly contradicted the statements attributed to him. As a member of Parliament I feel that I am demeaned in being compelled to associate with him after he has referred to me as a German. He said, "those Trades Hall Germans." There are as true and loyal subjects amongst the workers at the Trades Hall as the Hon. the Minister for Works himself. I suppose I should in a sense forgive Mr. George because he is the type of man who lived about the time of John Bunyan. We know that at certain periods there is a reversion to a type. I desire now to refer briefly to what the Government proposes to do with the trading concerns. The Government have told us they will do the best possible, but they do not say whom it is they will do the best possible for. The Premier has stated that the functions of a Government are to govern, not to trade. Without going over the whole of the ground again, in my opinion private enterprise, as against the united energies of the State, has had its trial in this State; and what is the

result? The result to-day is that in 90 per cent. of the instances in which the nation has been called upon to supply the wherewithal to carry on this war, the State has had to step in. As for the remaining percentage, the private employer who is prepared to do that will murder men in his endeavour to secure profits.

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

Hon. J. CORNELL: Before tea I was referring to the question of State trading concerns and the policy of the present Government as to their continuance. In making reference to those concerns I said that in the gigantic struggle in which practically the whole of the civilised world is to-day engaged the question of private enterprise versus collectivism had been subjected to a severe test. It is written that private enterprise in coping with the calls which the struggle has made upon the nations concerned has proved useless or utterly inadequate. As a result 90 per cent. of the material used by the whole of the belligerents is produced by the collective effort of the various nations. I also referred to the fact that the remaining 10 per cent. of the material was being produced by private enterprise. I may have been a little beyond the mark in my observation, just before tea, with regard to this 10 per cent. I spoke of the 10 per cent. as committing murder. But announcements in the Press have proved conclusively, even to the most biassed man, that in connection with the 10 per cent. left to private enterprise to produce, even the last vestige of respectability has departed from some people. During a struggle involving the future well-being of mankind we find some individuals stooping so low as to bribe army inspectors for the plain purpose of lining their own pockets. Mr. Sanderson, who is not at all times taken seriously by some members of this Chamber, but whom I can assure that I always listen to him with interest, made a remark last night—and what he said will come true—to the effect that this world war is going to make for the elimination of things that are bad, and is going to be, after the final settlement, a factor for good. No less a personage than the British Secretary of War said recently

that Great Britain itself would never revert to the conditions which existed before the outbreak of war. I am as sure as that I stand here to-night, that in view of the results achieved by private enterprise in the hour of direst necessity, in view of those results as compared with what has been achieved by collective patriotic effort, private enterprise pales into utter insignificance both in our eyes and in the eyes of future generations. It is recognised that the only effort that could be made is the united effort of a united people with one common object. The people of the British Empire will never revert to the system of leaving great enterprises in the hands of a few monopolists. I say advisedly to the present Government, "Whatever can be done by an individual can be done by a State, and should be done by a State, and will be done by a State." I agree that the State trading concerns have not been all that might be desired, but I have had the courage to come out into the open and say to those with whom I am now associated, with whom I have worked for years, and with whom I shall probably continue for years to work, that unless they are prepared to earn 10s. per day in a State trading concern they cannot expect to get 10s. per day out of that concern. I did not say that in Parliament—I said it at a Labour congress. In the same speech I said there were faults on the other side, and that one of the faults of the management of State trading concerns was that the Government were endeavouring to run a business enterprise on the same lines as a titles office. It must be recognised that the Government when conducting State trading concerns must have the power to dismiss, and to dismiss even the highest. Otherwise no State trading concern will ever be conducted with business acumen. However, I have not yet lost faith in the great possibilities of State trading concerns for the collective community. One point in the speech delivered by the leader of the House which concerned me closely was a reference to workers' homes. It has been said that the present Government propose to amend Part III. of the Act, which part provides for perpetual leasehold. I myself am the possessor of a worker's home under Part III. of the Act. The comparisons drawn by the

leader of the House and other hon. members between the working of the leasehold principle on the one hand and the working of the freehold principle on the other hand are not, in my opinion, fair comparisons. If a man desires to obtain a worker's home under Part IV. of the Act, which deals with the freehold principle, it means a total expenditure of £600, and the man must practically find £300 and the block of land upon which to build the house. That is to say, he has to find half the principal straight away. How many working men are there in this community to-day with £300 available? I never had that amount at one time in my life. But the working man with an income of less than £400 per annum can obtain a house under the leasehold system for a first payment of £5 6s. When he has paid that amount, his house is free from the bailiff, and sacred against seizure for debt. The locality in which I live to-day, West Subiaco, where the leasehold system is widely prevalent, I venture to say can, taken as a whole, compare more than favourably with any other residential locality in the State as regards improvements effected and as regards the calibre of the householders. I have emphatically represented to the Workers' Homes Board that the leasehold system as administered to-day is unjust, in as much as it does not, owing to its incidence and application, encourage lessees to work under it, for this reason: that under the agreement with the Board—assuming that I live to be as old as Methuselah and succeed in paying off my house—I am not then free to dispose of the house to any individual who is prepared to take up the lease in perpetuity. As far back as 1894, in New South Wales Sir James Carruthers passed an Act for closer settlement, which represented a similar scheme to our workers' homes; and the position in New South Wales to-day is that a man can sell to any buyer he can find so long as the buyer is prepared to take up the seller's obligations. Suppose a buyer came along to me to-night and said, "Cornell, I will give you £650; hand over your title, and clear out," I could not accept the offer; for I must surrender to the Board. When a man has paid for his house it should become his own, and he should have the right

to dispose of it to whom he pleases so long as the purchaser is prepared to take over the lease in perpetuity. I may be pardoned if I refer to that hardy annual known as the Esperance railway. When entering this Chamber I had hoped that one day I might develop into a representative of the Country party, or shall I say, a representative of a farming community. With the advent of the present Government, however, my hopes have been shattered. I am not in a position now to be inveigled into the devious ways of those who represent the farmers. I congratulate the Hon. Mr. Kingsmill, particularly for the manner in which he dealt with the question of the Esperance Railway, and I desire to say this publicly, as I have already said it publicly, that it did not surprise me when I read in the *West Australian* that Mr. Frank Wilson was going to stop the line, I expressed the opinion, come what may, that whenever the Wilson Government came in to power they would stop the construction of the Esperance Railway on the merest subterfuge. There is no getting away from the fact that the pronouncements and reasons given for stopping the line, up to quite recently, were set out in Mr. Mann's report—the presence of salt within the soil. The most recent utterance that it was stopped for want of material is a new discovery. As Mr. Kingsmill put it last evening, if it were stopped for the want of material, why a board or Royal Commission to inquire into the quality of the land. There is the answer, and I am surprised in a sense that some other hon. members of this Chamber have not entered stronger protests or been more consistent on this question. On a subject on which Mr. Mann was eminently qualified to speak, and in connection with which he put in six or nine months of travelling—the question of whisky, when he framed regulations in an endeavour to get a whisky that would not burn the inside out of a man, this House, after a speech by Mr. Jenkins covering 33 pages of *Hansard*, unanimously decided by thirteen votes to four that Mr. Mann knew nothing about whisky and disallowed his regulations. Still, on the question of Esperance soil, it is stated that Mr. Mann knows all about it. It is said that Mr. Mann's report was hidden or not made

prominent. Now if there was ever a railway put through any Parliament in the world that had close scrutiny, it was the Esperance railway. I saw in my first session in this Chamber after the closing hour, four railway Bills go through in four minutes. In the case of the Esperance Railway it was introduced on about five occasions into this House before the Bill was carried. It is all moonshine to say that it was not closely analysed. What concerns me most in the action of the Government in stopping the Esperance line, is not the effect that it is going to have on the immediate district of Esperance. Mr. Sutton, the Government expert in agriculture, who, by the way, would be welcomed back in New South Wales to-morrow—they are sorry they ever lost him—would not have anything to do with Mr. Mann's report. If the percentage of salt in the Esperance soil is going to be detrimental from the point of view of wheat growing, Mr. Sutton said that the same would apply to the whole of the wheat belt of Western Australia. By the same process of reasoning the Government by its action in stopping this line have damned the Esperance district, and damned the State as well, because if there is one particular part of Western Australia that has commanded public attention throughout the Eastern States for twenty years it is the Esperance District, and recently in my sojourn in New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria, in the case of many farmers I met, the only knowledge they had of Western Australia was what they had gleaned from the Eastern newspapers on the discussion of the Esperance land and the Esperance Railway. To show how far this Government were prepared to go, in my capacity as secretary of the Australian Labour Federation, when the line was stopped suddenly, I telephoned the Premier and asked him to receive a deputation, whereby ways and means could be considered of keeping the workmen employed there for a fortnight until the boat arrived in order to obtain means of sustenance, and he declined to receive the deputation. So much for the Esperance Railway. I just want to briefly refer to the redistribution of seats outlined by the leader of the House. I think Mr. Sanderson has stated the question fairly. Whether a Commission first of all

fixes the quota or not this House must deal with it. Parliament itself must deal with it. I think the first point, subsequent to the appointment of the Commission should be on the lines laid down in the late Scaddan Government's Bill. Let Parliament decide the quota, and on that basis the quota shall be fixed, and when that is done you do not want any Commission. The electoral officers can advise the State without the aid of any Commission. I will support Mr. Sanderson even on the question of proportional representation. The first basis you must start from, even if it is impossible to get it in this House, but in another place, is the basis of one vote one value, and the best possible manner of obtaining expression of that is laid down in the proportional system. If you depart from the basis of one vote one value, I think there are only three points that come into consideration why it should be reduced: one is distance from the capital, the other is scarcity of population, and the third, the size of the electorate. I sincerely trust that whatever Bill the Government may introduce on the question of redistribution that it will be on those lines, and that we will not have the anomaly that exists to-day of an electorate like Northam with a quota of 2,400, distant about 60 miles from the capital, as against Brownhill-Ivanhoe, Boulder, and Kalgoorlie with a quota of 5,000, distant 386 miles from the seat of Government. I am prepared to support a Bill on these lines. I recognise that there must be a redistribution, and I will approach it with an open mind. I say that when the party with which I am associated do not command a majority of the electors in the country, they have no right to sit on the Treasury bench. I have said it repeatedly outside, that the basis of representation should be sacred in the eyes of all parliamentarians, and representation as just as possible in the interests of politics. On the question of unification I agree with Mr. Sanderson again. Recently, when in the Eastern States, I came into contact with some of the Queensland and West Australian Senators, and they were of the same opinion as myself, that while the Federal Parliament is constituted as it is these two States—destined to be the greatest States in the Commonwealth—must take a back seat. It is beyond amplification that

the policy in the two largest States is working in that direction to-day. I think it is almost impossible that good government can be administered in Western Australia, owing to the vast area which we cover, as the State is constituted to-day. I also expressed this opinion at the Kalgoorlie conference, and my vote to-morrow would go in the direction of dividing Western Australia into three States. The day is fast approaching when I can see nothing else for it but unification. On the question of taxation alone, what is left for the State to tax? It is said that the Federal Parliament is usurping this. Any one who has read the thirty-nine Articles of the Constitution knows the Federal Parliament is giving effect to the powers handed over to it by the State. We even find on reading this morning's paper that the only new direction in which the State Government is going to depart in the way of fresh taxation, has been taken over by the Commonwealth. They have the functions and the power, and they will do it. That is explained to-day in the dual work that is carried on by the State and Federal departments. If some economy were effected in this direction I say that the consequent benefit to the State would be of immense value and make for less taxation. The inevitable trend of the Federal Government is in the direction of unification, and however much hon. members may dislike it they will have to face it in the future. After many years in public life in Western Australia, in a humble capacity, and in a high capacity, I think from my experience of the Commonwealth Parliament that Western Australia is in greater danger in the hands of its own representatives than at the hands of representatives in the Federal Parliament.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: You are speaking for your own party now.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am not speaking for my own party, I am speaking for Australia. It is singular that three persons of three such different types as Sir William Irvine, Mr. Sanderson and myself should agree on this question. It is evidently a case of great minds thinking alike. It would be only right for me this evening to make some reference to the mining industry. I notice that the Minister for Mines proposes calling a conference on this industry. I

thought that the Unionists were the only people who went in for conferences in order to dodge strikes. Evidently, the Minister for Mines is prepared to do likewise in order to shirk his responsibilities. This conference, it seems to me, will be largely composed of what the hon. Mr. Collier has said the prospectors and leaseholders' conference was composed, publicans. If the Government is genuinely desirous of doing something for the mining industry, one direction in which assistance is most necessary is in exploratory work. If it be the desire of the Government to assist the mining industry, I would recommend the appointment of a Commission, and that we should get appointed to that commission men who know something about the subject. I know two men than whom there are none better fitted in the State to act as commissioners—even though the Minister for Mines himself were chairman—than the late Minister for Mines (Mr. Collier) and Mr. McLeod, manager for Bewick, Moreing & Co. Of the mining men in Western Australia associated with the Chamber of Mines commend me to Mr. McLeod, who is a brainy man and is one of the best and most capable managers on the block. We would then have a commission representative of the wage earners and also the interests of the wage payers. To call a conference is only playing with this question. I would suggest also that Mr. Montgomery (State Mining Engineer) be appointed. If there be one industry which has done much for Western Australia and which will continue to do much in the future for the State, it is the mining industry. And yet we propose to call a conference! Another matter of importance to the mining community is the introduction of amended regulations under which the miners work underground. Since 1906 there has only been one slight amendment of the Mines Regulation Act, provision for the appointment of check inspectors. Beyond that there has not been a single amendment of the laws under which the miner earns his daily bread, despite the fact that in the meantime the mines have gone down from a depth of 1,200 feet to 3,500 feet. I claim the support on this question of Mr. Baxter, who is an old miner. I also claim the

support of the new member, Mr. Greig, who was a familiar figure on the Boulder 15 years ago; and I take this opportunity now of congratulating him on his election to this House. Although I may at times offer some drastic remarks in regard to farmers, hon. members will I think do me this credit that whenever the matter under discussion has been an Industries Assistance Bill or any matter brought forward in the farmer's interests, I have never objected or said a hard word against it. Times out of number in this House endeavours have been made to give the working miners of the State decent regulations governing their employment. The Hon. the Colonial Secretary has referred to what he terms the inconsistency of the Labour party. I desire now to refer to an instance of inconsistency on the part of the Colonial Secretary. We have been told it is proposed by the Government to introduce a Bill for the suppression of street betting and the abolition of the bookmaker. We are told that it is recognised the law in regard to street betting is a dead letter, and that it is thought that the control in this matter would be better placed with the State Government than in the hands of the local authorities. This decision was apparently come to as a result of the report made by the Select Committee appointed last year to deal with the matter of control of racing. In speaking on that report, and dealing with the question of abolition of the bookmaker, the present Colonial Secretary delivered himself as follows:—The remarks will be found in the 1915 *Hansard* page 1923, Select Committee's Report, Control of Racing—

I have this suggestion to offer, that the Government should apply the law of the land as it stands, and if they do so most of the trouble will quickly disappear. Betting by the bookmakers on racecourses is illegal.

Again he said—

Let it be the policy of the Government in the future, and particularly at the present crisis, to enforce this law—enforce it on every racecourse in the State—prohibit bookmaking and carry out the law as it stands and also confine the use of the totalisator to bona fide amateur clubs in accordance with the law as it stands.

If these two things are done, I am sure a great deal more would be accomplished than by giving effect to the detailed proposals contained in the report of this joint select committee.

When Mr. Colebatch said that he was a critic; to-day he is more than a critic, he is a builder. He proposes now, or at least his Government proposes, to introduce a measure of a nature which he last year said was not necessary.

The Colonial Secretary interjected.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Your own words have been quoted—you then said that the law of the State was sufficient. It seems only fitting on the occasion of the greatest crisis recorded in the history of mankind that public men should express their opinions on a question which is agitating the minds of the people not only of Western Australia but of the whole of Australia to-day. I refer to the question of compulsory service overseas. It has staggered me at times to find public men dealing with this question as though it were a simple one. I want to remind members that I brought this question before this House last session by moving a motion opposing conscription of human life. Although I have been an anti-conscriptionist all my life, more than nine months ago I came to the conclusion that in our existing circumstances compulsory service is the right thing. I came to that conclusion by the process of reasoning, because I realised that the voluntary system was reminiscent of all that was bad in history. Of those who volunteered, in 95 per cent. of the cases they had no other option than to do so. After the first glamour of the war had passed, we found that a big percentage of the gallant lads who volunteered did so to better themselves or were forced to volunteer. Throughout our Government service men are to-day being asked the question why they are not at Blackboy Hill. I say, let us have an equitable system. The responsibility of citizenship and the responsibility of nationhood and of freedom calls for the same sacrifice from men with money as from men without money. The man with money should be prepared to give his life together with his money as cheerfully as the man who gives his all when he gives his life. That was

what convinced me. If compulsory service is a necessity within the Commonwealth, I cannot see there should be any difference in the necessity for compulsory service outside. The objection has been raised that when the Defence Act was under discussion the intention was to provide for the defence of the Commonwealth. I say that the destinies of Australia will be shaped on the blood-stained battle-fields of Europe. That is where Australia has to be defended. Someone has made reference to the fact that politics make strange bed-fellows; but in my opinion war makes yet stranger bed-fellows than politics. After 25 years' connection with the Labour movement I find myself to-day speaking on the same lines on this question as many men to whom I have been opposed over the whole of those 25 years. I am perfectly satisfied that those men who have been my opponents covering that long period are as sincere in their opinions as I am, and they have been brought to favouring conscription by the same process of reasoning as I have. I have had to ask myself a question. I have publicly announced that in foul weather, as in fair, I will support the Prime Minister. But I have to ask myself whether I can associate myself in that support with some who are prepared to adopt the axiom of patriotism laid down by Dr. Johnson, that it is the last refuge of a scoundrel. I answer that I cannot. Could I stand on the platform with members of the Weld Club and say to the audience, "I stand side by side with my fellow patriots"?

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: The Weld Club was a haven of refuge for Don Cameron.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Circumstances alter cases. In this most trying period—I would forgive them if it were in normal times—when the galaxy of the land are prepared to assemble at the Weld Club and be waited upon by celestials whom they even provide with a joss-house—can I associate myself with that galaxy? I cannot and will not do it. I shall support the Prime Minister even if I have to plough a lonely furrow. Yet another section are supporting the Prime Minister; but how? The Prime Minister made a public declaration that if necessary—and he says it is necessary—human life would have to play its part in this great

conflict. But he added that if human life played its part wealth would have to make similar sacrifices. But we find men, Australian born, Australian public men, one of them in the national Parliament and a supporter of the Prime Minister's policy, subscribing to the manifesto read last evening in another place. The Colonial Secretary smiles. Sir John Forrest's name is appended to that manifesto. I do not wish to weary hon. members by reading the document. The public can read it as printed in to-day's *West Australian* report of Mr. Hudson's speech, word for word. That manifesto had its origin in a resolution carried by the august body of which I am secretary, and which occasionally, as Titus Lander would say, has put the boot into me. That body, as far back as last April, carried a resolution demanding conscription of wealth. These three signatories to the manifesto, Mr. Septimus Burt, Sir John Forrest, and Mr. W. T. Lorton, have each guaranteed £100 a year over a period of three years for the purpose of fighting the conscription of wealth advocated by the Prime Minister.

\* The Colonial Secretary: The Prime Minister does not advocate the conscription of wealth.

Hon. J. CORNELI: Taxation will do me, and that is conscription of wealth. Had the three gentlemen in question issued their manifesto hard upon the carrying of the resolution I have alluded to by the body of which I am secretary, there would have been something in it. But the manifesto is dated Perth, 22nd August, 1916—at least three weeks after the Prime Minister had publicly declared that the manhood of Australia would have to throw off swaddling clothes and put on the toga and bear their part in the great struggle beyond our shores. In the same breath Mr. Hughes said that wealth would have to play its part. Yet here we find three men declaring that, whilst life must bear its part, wealth will intrigue to escape taxation. There is a ray of sunshine even as regards the three who have attached their names to that manifesto. If there is one thing I revere in this world it is old age, and these three men have rendered good service to the State. What they are doing at the present juncture proves conclusively

to all right-thinking men and women that the three have out-lived their usefulness as public men. Let us give them the benefit of the doubt by saying that they did not realise the great wrong they were doing. I hope that Australia on the 28th October will speak in no uncertain voice one way or the other, for or against conscription. In the interim I trust every facility possible will be granted to those who oppose as well as to those who support the Prime Minister's proposal. The utmost freedom of speech should be granted to both sides to enunciate their views on this vitally important question, so long as the rules of decency, decorum, and toleration are observed. I have heard a conscriptionist say that anti-conscriptionists should be thrown into the river, should be lynched. But you, Mr. President, being a student of history, are aware that all the privileges which we enjoy, and all our free institutions, were built up on sacrifices made by a few individuals. In this great war, which will alter the course of the history of the civilised world in all its ramifications, the things we are fighting for are freedom of thought and freedom of action, and the preservation of small nations. As a member of a big nation fighting the battle of small nations, I say that the conscriptionists, even though they be in a ten to one majority, ought to exhibit toleration and allow the other side to be heard.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [8.25]: As you, Mr. President, are aware, owing to a strenuous campaign I am somewhat late in offering to you the congratulations, which I should have been pleased to render at a much earlier date, on your return to this House, and also an expression of my appreciation of the fact that you still occupy, as I hope you will for many years to come, your honourable position as President. My election campaign reminded me somewhat of an ordeal through which I passed some years ago, when, owing to mishaps, I was burnt out twice in the course of one year. A bush fire swept through my country in March, and again before the year was out. It seemed to me that I was passing through a similar ordeal when I had to face two elections in the one year. Accordingly, I have much pleasure in congratulating brother

members who got back to this Chamber without undergoing such a trial. I am highly pleased to congratulate Mr. Colebatch upon being elevated to the position in which he finds himself. At the same time, however, I sympathise with our late leader, Mr. Drew, and with the late honorary Minister, Mr. Dodd. Mr. Colebatch will always receive from me that loyal support which most hon. members invariably give to the leader of this Chamber. During the period I was debarred from attending here, the change of Government has taken place. Personally, I think the country is to be congratulated on the fact that the change has come about. Ever since that change I have felt, from the announcements made by the new Government, that we shall have an opportunity of getting back to something like a sound system of administration. In the announcement of Ministers with regard to State trading concerns generally, we have an assurance that the community will be safe from undue interference with trading affairs, that Western Australia will revert to the system which has always promoted the welfare of the British race. Wherever we find a British community, we find open competition prevailing amongst the various traders; and this produces far better results than when the Government endeavour to control the whole of the affairs of the country on a socialistic basis. It seems to me that in connection with the businesses which our Government have been trying to run, it is almost impossible for those in charge to get the best results. In our private capacities, in our own businesses, we find that the same thing obtains. It is very hard indeed to get an employee to control one's affairs in the same way as one controls them oneself, because the employee has not the same direct incentive as has the actual owner, whose personal success depends upon the success of his business. In most State concerns everybody's business is nobody's business. Naturally, when the Government try to run such a concern, they are outclassed at every point by the private trader. The Government have definitely announced that there is to be equal opportunity for everyone in the State, that they will do away with the system under which special work is conserved for special sections of the community. There is nothing

more detrimental to the building up of a country than the keeping of special work for the special benefit of one class. We have found a general slowing down amongst the public service in recent years, and this has been largely due to the departure made from the old established principle of equal opportunity for all. Reference has been made this evening to the charges on certain of our railways, and it was said that those charges on new railways have been found necessary owing to the heavy cost of construction. The new Government were twitted with having abolished those special charges. The excessive cost of construction which induced the Labour Government to revert to those extra charges was due to tardy progress in consequence of the slowing down movement. But it was unfair on the part of the Labour Government to seek to get back some of the increased cost by adding to the freight charges. To my personal knowledge the construction of a certain railway, only 15 miles in length, has been going on for two years, and those extra charges have been imposed upon the local community during the whole of that time. That is only one instance of many. If the Government find that the construction of various railways has been delayed and its cost increased as the result of the slowing down process, I think it only right that they should remove those increased freight charges. In regard to the suggestion that many of these country railways are not paying propositions, it is small wonder if that is so, because of the heavy cost of construction, due to the setting up of artificial conditions. One Government-controlled concern has to try to bolster itself up upon another, and that other becomes a parasite on a third State trading concern, making it necessary to impose further charges upon our railways. Again, the cost of construction of railways has been largely increased through the use of specially treated karri sleepers. From £170 to £200 per mile extra cost has thus been foisted upon railway construction. If inquiry were made it would be found that the working cost of the whole of our public service has increased. I claim that the support given to one or another industry is not to be gauged by the amount of money put into it. Certainly in recent years there has

been a general squandering of money all round. The support given to an industry can best be gauged by the results attained. Lately the results have not been anything like proportionate to the amount of money expended. I do not agree that we have had the best results from the enormous amount of money spent in the fostering of the agricultural industry. I firmly believe that that industry is destined to be of enormous benefit to the State. A very large amount of support is still necessary to that industry, but it requires to be better directed. I agree that there has been a great deal of misunderstanding in connection with a lot of the support given to the industry, owing to undue centralisation, and I can congratulate the present Government on having already put their fingers on the spot, through the Industries Assistance Board, in deciding on a greater measure of decentralisation in regard to the administration of that department alone. The money expended in the eastern areas could have been expended to very much better advantage with more careful local administration. There are in those eastern districts men deserving of very great help indeed, but who through their own modesty and nervousness did not make the overtures to the board which they were entitled to do, and who in many other instances did not get what they applied for. On the other hand there is no doubt that through centralisation and an absence of local knowledge on the part of the board, many men received more than they should, and in numerous cases I am afraid the State will not get the money back again or even the benefits that were expected from the allocation of the money. But, on the whole, our agricultural industry is a magnificent one. We have splendid agricultural areas and a splendid class of settlers upon them. Last year's crop merely showed the wide possibilities of those eastern areas. With a minimum of labour enormous results are to be obtained. I have seen magnificent crops realised by very few hands indeed, and I know numbers of hard working settlers with children able to attend to the terms, who have secured magnificent results. The new railways are going to show the benefit of the work done by the Government in the past,

and also by the present Government, who have a more ready grip of the subject than had their immediate predecessors. It is very necessary, and I am sure the Government realise it, that in all the encouragement they can give these settlers they have to take into consideration the difficulties and trials some of these people are put to with regard to the railway freights and fares. The Government have already given them a concession, and it was not because they were driven to it by any amalgamation with the Country party. It has, I am quite satisfied, always been the policy of the present Government. It was their policy years ago and it is their policy to-day. They have taken the first opportunity of putting it into effect, and have accordingly reduced, as far as possible, the freights on fertilisers. It is a recognised principle, and has been clamoured for by the settlers for many years past. It is a recognised principle upon the American railways, which are privately owned. It is recognised by their managers that it pays them to do this. It is a business proposition to run fertilisers out to the farmers free, because the more fertilisers the farmers make use of the greater the harvest that will have to be reaped, and the greater the amount of return in the way of loading that will be the portion of the railway company which grants this concession. The same thing applies to this State. We, fortunately, here need not use a great proportion of fertiliser. The lands we have here seem to respond most admirably to only one fertiliser. In some countries it is necessary to use more than one. But here the particular fertiliser used is phosphates. It has always seemed to me that it is far better that the Government should send the fertiliser to those farmers, even at under cost price of freight, because the difference in the price of the freight to the farmers is of the utmost importance. I am extremely glad that the Government have given the rebate which was promised by the Liberal party should they come into office. I am satisfied that the State will realise benefit from this from the fact of their having a greater quantity of fertiliser used. It has struck me as being extraordinary the difference between the fares paid by people in the country districts and those paid by people in the metropolitan area. I have not been able

to satisfy myself why it is that anywhere in the metropolitan area anyone travelling on our railways within a radius of 12 miles has his fare on a different ratio to those paid in the whole of the country districts. It seems to me rather an anomaly, because the whole of the people in the metropolitan area must realise that if the inland districts, including the goldfields, the coal districts, the timber areas and the eastern agricultural belt, fail, then the metropolitan area must fail also. It is extraordinary that these fares in the metropolitan area should be so much less than they are in the outside districts. For instance anyone travelling within the metropolitan area on a first class single fare for 12 miles pays 1s. 3d., but anywhere in the country districts for the same distance he has to pay 2s.

Hon. J. A. Greig: Shame!

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: On a second-class fare in the metropolitan area over that distance it is 9d., but for the same distance in the country it is 1s. 3d., 6d. more than it is in the metropolitan area. For the return journey over a distance of 12 miles one pays 2s. and in the country districts it is 3s. For a second class return ticket for the same distance in the metropolitan area one pays 1s., but in the country districts one pays 1s. 10d. for the same service. It is hardly the same service, because one invariably finds that the service in the country districts is not the same as it is in the metropolitan area. Here within the radius of the metropolitan area, one can get one's trains every half hour. It is always a very much better class of service. The carriages at night are lighted with electricity, but when travelling on outback lines one generally gets an ill-lighted carriage. The Railway Department may be credited, however, with the fact that they have a splendid system of lighting on some of the country railway carriages, but other carriages are anything but well lighted. In many of the centres we find that a fellow in the country districts has often to take one of these obsolete carriages, and he feels having to pay a higher rate for the convenience of travelling than the man in the metropolitan area has to pay under very much better conditions. There is no doubt that something has gone wrong. I am inclined to think that this is due to the slowing down

process in some centres. Some of our services in the country districts are not what they ought to be. Whether the cost of the railway service generally has gone up or not, I do not know. I am satisfied that the country has progressed tremendously to what it was a few years ago. In my own locality the train service is to-day infinitely worse than it was 25 years ago, but the district has progressed, and particularly is this reversion of things applicable when one considers that the district is a good fruit growing district. We find that people have been induced to produce fruit of various descriptions, knowing that they were near to the markets of the State, were right in touch with the main line to the goldfields, and that they had a market almost at their doors, but they find that owing to this gradual deterioration in the service many of them are unable to get rid of what they produce, and though they produce fruit equally as well as any other country in the world they cannot get their fruit to the market. I do not know whether this state of affairs is due to mis-management or to a lack of appreciation of the fact that unless these people are allowed to market their soft fruits, in particular, it is hopeless to expect them to go on producing it. It has had the effect of deterring many men who intended going in for fruit cultivation on a larger scale. I have known of some men grubbing up their trees because they will not trouble to go on producing fruit, when the train service will not take it along to the market which they had specially grown that fruit to reach. This is a matter which undoubtedly, I think, wants looking into. The Government have been right in appointing a Commission to inquire into these agricultural questions. People have taken the Government to task for appointing this Commission to inquire into agricultural matters generally. I think from time to time we do want an inquiry of this nature. It strengthens the hands of members in coming into the House. We naturally perhaps, are inclined to boost our own particular centres, but a Commission which is appointed to look into these questions throughout the length and breadth of the State will, perhaps, receive a greater amount of appreciation from people who are likely to be settlers here. The Commission which would inquire into these questions all

over the State would not be blamed for having any particular bias. I think that, although some remarks have been made with regard to the nominees on that Commission, we should have the greatest faith in them. I think the choice has been a wise one. We have on the Agricultural Commission members who have been associated with the affairs of Western Australia for a number of years. They are acquainted with the whole of the condition of affairs. They are fully acquainted with the State and have been largely engaged in production in Western Australia of every description. Amongst them are gentlemen who have been engaged in wheat growing and in producing stock, and the welfare of the dairying and the fruit-growing industries is also safeguarded. When one considers the names of such gentlemen as Mr. Giles, of the firm of Elder, Shenton, and Co., Mr. Clarkson, Mr. Venn, and Mr. Paynter, one sees that they are men who are well known throughout this State and are favourably known in the agricultural areas. I am quite satisfied that they will be able to look into questions such as the linking up of railways in order to give the best service to the community which they are intended to benefit. They certainly want linking up, and we want those in charge of the railways to realise that these lines were not altogether built for the benefit of the railway service and its officials, but for the service of the people of this country and for the building up of the various industries. If we could only link up those I certainly think a great deal of good would be done. In that direction we will probably get some very beneficial results from the Commission. In the same way they will be able to inquire into some of our port difficulties. We realise that at our ports, possibly due to the system in vogue of recent years, there has been a tendency to slow down, and when we see such episodes as that which occurred at Fremantle, where the men refused to work even though they may have been getting a matter of something like 7s. an hour, these are bound to bring discredit on the good name of Australia generally, and it is small wonder that vessels do not care to come here from the outside world. We want those men who handle our produce at the ports to realise that they have to link up with the people

of the inland areas. It is as much to their interest to help to get our produce away from this country as it is to the man inland to produce it. These people must realise that we all have to work together. When we find that there is a tendency for men to allow ships to leave our ports with space unfilled, when it is almost impossible for us to find freight enough for the produce which is on our shores, something wants to be altered in connection with the handling of the vessels at the ports. It is a well known fact that in these serious times when freight is so scarce, men have refused to load vessels and fill the space that has been available. Such a state of affairs is deplorable. The Government have announced that they are in favour of the bulk handling of wheat. I have always been an advocate of the bulk handling of wheat, and years ago here I spoke in that direction. I was twitted with the fact that there would not be ships coming here to handle our wheat in bulk, that they were not fitted up, and it was on that occasion I said that it seemed to me that if we produced anything there would soon be ships or arrangements made to handle our wheat in bulk. I am satisfied there would be no difficulty whatever in sending our wheat away under the bulk system. Without considering any of the other States of Australia, there would be an enormous saving of bags in our own State which would be really worth while. I know this question has become a live one in the Eastern States and there is a general feeling there that the bulk handling system should be brought into operation. There will be big vested interests for us to fight in connection with the matter, and I suppose it is those who are in receipt of good pay at our ports that the opposition will come from, those who have been in the habit of handling enormous quantities of bags which have been imported, in addition to the stevedores and others. When we can handle the wheat so that we can send it to the seaboard by cheaper methods and save the settlers in our eastern areas the enormous waste that takes place every year in connection with jutes, there is no doubt it will help to make the lot of the man on the land much better. The farmers will have more money to spend on the development of their areas, and the people of the metropolitan area also will

benefit. With regard to the Esperance railway, I do not wish to say much about it, except that I was always opposed to the construction of that line, not because I considered the land there was not worthy of a railway. It never seemed to me that we were justified in spending a large sum of money in the construction of a line while we had a number of settlers in those areas closer to the more populated centres engaged in farming operations who had already produced wheat and had no means of moving it. I argued that when we had developed and dealt with those areas already settled, then if we had the money, it would be time enough to proceed with the Esperance line, always remembering that in early expressed opinions, Mr. Paterson, in particular, said that before anything was done with the Esperance country experiments should be carried out down there to prove what the land would grow, and what results were likely to be obtained. So far as the settlers who first went down there are concerned, they did not go there under the promise that a railway would be built; they were never promised a railway. The early settlers who went to Grass Patch and started farming there never anticipated that a railway would be constructed. They merely went there because they saw the possibility of a market in the then newly discovered Dundas goldfield. They knew that they could find a market at Dundas for their farm products and that goldfield was within easy distance of their areas. That was the inducement those farmers had to go to Grass Patch, and it is idle to say that they have been waiting for a railway to Esperance. As a matter of fact such a railway would be of very little use to them. The one great idea was not to hold out any promise that a railway should be built down there. I am not quite satisfied that a great deal of good could be done to this State if some better arrangement were entered into with the Federal authorities in connection with the linking up of all the different departments we have throughout the length and breadth of this State, particularly the departments controlling the telegraphs and telephones. In this direction I disagree with Mr. Sanderson's views on the question of unification. When we were a Crown colony we had

enough of that kind of thing, and we partially returned to that state of affairs when we joined the Federation. If now we adopt unification we will go back again to the old order of things which we struggled so hard to get away from, and that is control from a distant centre. The question of linking up the agricultural communities by telephone and the enormous cost that seems to be attached to it, as well as the obstacles that seem to be put in the way of the settlers, leads me to believe there is something wrong. If the Commonwealth cannot do better than that, it is not wise for us to consider the advisableness of handing over to them any more power than we can help. If we allow them to take and control everything from Melbourne or Canberra, what may we expect when they have shown their inability to deal satisfactorily with a small but important matter affecting the welfare of the agricultural community. In all this pioneering work, whether it be on the goldfields, in the far northern areas, or in the agricultural centres, those are the principal directions in which any Government must give their attention. The healthy life the people lead bids fair to bring up a strong, stalwart, and virile race. The Government should give further attention to those parts of the State which we are looking to to produce wealth for export from our shores required to pay the interest on, and help to find, the enormous sums being raised, and to be raised in the near future, to carry on this war. Increased population is very necessary. It is appalling to anyone who travels the country—and I have travelled around my district, which is a very large one, a good deal during the past 12 months—to see the enormous decrease in settlement which has taken place owing to so many of the men in the back areas having gone to the Front. There has been a great depletion of the young men who were doing noble work in our back areas. While it is inspiring that they have gone to fight for us, it is a fact that they are of the right stamp required to add to the productiveness of Australia. With regard to the referendum on the liquor question which is suggested to be held shortly, I hold the view that this House took the right action last year when we took the matter in our own hands and dealt with it

rather than allow it to go to a referendum which was proposed to be held six months afterwards. In that case, rather than leave the question to a referendum to be taken six months after the Bill had been passed, Parliament took the responsibility of altering the hours at which hotel bars should close. On that action I voted in favour of the 9 to 9 measure. I am disappointed that the advocates for reduction have not been satisfied to accept a continuance of that law. They seem to overlook the fact that by continually tinkering with the liquor laws they are likely to do more harm than good. If they succeed in reducing the hours to any extent they will probably increase the difficulties of the authorities who have to administer these matters. If the hours are further curtailed I fear there will be a considerable increase in sly-grog selling in our inland areas. It would become much more difficult to control the sale of liquor outback. I hold it is unreasonable of these people that because there is a small percentage of the people—probably not more than two per cent.—who cannot control their own actions, to continually demand further restrictions. I do not see why because two per cent. of the people cannot control themselves the remaining 98 per cent. should be put under lock and key. Because a few people cannot control themselves, the temperance advocates would prevent others from having what is perhaps necessary in a medical sense, and would deny to that larger section what they require in a sensible and reasonable way. It will, however, be some time before this matter comes before the House, and I merely make these remarks to show the direction which my views take on this matter. I think that the present measure is a reasonable one. It has worked well and done an enormous amount of good. The attitude of the temperance advocates appears to me to show a desire to build up a nation of milksops at a time when we should aim at building up a self-reliant people who can control themselves at all times. I wish now to make a brief reference to the election which I recently contested, and to draw attention to what I consider a necessary amendment which might be taken into consideration when the proposed Bill for the alteration of electoral

boundaries is under consideration. There are some facts in my recent experience which disclose a rather serious position. It may happen that some other member of Parliament seeking re-election might have to undergo the ordeal I had, possibly under like circumstances. I realise that the circumstances connected with my election were unique and that a most extraordinary position arose in connection with it. The Court itself, it seemed to me, overlooked section 161. If they did not overlook it, then I think the section requires amendment. Section 161 reads—

The Court shall inquire whether or not the requisites of section one hundred and fifty-six have been observed, and so far as the voting is concerned, may inquire into the identity of persons, and whether their votes were improperly admitted or rejected, and whether the result of the polling was correctly ascertained, but the Court shall deem the roll conclusive evidence that the persons enrolled were, at the date of the completion of the roll, entitled to be enrolled.

When the Court came to deal with the dispute in my election, so far as I am aware, it failed to observe the instructions contained in that section. Had the Court inquired whether the voting had been properly admitted or rejected, undoubtedly no other decision could have been come to than one distinctly against the proper admission of votes. When the Court declared that the election should be declared void, it failed to observe the requirements of this section of the Act. If, on the other hand, my reading of the section is a wrong one, I think the section should be amended so as to make it more definite. That would prevent some unfortunate member of Parliament, or would-be member, finding himself in the predicament I was in. At least, such litigant would have an opportunity of having full and proper inquiry made into the question whether votes had been properly received or rejected as the case may be. Under Section 171 power is given to make rules of Court; and it has been found that the Act is somewhat overruled by the rules of the Court. It is true those rules of Court were passed by both Houses of Parliament, but I am sure members of this House at any rate did not

at the time realise the purport of those rules. The rules of the Court under the Electoral Act decidedly require to be repealed, and I make the suggestion to the leader of the House that when the matter of the alteration of electoral boundaries is being considered the question of the rules of the Court should also have attention. I beg to support the amendment which has been moved to the Address-in-reply.

Amendment put and passed.

Question put and passed, the Address as amended adopted.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [9.26]: It having been decided at a joint meeting of members of both Houses of Parliament held to-day to adjourn Parliament for the purpose of affording members an opportunity of taking part in the referendum campaign, I move—

*That the House at its rising do adjourn until Tuesday, 31st day of October.*

Question passed.

*House adjourned at 9.30 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 28th September, 1916.*

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

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Honorary Minister: 7, Report on the administration of the Education Endow-

- ment Trust up to the 31st December, 1915.
- 2, Model By-laws made under the Health Act, 1911-15 (Plantagenet Roads Board).
- 3, Regulations under the State Children Act, 1907.

### QUESTION—ANTI-CONSCRIPTIONIST MEETINGS — PROTECTION OF SPEAKERS.

Mr. GREEN asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that a number of people made a savage attack on a speaker on the Esplanade on Sunday afternoon last, because he was speaking against conscription? 2, As this great subject will have to be submitted to a referendum of the people of Australia on 28th October, will he endeavour to prevent a repetition of these disgraceful methods, by granting adequate police protection to those who desire to hold public meetings to ventilate this question, so that both sides may be presented to the people? 3, Is he aware that a number of hooligans were incited in this cowardly attack by one, Recruiting Sergeant Brunnen? 4, If the facts are as stated, will he bring the reprehensible conduct of Brunnen under the notice of the Federal military authorities so that his actions may be investigated and dealt with?

The PREMIER replied: 1, One of the principal speakers at an anti-conscription gathering on the Esplanade on Sunday afternoon, 24th instant, was rushed by a large crowd and sought refuge in the Weld Club. 2, The State police will do all that is possible to maintain order at public meetings. 3, No. 4, Answered by No. 3.

### QUESTION—RETURNED SOLDIERS, EMPLOYMENT.

Mr. CARPENTER asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that a large and increasing number of returned soldiers are unable to obtain employment? 2, If so, what steps do the Government propose to take in order to prevent these deserving men from suffering hardship and want? 3, Has any further consideration been given to the suggestion that a number of these men be em-