

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 9th December, 1914.

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

QUESTION—WORKERS' HOMES.

Hon. H. CARSON asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What was the amount loaned under Parts 3 and 4 of Workers' Homes Act up to August 1st? 2, What was the amount of payments overdue on August 1st under these parts of the Act?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Part III.—No amount was loaned under Part III.; the capital expenditure on 1st August, 1914, amounted to £76,333 14s. 7d. Part IV.—1st August, 1914, £383,983 15s. 2, Part III.—To 4th August, 1914, £174 2s. 6d. Part IV.—To 1st August, 1914, £449 10s. 11d.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motions by the Colonial Secretary, Sessional Committees were appointed as follow:—

Standing Orders Committee—The President, the Chairman of Committees, Hon. D. G. Gawler, Hon. H. P. Colebatch, and the mover.

House Committee—The President, Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom, Hon. A. G. Jenkins, Hon. J. Cornell, and Hon. R. J. Lynn.

Printing Committee—The President, Hon. R. G. Ardagh, and Hon. A. Sander-son.

Library Committee—The President, Hon. W. Kingsmill, and Hon. J. E. Dodd.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.35]:

I must congratulate Mr. Ardagh on the brevity of his speech. If we feel so pleased with the brevity of Mr. Ardagh's speech we must feel doubly pleased at the silence of Mr. Cornell. Unfortunately, through his silence, we have missed some of the usual information he so readily supplies. Hon. members will agree that the position of our State demands, in this crisis, that all party feeling should be put aside, and that every member is called upon to do his best to assist in bringing about good administration. It is the intention of the Country party to overlook any acts of maladministration in the past. We are not concerned with what has happened in the past, but we are looking to the future, looking forward to the Government taking us into their confidence, so that we will be in a position to assist them. Last session I assured hon. members that the Country party was a separate and distinct body, returned under a charter which they were in honour bound to uphold and adhere to. Since then we have been strengthened by the return of eight members to the Assembly, and the speech made by the leader of the Country party in the Assembly yesterday should clear the minds of hon. members as regards the position of that party, and its attitude in the future. When contesting my election, I found that one of the main questions brought forward was that of the tariff. My opponents contended, and rightly so, that the fiscal issue was *ultra vires* as regards State politics. But I remember that they themselves were the first to touch upon it. Before I opened my campaign we were attacked by one of those gentlemen on this question. It left us in the position that we had to fight on that issue. Then we were asked, why should we fight the Liberal party when we were going so strongly for an alteration of the tariff; seeing that they were the friends of the rural producer we should not fight them on those grounds but should wait and contest the Federal elections. This was all very good; but the Federal elections came along. Then what was our position? We were told that we should unite with the

Liberal party and form one solid force to fight the Labour party and, as regards the tariff question, that they were there already and would champion our cause. In addition, the Interstate Commission was appointed and we were told that that was the place for our grievances, that that would afford opportunity to put our case forward and receive some redress. Hearing those statements, one would have thought that those friends of the rural producers, who were doing so much for them, would take an opportunity, when the Interstate Commission visited Perth, to lay before the Commission the position of the producers and assist in bringing about a reduction of our monstrous tariff. What occurred? Of all those friends of the rural producers, not one came forward with a single piece of evidence. No information whatever did they put before the Commission to assist us in getting the redress so earnestly required. They left it all to the representatives of the Farmers and Settlers' Association, which they despised so much. An hon. member remarks, "I should think so." They were supposed to be representing the rural producers. I do not hesitate in saying they were not representing them when they were not watching every opportunity to put their case forward. Now we find there are alterations in the tariff, and, apart from the users of luxuries, the only people to suffer are the unfortunate rural producers. Mr. Ardagh stated that the Labour party were representing a majority of the electors. I take it that he was alluding to the other Chamber. On taking a glance at the position of the 26 Labour members in the Assembly, one would think that this was correct, but on going deeper into the figures we find it is far from being correct. The total number of electors on the Assembly roll for the last election was 214,741. The 26 electorates represented by Labour to-day total only 102,215 electors, leaving a balance represented by the other members of 112,526 electors. So, to put it plainly, the Labour party are representing the minority, inasmuch as

there is a majority of 10,311 against them.

Hon. H. Millington: What about the uncontested seats?

Hon. P. F. BAXTER: You will hear about them in a moment. We find that in nine electorates represented by the Labour party there is a total number of electors on the roll of 12,733, whereas in three electorates represented by the Country party the total number of electors is 12,888, or a majority of 155 in three Country party electorates as against nine represented by Labour.

Hon. J. Cornell: Specify the electorates.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Those of the Country party are York, 3,868 electors; Avon, 4,219; Toodyay, 4,801. They are the total numbers on the roll. The nine electorates of the Labour party are, Cue, 1,319; Gascoyne, 1,155; Menzies, 1,347; Leonora, 1,428; Mount Margaret, 1,409; Murchison, 1,855; Pilbara, 1,005; Roebourne, 1,130; Yilgarn, 2,085.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: What about Hannans, Kalgoorlie, and Boulder?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The metropolitan electorates more than balance those. Surely our Labour friends who preach so much about democracy have overlooked this matter. I do not think they are sitting behind this knowingly. They have overlooked it. If they feel so democratic, there is nothing to prevent them bringing in a Redistribution of Seats Bill next session and amending the position, putting it on more equitable lines than it is to-day. We hear a lot to-day about the coddled farmers, and about their getting everything and the goldfields being sacrificed in their interests. The goldfields form a most important district and the goldmining industry, like other industries, will be assisted in every shape and form by the Country party. But it is very amusing to hear statements made that the goldmining industry is being sacrificed in the interests of the farming industry. The Agricultural Bank which has done so much for the farming industry, and has done such splendid work, has made ad-

vances to the amount of $2\frac{3}{4}$ millions. That amount of money has been put into the Coolgardie water scheme, and very rightly so, because it is a worthy object. What we are told is that the goldfields are suffering through the farming industry being too much pampered up, and through the farmers being too much coddled, but what is the position? We find that a million of money is being utilised to provide interest and sinking fund on the Coolgardie water scheme. I will ask hon. members if anything like that amount is to be found as set aside to pay interest and sinking fund for advances from the Agricultural Bank for the farmers. We do not find it so. Let me go further. We find that the mining industry up to October last produced dividends to the amount of 24 millions. What has the farming industry produced up to date?

Hon. J. Cornell: A lot of bankrupts.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The hon. member is quite right, this having been brought about during the past administration. The position of the farmers with regard to the Coolgardie water scheme is that they are asked to carry the whole burden on their own shoulders. That is the position, notwithstanding the fact that the goldfields, which have produced dividends to the amount of 24 millions, are being supplied with water to-day at 4s. per thousand gallons. What are the farmers paying? They are paying up to 8s. In the first place, they are paying £5 household fee; then they are paying 4d. per acre water rate, and if they want any excess water it goes up to a maximum of 8s. That is what the farmers are being asked to pay as against what the goldfields have to pay, notwithstanding that the water is only pumped a third of the distance for them. That is the position, so far as they are concerned. Last year the agricultural districts paid towards the Goldfields Water Scheme £21,392. I think that is a very creditable sum indeed. Now, we will take the incomes of the farmers, and contrast them with the dividends which have been produced by the goldmines. The whole amount of in-

come tax for the State last year was £78,974, and out of that amount the farmers only contributed £2,381. Out of the 21,996 persons engaged in farming, dairying, and fruit growing, only 855 paid by way of income tax on an average of £333. I may say that this money was not made out of farming; it was mainly contributed by the so-called St. George's-terrace cockies. A lot of it came from persons who have other businesses which are paying well in town, and who are running farms in addition, and are, therefore, classed as farmers. This amount paid by way of income tax return is the very slight amount contributed by the farming community. Yet we are asked to pay these tremendous rates. I would like hon. members to understand that these are facts that I am giving, and that I am not fighting against the goldfields. I have no fault to find with the assistance rendered to the goldfields, and I will assist them in anything that is just that they may bring along, but I am fighting our case, the case of the rural producers.

The PRESIDENT: The question is the Address-in-reply.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I maintain, Sir, that this applies to it.

The PRESIDENT: I am only drawing the hon. members' attention to the matter.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: In this direction we have another illustration. That is in regard to the amount of money we are charged on increased costs on lands, and hon. members will be surprised to know that that brings in some £200,000 a year. This increased price on the land is brought about to give better facilities, and when this was done whatever facilities had been given the farmers have had placed upon them the increased costs for freight, which has more than made up for the increased facilities. The sum of £200,000 would go a long way towards building railways and roads, and it would be interesting to know the amount that has been spent on railways and roads during the last 12 months. Rail-

ways and roads are built by the State, not only for the benefit of those on the land, but mainly in order to produce revenue, for you cannot produce revenue without them. There are two most important factors in producing a revenue, namely the building of roads and railways. With the increased cost of land and the increased railway freights we are still asked to build these railways for the benefit of the whole of the community. Take a glance at the land tax. The returns show that for the year 1913-14 the land tax amounted to £46,201. Considerably over one-half of this amount was paid by the rural and pastoral industries. We all know perfectly well we pay indirectly the greatest share of the balance—

The Colonial Secretary: What percentage?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Over one-half. We contribute as well, indirectly, most of the balance in the shape of increased costs on anything we are purchasing, and the increase put on in the metropolitan or any other area of the State will be bound to come back to the producer every time. We cannot get away from the fact. It was not my intention to address the House at any length. I intended to cut my remarks short, but that hon. members of this Chamber should not be impatient I will tell them that it is not likely, I understand, that we will finish to-night, so that in that case I do not think we need be too impatient. I would like to have a little to say in reference to the Foodstuff Commission. This matter had been handled very severely all round, and rightly too. There is no getting away from the fact. I for one do not blame the Government, and I do not blame the Commission wholly and solely, but one man on the Commission, one individual, Commissioner Rae, has been the cause of the whole trouble in reference to the Foodstuff Commission. There is no getting away from that fact. Personally, the experience that I have had with the Foodstuff Commission is—

Member: Why Mr. Rae?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: My experience of the members of the Foodstuff Commission is that they are doing good work. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Rae has gone out armed, as he thought, with more authority than he really possessed, and he was particularly hard upon Mr. Whitfield. Mr. Whitfield is a gentleman than whom no one in this State is more respected by those who know him. He is a gentleman in every sense of the word. He is upright, straight and honest. But what is he classed as? He is classed as a rogue in this transaction, purely and simply, though he is a man who is as straight as a die. The other members of the Commission, however, repudiated any part whatever with this deal in regard to Mr. Whitfield, and apologised to him. Commissioner Rae went out there and demanded his wheat, notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Whitfield had a letter from the Commission saying that he could sell any amount of that wheat that he could dispose of to his neighbours for seed purposes. We know that it is very necessary this year to see that there is sufficient seed for next sowing. The wheat in question was a splendid sample for seed, and was from one of our best farmers in the State, who grows wheat carefully, and whose wheat would be very valuable to the State at the present juncture. This gentleman was almost compelled, through ill health, to part with his wheat, and if Mr. Alec. Monger had not advised Mr. Whitfield the whole of his wheat would have gone to the millers at 4s. 6d., instead of the farmers having the benefit of it at 5s. It is a benefit to be able to obtain that class of wheat at 5s., and I, myself, would have been only too pleased to have been able to procure some. It is a very good class of wheat, and will be well worth 6s. a bushel. Fortunately I have enough seed for myself. He was almost compelled, I say, by this gentleman to sell his wheat, notwithstanding the fact that he had a letter from the Commission telling him that he could sell as much as he desired to his neighbours for seed purposes. I do not think

we should blame the Commission altogether. It is unfortunate that they should have been connected with the matter in the way they are. In reference to the position of the farmers at the present time, it is unfortunate indeed that there are those to whom the Government cannot extend assistance to-day. There is no getting away from the fact. They are not in the position to do it owing to so many being clients of other institutions. I hope the Government will, however, bring forward legislation to protect those persons. I fully recognise that they cannot do it as things stand at the present day. Any legislation that is brought forward, I am sure, will receive the assistance of every member of this Chamber when it is being put through. It is to be regretted that something cannot be done now for it means a very great loss to the State. It is hoped that something will be done to keep these struggling people on the land. As representatives of the people in this present crisis, we are faced with a very great difficulty. We have in front of us a very small amount of money considering the heavy expenditure which will have to be met. That requires the assistance of every member of both Houses in co-operating with the Government to tide over this difficulty. Again, we have a shrinking in revenue, and unfortunately this has been added to month by month by inroads from the Federal Government. Also we are faced with the worst season ever recorded. I do not think I need dwell upon it further than to say that for 75 years past there has been nothing on record to show that we have had anything like the season we are experiencing this year. It is true that we have a small return but we must remember that to-day we are adopting modern farming methods that they could not avail themselves of in the past. Now, I notice that our sister State, South Australia, has launched out in assisting farmers. They are going a little further than this State in making advances for the agistment of live stock, and also in connection with fallow. I do not think we can go that far here, however, but

one step they have taken, and that is with regard to payments. I notice that the amounts advanced are charged for at the rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest. This is calculated to the 1st February, 1916, so that the South Australian farmers have until the 1st February, 1916, free of interest, and then are only charged $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the money. We are faced with another difficulty and that is, the most serious war that has ever occurred in the world's history, and which will have a more far-reaching effect than any other war in the past. I hope that it will not occur again for a long time. We all feel sure of the result; there is no doubt about that. The result will be the downfall of Germany and the uplifting of civilisation. We all recognise the splendid work done on our behalf by the Allies. We must also remember the tremendous sacrifices they are making, though I am afraid some of us do not recognise that, and we must remember they are being made on our behalf. We want to take a step in the right direction and assist them. We want to provide them with all the commodities it is possible to do. One of the main things is to provide foodstuffs. To do that we must push on with all development work and there is nothing better for this State than to carry on work of that nature. We have at the present time a large number of unemployed amongst us and the position in regard to those people is becoming serious. Those men should be found work, but that work should be of a reproductive character. There is no better work for any country to undertake than the opening up of its lands; none whatever. The clearing of a block of land, however, does not finish the work of that land; it is only the commencement. There is the cropping which follows and which produces revenue for the State, and whilst we are going ahead by producing that revenue, we are also producing foodstuffs, which will be needed very badly indeed in the next 18 months or two years. I do not know whether it is wise to proceed with work such as that on which the unemployed have been placed at East Perth. Personally, I think that could be put aside

in favour of more important work. I may be wrong, but I think the money could be better spent in the direction of constructing agricultural railways or roads in agricultural centres. With reference to the position of roads boards and municipalities, I hope the Government will not overlook either bodies, because they are in distress to-day, and whilst they cannot hope to get the full amount of the subsidies, I trust the Government will meet them half way, or possibly go a little further. There is no getting away from the fact that if the municipalities and the roads boards are supplied with capital—and most of them to-day are financially stranded—that capital will be utilised right away, and it will provide work for a lot of the unemployed who are in our midst. I hope the Government will give this matter earnest consideration. As a Country party representative, I am quite willing to do all in my power to assist the Government, but one thing the Country party, as representatives of the people, ask, and I think we are right in demanding it, is that there shall be placed before us a statement of the country's financial position. It is not right to expect us to accept any part of the responsibility of the conduct of the State's affairs if we do not know how we stand in regard to the finances. Speaking for the past six months, the period I have been in this Chamber, I have not been given the opportunity of learning anything about the financial position of the country. We are not concerned with the past in any way, we are looking to the future, and we want to assist the Government to pull the State out of the trouble it is in at the present time.

The Colonial Secretary: What information do you require?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Information in regard to the finances. We want the balance sheets of the trading concerns. I have not seen any since I have been in the Chamber.

The Colonial Secretary: They have been here.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That is news to me. We have had no information in regard to the trading concerns. The Gov-

ernment have tried several times to produce balance-sheets but the Auditor General appears to have turned them down, and if the Auditor General is not satisfied we cannot be satisfied; I am quite sure on that point. I do not think I need detain the House longer. I only wish to impress on the Government the necessity for supplying us with the information. They will then find that we shall be prepared to give them all the assistance in our power. If that assistance is of any use, they can have it, but it is only by supplying us with the information we require that the Government can expect to get it.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [5.8]: I rise with some hesitation to speak at this juncture, owing to the peculiar condition of affairs, not only in this State but throughout the Empire generally. We all are aware of the troublous times we have before us, and how difficult it is for everyone to steer clearly and carefully through them. Under those circumstances I do not think one should be too critical, or should find fault; at the same time I consider that, as one of the custodians of the public interests—and we are all custodians to a large extent of the public interests—it is only right that we should ask for information, and if we cannot altogether give advice, we should be a little critical even from a friendly point of view. It seems superfluous to make further remarks after the admirable speeches which have already been made, but even at the risk of repetition I shall refer to some of the matters that have already been touched upon, if only to emphasise the points which have been made. I have at the present moment every sympathy with the Government, and I am quite certain that they can rely upon any effort I can make—although it may seem like the mouse offering to help the lion—to assist them to carry on the affairs of the country to the advantage of all parties. They must, however, allow me to express to a certain extent my own opinion as to whether or not the methods they are using are the best. The greatest exception I have taken to the Government in the past has been in the direction

of the management of the finances. No one can look upon the finances of the past, and see the results as they are at the present time, without seeing that the position to-day is absolutely lamentable. I read once, in a very able speech made by the Premier, who also controls the Treasury, that he said he was the youngest Premier who ever held that position, and that he took up the position almost without experience. I think hon. members will all agree with me that the result of his administration has certainly borne out the truth of those words. Of course, every one learns by experience and we can only hope that in the future the Premier will be able to remedy some of the errors of the past. After having expended in the course of three years something like 24 millions of money, we find that not only has he spent the whole of that money but that he has left us with a very large deficit. I am not making these remarks in any offensive way, I am only stating what are actual facts, and no one who has any aspirations or pretensions to be a business man can possibly say that the affairs of this country have been properly handled, when we find that the result is as I have just stated. What is the consequence? Here we are confronted with a most difficult position in regard to administration and we are in a worse position than the State of Western Australia, in its previous history, has ever been in. I say this with the deepest regret, but unfortunately I am afraid it will be impossible for anyone to contradict me. They say that we ought to be as economical as possible, but I am afraid it will be very difficult to save our money now. I consider that any Government that may assume office, as the Premier of New South Wales said the other day, ought to be able to make 1½d. for every 1d. It is the business of the Government to make the State pay, or, as we generally say, we should make both ends meet. The only way the present Government apparently have been trying to make both ends meet, so far as I can see, has been by burning the candle at both ends. The enormous deficit we

are faced with I put down entirely to want of capable administration, and from the fact that the Government have not got value for their money. I do not complain of the way in which they have spent it, but my complaint is that they have not received value for what they have spent. For philanthropic purposes --I will not say for the purpose of getting votes--they have dispensed money and have not got the returns that should have been obtained. Under such circumstances, it is impossible to make both ends meet. We have only to take the Railway Department to see at once that the wages were raised to a large extent and that freights were not correspondingly increased; and the railways, instead of making a profit of £225,000, I am not quite certain whether the year's operations have not resulted in a loss. If the freights had been correspondingly increased, as should have been done, when the wages were advanced, then the Government would have crippled every industry in the country. The answer to that is that the wages were raised more than the country could stand.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: It is not even a living wage to-day.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Whether it is or not, no industry can pay more than it earns. It is all very well to talk about a living wage. I believe in paying everyone as well as it is possible to do, but it is out of the question to pay a man more than you have. If a man has a farm he cannot pay more than he earns himself. But I am not going into details of the expenditure and the results. I am only just saying that we are landed with this tremendous deficit after the expenditure of 24 millions of money, and I hope that in the future the position will be such that there will not be a repetition of that sort of business. It may be argued, of course, that the Scaddan Government are not to blame and to some extent they are not to blame for the expenditure of this money. When they stood for election three years ago they stated on the hustings that if the people sent them back to

power they would raise wages and salaries, and that they would find lots of avenues for employment. They carried out every word of the pledge, but unfortunately they carried it out in the interests of one class only. Had they studied the interests of all classes the position to-day would have been entirely different. But in carrying out the promises they made on the hustings—and I think it only right to carry out such promises—they have worked for one class and one class only; the whole of their legislation has been for one class. This House has been twitted with having thrown out 38, 40, or 50 Bills. Mr. Cornell once gave the figures.

Hon. J. Cornell: I have lost count.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: This House was twitted with having thrown out these Bills simply because they were sent here by a Labour Government. Nothing of the kind was the case. Had a Liberal Government brought down Bills embodying similar provisions, they would have met with a similar fate. All I complain of is that this expenditure has been made in the interests of one class, and to such an extent that the State cannot stand it. Had the Government worked with the same zeal for the benefit of the whole of the State, instead of one class only, they would have received not only my approbation but, I believe, the approbation of every business man throughout Western Australia. I will not refer to this question further except to express the hope that in future the administration of the finances will be carried on in the interests not of one class, but of the whole of the State for the development of reproductive works and with the object of making ends meet. The next subject on which I would like to say a word or two is that of the unemployed. I think the Government in the interests of law and order and good government should prevent the deliverance of some of the speeches in connection with the unemployed.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Some of the speeches contained decided incite-

ment almost to rebellion, or even to something worse. I will not mention names but law and order should be maintained no matter what section of the community is involved. Speeches have been delivered which might have led to great trouble. It is certainly the duty of the Government to take notice of such things. Some of the men making the speeches which might have incited people to do unlawful acts are among the very men who, when workers are earning 9s., 10s., 11s., and 12s. a day, urge them to strike for another shilling if they can get it. Now they find that men are out of work. I read a statement the other day to the effect that landlords and the owners of private enterprises and commercial undertakings should be the first to find employment for those out of work. What happens in the times of peace? The efforts of many of those who represent the unemployed are directed towards making workers restless, and towards inducing them to strike and cause all sorts of trouble to private enterprise and commercial industries, with the result that many people engaged in them have been driven out of the country. It is a great pity that this state of affairs should exist, because it necessitates the Government finding employment and money for those men, instead of leaving it to private enterprise to help them through. There has been a good deal of discussion about engaging the unemployed in clearing land on contract. This would be a very great mistake; it should be done by day work, and a really first-class man should be engaged to take charge of gangs of these men and make them work. We want a man in charge who would not be worried off his head if he happened to sack a man.

Hon. C. Sommers: Would you clear land by day labour?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Yes, and I could give instances in which dozens have done it at the very price suggested by the Government, namely, 17s. 6d. an acre. Clearing land is a work of skill. Many people think all that is necessary is to use an axe and cut the timber down. The man who does so is a fool, and will

not make clearing pay at 30s. an acre. The firebrand is the thing, but one needs to know how to use it. The proper way is to employ an experienced man, and to allow him to engage the men under him.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: That would be contract work.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: No, day work. The Government would employ the man, and he would employ the workers who would do so much a day.

Hon. W. Patrick: It would cost a fiver an acre then.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I could bring figures relating to a large amount of clearing to show that the hon. member is absolutely wrong.

Hon. W. Patrick: You must have a first-class man.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Exactly; a man who understands it, and who sees that the men under him work well. This scheme could be successfully carried out if the politicians would leave the man in charge alone, and if, in the event of one man being sacked, the rest did not strike out of sympathy for him. To employ men as is suggested to clear land at 17s. 6d. per acre, when many of them know nothing about it, would be an absurdity. There are two good relief works which should be undertaken by the Government. They have been referred to by Mr. Baxter and are the clearing of land and the making of roads. Where there are no railways we should make roads, and we should clear land so that it will be ready for use next season. I throw out this suggestion to the leader of the Government, and if he adopts it he will get all the unemployed off his hands, and they will be contented workers. It would be necessary to select the men in gangs, and to give them what they were worth: one man might be worth 30s. a week and his tucker, and another £1 a week; they could be paid whatever they were worth and there would be no trouble, but the man in charge must be—

Hon. C. Sommers: He has not been born.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: I would like to see you do the drafting into gangs.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: That could be done as soon as the work was started. It would not be so difficult as the hon. member seems to think. I wish to refer briefly to the Control of Trade in War Time Commission. I consider they have interfered most unnecessarily in connection with the price of wheat. The Control of Trade in War Time Act and other statutes were passed with a view to preventing any cornering by speculators in grain or other necessities of life. The Royal Commission were not intended to fix the price of wheat as soon as they were appointed. The intention was to prevent speculators from buying up the wheat and flour in the country and charging perhaps 10s. per bushel for wheat and £20 a ton for flour. But the Commission fixed the price of wheat at 4s. 6d. per bushel. This was hardly a normal price, and it was absurd. When the Commission discovered the absurdity of their action they attempted to crawl out of it by saying it applied only to old wheat. I am confident their decision was to apply to new wheat, and no statement I have seen makes it apply only to old wheat. The consequence was that farmers decided to cut their crops for chaff which was bringing £7, £8, and £9 per ton, and before the mistake was discovered many of the crops had been cut for chaff. To illustrate the absurdity of fixing the price of wheat at 4s. 6d. I would point out that a man who, in a decent season, reaped 20 bushels to the acre, would this season, when cutting only three to five bushels, have to run his horses and machinery over four acres to obtain an equal quantity, and he has to feed his horses on chaff which is worth £7 to £9 per ton, while he is limited to a price of 4s. 6d. per bushel for his wheat. The absurdity of the position is obvious. It might be argued that the chaff would belong to the farmer, and that if his horses had not eaten it he could have sold it, but I consider that the Commission have protected the townspeople at the expense of the unfortunate farmer who is

suffering from the effects of the drought. Is this reasonable? I say it is the height of absurdity, and I hope nothing of the kind will occur again. Laws of this description were designed to prevent monopolies. There has been no attempted monopoly in this direction and I am in a position to know a good deal about what is going on. I protest against the further expenditure, at the present time, of public money on workmen's dwellings. Such expenditure is absolutely unnecessary. The erection of workmen's dwellings has been advanced as a good work because it provides employment for carpenters, joiners, painters, and other tradesmen at a time when there is not much work going on. It is right to find work for these men if possible, but if we adopt that line of argument we shall presently have lawyers and lawyers' clerks complaining that they have no work and asking the Government to employ them on drawing up a lot of bogus agreements to give them something to do. The Government might well reconsider their decision in regard to this line of expenditure, when we remember that there are hundreds of dwellings now vacant and that rents are going down every day. I know of one instance in which the rent of some cottages has been reduced during the last fortnight by 3s. per week. Under these circumstances the expenditure on workmen's dwellings is unnecessary. My greatest regret in connection with the finances is that the Government are not in a position to extend that help to the industries of the State which they otherwise might have done. One of the industries which might have been assisted is the pearling industry which is now in the unfortunate position of being unable to sell any pearl shell whatever in London. I know this is a fact from a cable which was recently received. There are something like 300 or 400 tons of pearl shell in Broome at the present time, and the unfortunate owners are unable to pay their men or to even pay off their divers or to keep the industry going. If the Government were in a position to guarantee £100 or £150 a ton on their shell some of the banks

might find the money and enable them to keep the industry going. The selling price of shell just before the war broke out was £225 per ton. If the Government guaranteed £100 per ton the money might be found and the industry might be kept going without loss to the district. If the boats are laid up and the crews are dispersed it will take a long time to get the industry on the old footing again as the owners and proprietors may leave the State and the whole industry go to pieces. I commend this matter to the leader of the House. In many ways the Government might have assisted private concerns in order to keep them going, but instead of that not only the Government but the representatives of Labour have done everything they could to stop private industries. The Government come into competition with private enterprise in eight or ten different businesses. It is far better that private interests should carry on trading concerns. I was laughed at a little while ago for suggesting that the Government could put a man in charge of clearing work to engage other men to carry out that work. I know why hon. members laughed; it was at the idea that those men would not care what the man in charge said or thought. Any employee of the Government service now does not care what anyone says to him, but just does as he likes. It matters not whether the man is employed on the steamers or in any other trading concern, he does pretty well as he likes; and if one of the employees was dismissed there would be a great deal of trouble simply because he is a Government servant. Under the circumstances, I consider it unwise for the Government to invade what I may term the territory of private trading concerns. The Government have not made a success of any trading concern that I know of, and they have succeeded in driving a number of private employers away. I think the policy of the Government ought to be re-considered, so that money may come here, and not only come here but stay here, to develop our industries. It may be, of course, that the Government run

these trading concerns—I do not say it is so, but it may be so—because they know that through these concerns they will have a large number of voters in the numbers of men whom they can employ. There is in diplomatic circles such a thing as an honourable understanding, and it is possible that an honourable understanding may exist between the Government and the employees of the State trading concerns. I say there is just a possibility that such an understanding exists, and I should be glad if the Government would re-consider their position in respect to trading concerns. I am not saying this offensively, or even critically. I am only pointing out the failure the Government have made of their trading concerns. I speak of failure because we have no evidence of success. As Mr. Baxter has said, we have no balance sheets to prove success, and so we must assume that the results are not quite so good that the Government would like them to see the light of day. Amongst other measures that we are to be asked to consider is a Bill which will have for its object the rendering of necessary aid to settlers suffering from the effects of drought. I do not know whether the pearlers are suffering from the effects of drought, but I am quite certain that the pastoralists are, and therefore I hope the Government will do a good deal for the pastoralists as well as for the farmers. The pastoralists are a large and important section of the community, and as deserving of consideration as are the farmers and others. Then, I find in the Speech another reference to “measures for the relief of sufferers from the drought settled upon the land, and of those citizens deprived of employment as a result of the partial failure of our harvests.” I think that suffering from unemployment was referred to by my friend in connection with the pearl-shellers. Certainly, they are deprived of employment; and I have no doubt that the measure proposed by the Government would embrace pearlers, and therefore I am extremely glad. With regard to private trading interests, I just wish to draw attention to the difference between the policy of Western Australia

and the policy of our friends the Germans.

Hon. E. M. Clarke: They are no friends of ours.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: What policy did the Emperor of Germany pursue? He did everything he possibly could to foster private enterprise, and to develop mercantile arrangements all over the world, with the result that the Germans were nearly running every other nation off the earth. The Germans were first-class mercantile men and traders.

Hon. E. M. Clarke: Until they were found out.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM I am talking about their mercantile abilities. They were capable manufacturers and business men. Even their enemies must admit that. However, all I am endeavouring to point out is the difference between the policy which brought Germany to the position of the finest and most successful trading country in the world, and the policy of Western Australia, in which State the Government are endeavouring to invade the rights and the position of those who have the means of carrying on trading to very much greater advantage.

Hon. E. M. Clarke: What will Germany be a year hence?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I am not talking about that. That has nothing to do with my present point. I saw somewhere that the Premier had said that under no circumstances would wages and salaries go down, and that they must not be altered whatever happened. We all would like to see wages and salaries kept up. There is no one who likes better than I do to see people well paid. I have made it one of the mottoes of my life, whenever people were in the relation of employee to me to try and pay them well. But how is it possible to keep up wages and salaries when everybody else's income is going down? I will take an interested case. It is said that a member of Parliament should not take part in a debate on a matter in which he is financially interested. I will, however, take my own case, because I know more about it than

I do about anyone else's case. I have a farm and also a station, and for two years I have not received a penny from either of them. Now, how can I go on paying the same wages? Where am I to get the money from? It is an absurdity. I cannot do it. Now, take the case of the Government. The Government are in debt to the extent of nearly a million, and yet they say wages must not go down. The railways are not paying; hardly anything is paying; but yet Ministers say wages must be kept up. Who is going to pay those wages? The taxpayers must pay them. But the taxpayers are the producers of this country. Taxation does not come from the men for whose benefit all this expenditure has been made. I maintain that the bulk of this money has been spent on the workers, on members of what is known as the Labour party, on the labour classes.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is absurd.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: And I go further than that.

Hon. J. Cornell: Absurd!

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: The first thing I remember happening on the advent to power of the present Government was an increase of 1s. per day in railway wages. In that connection I saw an admission of an increase of about £300,000 or £400,000 in Government wages and salaries. I contend that the bulk of the people who receive this increase, pay not a pennyworth of taxation. Well, I will not say one pennyworth, but I will say that they pay very, very little. Take the man receiving £4 or £5 a week. If he does not receive that pay regularly, his earnings will not amount to £200 a year, and in that case he is exempt from income tax. Again, he pays no land tax. The only taxation he pays is the duty on his clothes and his beer and tobacco.

Hon. J. Cornell: What does that amount to?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: He pays all those taxes to the Federal Government, from whom this State obtains a payment of 25s. per annum. The men on whom all this money has been spent, whose wages have been raised with the result of the accumulated deficit, return

to this State only 25s. a year. They pay neither land tax nor roads board rates; nor duties to any appreciable extent, because probably they board somewhere or other. The only return this State derives from those men is 25s. per annum. On the other hand, look at the poor farmer, or look at any of us. What do we pay? Income tax, land tax, roads board rates, and taxation of every description. And we do not get our incomes raised. We do not get thousands upon thousands of pounds spent on our class exclusively. Although we do not mind more taxation, and recognise that there must be more taxation, and although we will bear that increased taxation willingly, we ask that the incidence of it shall be fair—that the whole of the taxation shall not fall entirely on the producers. Let us have the taxation distributed fairly. Those who can pay most, let them pay most; but do not leave some to pay nothing whilst others, who perhaps are not really in a position to pay, must strive to obtain the money from other sources. I will not take up the time of the House longer. I hope that the Government will profit by the few remarks I have made. Those remarks represent the opinion of one who, at all events, may fairly claim to be a business man, of one who is associated with many of the leading business concerns in Western Australia. Ministers may judge from my utterances how I, and a good many others, regard the past three years of Government administration. I hope the House will agree with me in expressing a benevolent trust that henceforth we shall find the administration of the finances, and the general development of the industries of the country, carried on to the very best advantage of the whole community.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [5.40]: I think it may be necessary, before proceeding with my remarks on the Address-in-reply, to make a slight explanation. I understand that on the opening of Parliament I did something that has never before been done in this Chamber—formally second the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. I had two reasons for taking the course I took. One

was that of consideration—and I think this is an excellent reason—for those people who came at your generous invitation, Mr. President, to attend the opening of Parliament and to mix with one another. The other reason was that there is nothing in the Governor's Speech to talk about. However, since then hon. members who have preceded me, have not seen fit to follow the good example I set. On the contrary, they have introduced highly controversial matters—matters which I thought would not have come up for discussion at all during this session of Parliament. I have, therefore, no need to offer an apology for speaking at the present stage. Proceeding further, I desire to do as is customary with me at the opening of a session, and that is to extend my felicitations to yourself, Mr. President, and to hon. members generally on our once again meeting in this Chamber. In doing so I desire to individualise to a certain extent, and to offer specially hearty congratulations on the return of a member alongside whom I sat during two sessions of Parliament—Mr. R. D. McKenzie. I heard, when Mr. R. D. McKenzie was far distant from us, that he had enlisted. It was with mixed feelings I received the news, and my present feeling is almost one of sorrow that the hon. gentleman did not enlist and go to the front, because upon his return—and undoubtedly he would return, with the rest of his countrymen, covered with glory—he would probably have been able to state on the floor of this House that in actual warfare tactics are not so despicable as they are in political warfare. That brings me to the one paragraph of the Governor's Speech with which I am wholly in accord. The paragraph I refer to reads—

I now leave you to your labours, trusting that by the blessings of Divine Providence they will prove of material advantage to the people of Western Australia.

After going through the recent election I am in a position to say that I know of no political party in the Commonwealth that is more in need of the blessing of Divine Providence than the Labour party

is to-day. After all that has been said against the party, I believe that it is only by an actual dispensation of Providence that it was again returned as the Government of the day. Other hon. members having refrained from doing so, it is perhaps necessary for me to analyse the causes of the return of the Government, though with a diminished majority. I wish to say, and to say it emphatically, that I do not complain of the defeats sustained by individual members of the party. During last session I said on the floor of this House that the Scaddan Government would come back from the general election. True, it was a narrow squeak; but they have come back. Now to find and to follow facts out to a proper conclusion we have to get at the cause, and I say undoubtedly the greatest cause of the reduced majority in favour of the Scaddan Government was the Press of Western Australia.

Hon. E. McLarty: And the War tax.

Hon. A. Sanderson: *The Worker?*

Hon. J. CORNELL: With three exceptions in this vast State every newspaper was against us, and to this extent they sank all the particles of fairness that they possessed in days gone by.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Never mind, you are back again.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I say the noblest Roman of them all was the *West Australian*, and here on the floor of the House I congratulate the *West Australian* on getting off the rail. Whether it has got off the rail or has been shoved off I am not in a position to say, but this election has conclusively proved to any unbiased person that the *West Australian* is now on its feet, and when a paper will print assertions that are made by persons on the hustings against responsible Ministers of the Crown and suppress their replies until after an election is decided, I say that Press is not a factor for good in the community. At one time it was said that the Press was the mouthpiece of liberty, that it was the mouthpiece of the people, without any qualification, but I venture to say that the Press of this State in this election was not the mouthpiece of the people, and were I asked to

coin a phrase depicting the *West Australian* I would without hesitation term it a Colossus with hands of mud. There is another phase of the elections which is pleasing to me, and which has I hope for ever set aside the old bogey, that there are no parties in this House. And I desire to congratulate some hon. members whom I thought were not capable of the activity they displayed physically and from an athletic point of view on the enormous activity displayed during the late election. We have it, and it cannot be disputed, that the leader of the Liberals of Western Australia occupies a seat in this House. It is a very high compliment, and I am to a certain extent pleased. I refer to Mr. Colebatch. No man can dispute it that the real leader of the Liberal party during the last elections was Mr. Colebatch. Some hundred years or more ago the late Edmund Burke said that when Peers entered into an election they did not enter into that election as Peers, but as representatives of property. What Edmund Burke said over one hundred years ago is as true to-day as the day he said it, and it was no desire on behalf of the representatives of this Chamber, who opposed our party at the elections, to do so in the interests of the whole of the people. They opposed our party in their own interests, and in the interests of their own property. What was said of Peers by Edmund Burke can to-day be said of legislative councillors. I view the results of the general elections to a certain extent sorrowfully, for several reasons. This is my first term in the House during which there has been an Assembly election, and I say with all due sincerity that there are late members of another place who have fallen by the wayside, both liberal and labour, to whom I hope I shall always be able to hold out the hand of good fellowship. That is something that should give one food for thought. If in a political fight they go down I have a certain amount of sorrow for them, but we have now to take account and view the position as it stands. Before the last

election, so far as the Assembly was concerned, labour had 33 seats and liberal 17. The Assembly just returned contains 26 labour members, 16 liberal, and 8 members of the Country party. Therefore the state of affairs which had existed for many years and which exists in all Parliaments of Australia to-day has been done away with. Personally I regret it. I regret that there is a third party in our popular Chamber. But it is the wish of the electors, and I say to the members of the Country party in another place that they will soon find their level. They will find that their talking on party outside is a very different thing from talking on party inside, and sooner or later they will have to show how they stand. I can only refer to the Country party as political bush-rangers. I referred to them before the last election as a joint in the tail of the Liberals.

Hon. A. Sanderson: You are always at sea.

Hon J. CORNELL: I should have said on that occasion that they were the joint in the tail of the liberal ox, and had I said that, I could now have said that in the interim the liberal ox has had an attack of pleuro and part of its tail has fallen off. As far as the election is concerned, it can be very well said that the Country party have given the Liberals and the Labour party a shaking up. The Country party have gained at the expense of both. I have carefully read the speech of Mr. Gardiner, their leader, and I listened very carefully to-day to Mr. Baxter, to what at any rate we should have expected as a declaration of their policy, and if any one can construe the remarks of Mr. Gardiner or the remarks of Mr. Baxter into a declaration of policy, then I say he is someone who has come down recently. As far as I can interpret their remarks they stand as one word, an enigma. They are going to take up the position that I suppose all new parties take up. They are going to run the country, but I can assure them that they can only run the country to the length and breadth

of their own enthusiasm. As I said earlier in my remarks, they will soon find their level, and the sooner the Labour party and the Liberal party make up their minds, and not wait until the Country party put the gun to their heads, but put the gun at the head of the Country party the better, so that they may find out which side of the fence they are going to be on. The sooner that is done the better for the politics of Western Australia. I say in political life as in all other walks of life, that no good can be gained by bargaining and bartering and understandings. There can only be two parties. The party that is worthy of a name must of necessity win recognition and declare from the outset their intention and their policy. The Liberals and Labour have been accused of not doing enough for the Country party. All I have to say to Liberal and Labour is that they have done too much, and having reached the end of their tether they have been rewarded by someone else being sent in to do more for them. I now leave the Country party and come to the remarks of Mr. Colebatch. I must state, after listening to hon. members' speeches, that really Mr. Colebatch is the only hon. member that has said anything worthy of notice. Therefore, I propose to deal in a general manner with some of the hon. member's statements. But I would like to say to Mr. Colebatch in passing that probably if he had dealt generally with many things and not chased tiny little points it would have been to his benefit. I have heard the hon. member make better speeches than the one he delivered yesterday. What did the hon. member do? I have taken the trouble to read his speech, and I have taken the trouble to make a comparison of the speeches of the two leaders in the Legislative Assembly, and I find that something has happened that has never occurred in my experience in this State before. Mr. Colebatch has received as much space, within an inch or two, in the *West Australian* as the leaders of the two parties in the popular Chamber.

Therefore that is evidently another recognition by that excellent journal, the *West Australian*, of the importance of the hon. member. What did Mr. Colebatch serve us up? A smoking hot joint, and that is all I can criticise it as. But if we come to analyse it and wait till the smoke clears off and extract the gravy we find very little meat. If Mr. Colebatch had not gone so much into detail probably there would have been more meat and less gravy. But he starts off by saying that at the last election the Income Tax (War Emergency) Bill, and the attack on the Legislative Council were the outstanding issues, and the Premier, though still in power, must recognise that on these issues he was defeated and consequently he had wisely laid them aside. I would like to say a word or two on the Income Tax (War Emergency) Bill, but I will reserve my other remarks until dealing with the deficit. It was pointed out at election time that the Income Tax (War Emergency) Bill was going to be a tax on the poor man, and that he should not be expected to pay it. Wherever I spoke in the interests of the Income Tax (War Emergency) Bill I used to quote Mr. Colebatch's own argument that, in actual result, the emergency tax was going to be a tax, not on the poor man, but on the rich man. There is not a mine on the Golden Mile in which the workmen have not banded together and levied upon themselves to the extent prescribed by the schedule of the Bill. These men are all contributing to the Belgium Fund, the Red Cross Fund, the Patriotic and other funds. It is a significant answer to the arguments used, and it shows that there is no opposition in the goldmining industry to the Bill. It is a sufficient answer to say that not only are they prepared to return men favourably disposed towards the Bill, but since the Bill has been rejected, they have put it into operation, so to speak, on their own volition. Mr. Colebatch occupied a half a column dealing with the compilation of the electoral roll, and at the outset—I know this does not appear in to-day's newspaper

—he used these words, which I took down at the time—

The purity of our electoral system has been disturbed, and to an extent destroyed, by the present Administration.

This is a deliberate charge, and it can only be construed to mean that the Government have deliberately manipulated the rolls. So far as I can ascertain the purity of electoral enrolment, the purity of the electoral rolls, is borne out in the actual result of the elections. I would like to say—I think Mr. Colebatch will agree; I made use of the same remarks in supporting a vote of thanks to the Commonwealth returning officer for this State, in which he agreed—that the great mass of the electors, not only in this State, but in any State or any nation, are honest in their intention, and too much is made of the dishonesty of the elector. I say, without fear of contradiction, that with all the elections which have taken place in Western Australia, or in Australia, since the inception of Responsible Government, it is impossible to bring half a dozen illustrations to bear, showing that the elector, by voting wrongfully, was responsible for the return of a candidate. It is time we took a broader view of it. But Mr. Colebatch has not even credited the Government with the desire to give facilities to the elector to record his vote, or to recognise that when a man is not on the roll he cannot record his vote; and as for there being 20,000 people more on the roll than should have been, I say that no charge can be levied against the electors of Western Australia. It cannot be said either that the electors or the Government were impure in their motives. After all, we are not so much concerned about the purity of Governments, because their environment very often impels them to turn to expediency. I would have expected Mr. Colebatch, in dealing with these points on the compilation of the rolls, to prove the case before this Chamber, to prove that there was corruption on the part of a voter in that he had voted twice or may be three times. But Mr. Colebatch failed to do so.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: I told you yesterday that the facts have been supplied to the head of the department.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Very well. The manner in which Mr. Colebatch employed his words here yesterday was calculated to make one think that he had the intention of saying that someone had done wrong. The fact that the Electoral Department has been supplied with the information has not been exemplified and borne out on the floor of the House. When the case comes to be investigated by the Electoral Department it may be proved that there is no case, and if there is no case it will destroy the insinuation of Mr. Colebatch. If the hon. member was sure of his remarks—

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: I am.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Well, why did you not make out a case here?

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: Because this is not the place to do it.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Then this is not the place to bring it up at all. I am not going to indict any man, or any section of the community, of dishonest motives unless I am prepared to absolutely prove it. The most sacred possession of any man or woman is a good name, and I say that when one charges a man here, in this House, and is not prepared to substantiate the charge by facts, one is trying to take away that man's greatest asset.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: That is exactly the reason why I did not mention names. The proper place in which to mention names is that place where those charged can reply.

Hon. J. CORNELL: When one hon. member voted improperly I was not afraid to get up and draw attention to it.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Oh, let that rest.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I will not. The illustration used by Mr. Colebatch was merely a hypothetical case.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: Nothing of the sort.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, it was that a Labour official had gone out and given certain instructions. I have known Liberals give certain instructions. I know

of one individual who wrote in to a certain organisation to know why he had been struck off the roll. He put others to a lot of trouble to interview Mr. Cathie and when Mr. Cathie investigated the case he found that not only was that individual on the roll, but he had acted as a poll clerk on election day and had voted. How, then, can we seriously put hearsay forward on the floor of the House.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: I do not think I would worry about that if I were you.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Colebatch has referred to the decline in the gold yield. We all regret that decline, but Mr. Colebatch gave us only one concrete illustration as a way or means of stemming it; that was to give an assurance to mining managers and shareholders that no new legislation of a harassing nature would be introduced. This, of course, would be impossible as Parliament cannot bind succeeding Parliaments. The only legislation brought down by the present Government which may have harassed the industry was the Mines Regulation Bill. In considering the mining industry we have to consider the health and the lives of the workers, and without going into the whole of that Bill I may ask what did it resolve itself into at the finish? It resolved itself into the appointment of check inspectors with insignificant power which would have been of no utility; yet the House even then refused to agree to the principle. The Honorary Minister (the Hon. J. E. Dodd) said in effect, "Agree to that and I will agree with you in all things else concerning the Bill." Still they rejected it. If hon. members think the Labour Government have harassed the industry those members ought to take the trouble to read Mr. Sutherland's speech at the dinner of the Chamber of Mines last Saturday evening. Mr. Sutherland, I may say, is a man well qualified to speak on the subject. By reading that speech hon. members will see whether or not Mr. Sutherland holds the same opinion as do they. No man could have more warmly eulogised the present Minister for Mines than did Mr. Sutherland.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Before tea I had finished my remarks in connection with the mining industry. The next portion of Mr. Colebatch's remarks I desire to touch upon has reference to the Control of Trade in War Time Commission. I notice in measuring his speech that his remarks have taken up three-quarters of a column in the newspaper, whereas the whole of his remarks could have been greatly condensed for there was in them very little of common sense but a good deal of verbiage. This Commission was appointed for a special purpose. This House saw fit to pass a Bill clothing this Commission with powers that it now possesses.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Outside which it goes.

Hon. J. CORNELL: And the Commission has seen fit to act and I for one am not going to enter into the question of whether or not the Commission has acted wrongly or rightly. That is labouring the question, because the question at issue is what can a Commission do and, does it do it? For this House to enter into an argument as to whether the Commission has exceeded its powers or whether it has not done so is beside the question inasmuch as whatever discussion may take place in this Chamber, if it is going to have an influence on how the Commission will or will not act, then I say that the Commission is not worth its salt. Parliament has seen fit to provide machinery for appointing this Commission and in that machinery was the power given by which the Government could appoint a Commission. The Commission is appointed and I hope it will act and continue to act in the way it thinks right in its judgment, irrespective of any trivialities emanating from or any reflections that may be made by this House. Immediately its members take into consideration the question of personal aggrandizement or otherwise as a result of remarks made inside this Chamber or outside it, they will destroy their functions which are set up and which they are to keep going. So far as the Commission is

concerned I will end with that. If this Parliament or this House think the Commission is doing wrong why do they not come out straight and say so, and why does not this House carry a resolution that the Commission ought to go out of existence? Let them do it then and do it properly, but I hope the Commission will not take any more notice of the remarks which have been made than I have.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: No one could do it on the debate on the Address-in-reply.

Hon. J. CORNELL: In dealing with the question of the money that is being advanced by the Federal Government to the State Governments, I find it very hard to link up and connect Mr. Colebatch's remarks thereon, in a sequence in which I ought to do. But the position as he has presented it, is this—that 18 millions of money have been received per medium of a war loan from the old country, and it was mooted abroad that the people in England in subscribing this money said that it should be used in Australia for war purposes and war expenditure only. Something is inferred by Mr. Colebatch, but I have not heard whether it is correct or not, that though the Premiers of the various States had agreed to the allocation of the £18,000,000 the obligation was placed upon them that they could not make use of this money in the direction in which conference indicated it should go. As a consequence Mr. Fisher had to stay his hand and find another way out of the difficulty. But the way out of the difficulty is not as the hon. Mr. Colebatch puts it. He says when drawing attention to the Governor's Speech where this is mentioned that we ought to be thankful to the Commonwealth, that the Commonwealth had loaned to the States various amounts with which we are all acquainted at 4 per cent. interest, that they loaned 10 millions of money from the Associated Banks, and that that 10 millions of money is money that is going to provide the nucleus of this fund and therefore get over the difficulty which it is said came from the old country. Now, the Associated Banks have not loaned the Commonwealth 10 millions. What

the Associated Banks did was to give the Commonwealth Bank £10,000,000 in gold for £10,000,000 in notes with an assurance that these notes would not be rushed into the Treasury. I ask any sensible individual this question, was it not equally for the benefit of the Associated Banks to do as they have done as it was for the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth? Have not the Associated Banks of Australia as much to gain, indeed more to gain, by the stability of the financial credit of the Commonwealth as the Commonwealth has?

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Of course the banks want to get rid of the gold.

Hon. J. CORNELL: After all, the pound note is just as good a commodity as a sovereign, the only difference being and the financial stability of the Associated Banks of Australia. Much too has been said of how people have come to the rescue in the old country, rescue in a time of dire necessity in the raising of a war loan. But nothing has been said in this Chamber or nothing has been said in the Press in Western Australia of the fact that not so long after the outbreak of the war the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to go to the assistance of the Associated Banks in Great Britain and guarantee their issue. This is news for the hon. members but it is correct. After all, the occasion arose in Great Britain when the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to guarantee the issue of the banks in the same way that the State of Queensland and other States had to guarantee the banks when the land boom burst. Does it say much for the financial stability of Great Britain? It points to the fact that in Great Britain the chartered banks were not self-supporting in the crisis which presented itself without the backing of the nation.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: But here the reverse is the case.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Let me come to that. I venture to say that if the Associated Banks had not arrived at the understanding with the Prime Minister

and which I say was a sensible understanding—an absolutely sensible understanding—and had they not agreed to interchange gold for notes, once again we would have had the spectacle in this country of our financial credit being in a state of chaos and very likely to break down as it did in 1892. At that juncture the various State Governments had to guarantee the note issue of the Associated Banks. Hon. members will not dispute that.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: They have no note issue.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Commonwealth would have to guarantee the note issue to save the credit of the Associated Banks of Australia. I venture to say, nay, I assert, that the Associated Banks of Australia have not sufficient gold within their treasury chests to pay 33 per cent. of their issue. We find that in 1902 when everything was in a state of panic, and when the position was not so dire as it is to-day—

Hon. W. Kingsmill: In the way of Government.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That every bank in Australia, with the exception of three, had to be guaranteed by the various State Governments. Had the Government not come to their assistance, the whole of the community must have been ruined. I say that the banks have not loaned one penny. What they have done has been good for the people of Australia, and it has been good for them, and they have done it as much in their own interests, for their own salvation, as much as in the interests of the Commonwealth. I have yet to learn that the banking institutions of Australia have anything in sympathy with the Commonwealth Government as it exists to-day. Hon. members have only to read the second reading speeches on the debate of the Banking Bill in the House of Representatives. Mr. Colebatch has stated that Queensland turned this down. As a matter of fact, Queensland was not represented at the conference, and the terms on which this money would be

loaned to the States, and the amounts that would be made available were not known to the Press assembled at the conference table. Queensland is not going through the condition of drought as the other States are doing, and therefore there was no need for that State to be represented. If there had not been a drought in any of the other States there would not have been any need for what has happened lately. As usual, Mr. Colebatch could not get away from having a dig at the workers' homes. He said it was a wrong thing to use any of this money for the further building of workers' homes, and he added that the money was not loaned for that purpose. The money, however, can be legitimately used for the purpose of public works, and all other purposes agreed to at the conference. Mr. Colebatch said that the Government proposed to double their expenditure on workers' homes. He should have been fair and not left the inference which he intended to convey, that the Government were going, in the immediate future, to spend double the amount in the construction of workers' homes that they were doing prior to the outbreak of the war. The Government had no intention of doing so. We know that after the outbreak of hostilities the construction of workers' homes was cut down to a minimum. The leader of the House will correct me if I am wrong when I say that what the Government propose to spend is not in the vicinity of £7,000 per month. Mr. Colebatch advocated as another reason why money should not be spent on workers' homes, that if these homes were put up for auction to-day they would not realise 75 per cent. of what they cost to build. We will admit that. What I want to ask is if other forms of business or enterprise were put on the market to-day, would it not be seen that their value too had depreciated equally with the value of workers' homes? Are we to infer that when the crisis is over they will re-establish themselves in the position they occupied previously to the outbreak of war, and workers' homes will remain at the 25 per

cent. depreciation? It is ridiculous to imagine so. Everyone must know that all things will come back to normal, and to bring forth the tripey old argument which the hon. member used is ridiculous. Irrespective of the financial orgy which Mr. Colebatch and others say the Labour Government have indulged in, there is not one item of expenditure from loan money in Western Australia which has provided a better asset than the workers' homes. It is an asset that will stand when other assets which are only a shadow to-day will have gone. Workers' homes are well and faithfully built, and those who have them are well satisfied. It has been said that if they were put up for sale they would bring 25 per cent. less than they cost to construct, but I do not know one individual who is in possession of a worker's home who is desirous of getting out of it. These homes, too, will tend in the future to reduce the high rents which have existed for a considerable time past. There is another question to which Mr. Colebatch referred, namely, that of the unemployed. Mr. Colebatch is a marvellous juggler of words. At first he said definitely that he did not favour a reduction of wages, but then he proceeded to give an illustration as to how we could cope with unemployment. He implied that there should be a reduction of wages. I suppose the statements have been made for a two-fold purpose. Mr. Colebatch is a warrior who does not go about the world as warriors did in the days of savagery. He goes forth as they did in the Middle Ages, and if he is ever accused of having advocated a reduction of wages he can take up *Hansard* and point out that he was not in favour of a reduction of wages. When, however, we take his correct inference, it is plain that he has advocated nothing else. He advocated self-sacrifice in order to bring about greater production. In the present state of affairs what sacrifice can the employer be asked to make? The only sacrifice he can be asked to make and which he is likely to make, is that he will continue in the expansion of an in-

dustry which, in all probability, will, after things are settled down, re-establish itself and thereby he takes very little risk. On the other hand you can only ask the workmen to make three sacrifices namely, to work longer hours and for less wages and do more work. I do not think any decent employer will say that the workmen of to-day are not fairly conscientious. What other sacrifice can the working man make? If there were a fair and honest understanding that when the proposals matured the worker would get a quid pro quo from the benefits derived from the venture, I would say to the worker "Make the sacrifice." But I am not going to say that the worker shall make all the sacrifice and the other fellow take the minimum of risk and eventually get all the profits that accrue from it. A man cannot put his wealth into operation until he gets human hands to assist him, but if he cannot get that his gold is not worth one iota to him. I ask hon. members not to talk in platitudes, and not to come out with the same old bogey that our grandfathers were afraid of. We have advanced since then. I was told the same at my mother's knee, and as it was not true then it is not true to-day. I ask hon. members to try and get up to date. I would like to deal with Mr. Cullen before I come to the end of my remarks. We all have a considerable amount of respect for that gentleman. I have myself. But I have also come to the conclusion that Mr. Cullen imagines himself the deputy leader of this House self-appointed. As is usual, Mr. Cullen takes himself more seriously than anybody else does. He is amusing to us. I took him to task once on the floor of this House, and I ask him not to go to extremes. He even got down at one time to tripe and sausages, and now we find that the time of hon. members is going to be taken up, so far as that gentleman is concerned, by his reference to fish. I hope of all the enterprises that the Government have embarked upon the fish enterprise will provide the minimum of controversy. With regard to the deficit, this is the first time that a great deal has been said about it,

and I suppose it will not be the last. I am not so much concerned, and I do not think other members should be so much concerned about how the deficit occurred. If a burglar enters a house the concern is rather to get him out than to consider how he got there, and that is the position which confronts us to-day in connection with the deficit.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: That is to say there is a burglar in the house.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have thought as seriously as any hon. member about the deficit and have said repeatedly that it is to a certain extent the fault of members of this House. In a rising community like Western Australia, there must be increased charges for the services rendered to the public and there must be increases in other directions. We were asked to pass a land and income tax Bill in an amended form, which would have produced greater results and must have assisted to stop the drift. We were asked to pass the Income Tax (War Emergency) Bill and this House rejected it. We would not allow the Government to put their programme into operation or give them the necessary taxation to carry it out. The Government have tried to do their part as honest men should by administration. They have put their programme into operation to a very great extent, and in doing so have built up a deficit. There are three ways of dealing with the deficit, and I ask hon. members which they are prepared to advocate. The financial tide will only be stemmed by the adoption of one of these methods. One is retrenchment minus a reduction of salaries. Sir George Turner adopted this course at the burst of the boom in Victoria and Mr. Irvine adopted it on his black Wednesday. Another way is to impose greater charges for the public services rendered by the State and to curtail the services rendered. The Government have endeavoured, as was absolutely necessary, to curtail the time table of trains. In Victoria trains were reduced from three to one a week in certain country districts.

If we are not prepared to curtail the services rendered by the State or to pay greater charges for those services, there is only one way out of the difficulty. I say there should be no reduction of wages and no retrenchment, unless it is proved that a man is not required or is not giving value for his wages.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: If you reduce the services you retrench.

Hon. J. CORNELL: No, the State is taking over newly constructed railway lines, and if certain trains are taken off as the finished lines are opened up there need be no retrenchment. If we are not prepared to reduce the State services or to pay greater charges, there is one other course open to us. I do not favour sacking a man because there would be an obligation on the part of the State to help such a man and such help might be in the form of charity, which would be a dead loss. I do not favour cutting down wages as a means to stem the financial tide. If wages are to be cut down it should be done on the basis that the individuals concerned are not giving value for their wages. The time has arrived when our revenue should be as nearly as possible raised directly and in accordance with the means and the ability of the individual to pay it. The method I advocate is on the lines of the Income Tax (War Emergency) Bill. I advocate a re-introduction of that measure perhaps with slight amendments.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: The Government intend to re-introduce it, do they not?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am not aware of it.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: They promised to.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think that is the right course to adopt just as the Federal Labour party think that the referenda should be again submitted to the people. Although the electors have turned the referenda down in a sense, that does not affect the justice of the proposals. We should not be satisfied with one repulse; we should give it another go.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Hear, hear! Go to the country on it.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If the electors of Western Australia will not back us up

in the popular Chamber, they will have to get someone else to do the job, and they will then have to take someone else's medicine. That someone else will not tax himself; he will favour retrenchment wherever it is possible. If someone else does come into power there are many forms of legislation with which he disagreed when the Labour party were in office, but with which he will agree then. If the people of Western Australia returned Labour with a majority of one or two pledged as I have indicated and this Chamber refused to agree, I would favour going to the country again. I am not yet satisfied that the last has been heard of tackling the prerogative of the Legislative Council. We will have to fight it sooner or later.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Who are we?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Labour party. The hon. member's party will never tackle it. It is wrong from every point of view, and so long as this Council is constituted as it is, so long will the opinions of property prevail against the opinions of the manhood and womanhood of this State. There is nothing new in tackling the prerogative of the second Chamber. The House of Commons has done so, and has succeeded in muzzling the second Chamber, and in Western Australia and in every State that has an elective House on the property qualification, nothing less than the prerogative which the House of Commons now enjoys in the Imperial Parliament will do. Why should not the people here have the same prerogative and power? The Imperial Parliament gave Australia its Constitution and so long as the people of Australia are prepared to accept the rebuffs of the representatives of property as to how they shall finance their States, so long shall they be kept in a state of impecuniosity. I hope the Labour party will rise to the occasion. Since its inception there has stood on its platform a plank for the effective reform of the Legislative Council with a view to its abolition. That was inserted 15 years ago, and so far nothing has been done to attain that end. If we concentrate on that plank, the

others in the programme will soon afterwards come into operation.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan) [S.13]: I am glad to learn from the Governor's Speech that the session is to be a short one, because I believe it is not legislation we require so much as good administration. I hope the Government will take heed of what has been said at the close of past sessions. There has been complaint from all quarters of the House that Bills have been rushed down at the last moment and members have not been given an opportunity to consider them as carefully and closely as they desired in the interests of the country. I have had cause to regret this in the past and I say to the leader of the House, not by way of a threat, but in an appeal for common fairness to the country and this Chamber that I hope he and his Government will bring in Bills, especially those of an important nature, early in the session so that this complaint shall not arise this session. In regard to the trading concerns, the Minister said the balance sheets were here, but throughout the length and breadth of the country the great complaint is—

The Colonial Secretary: No, I denied the statement that there were no balance sheets.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: The complaint is that we have embarked on all these socialistic enterprises and invested huge sums of money in them and that the people cannot find out whether they are paying or not. We are told they are paying. Well, if they are paying, the Government should not be afraid to give the balance sheet to the light of day, so that we may all rejoice in the success of these concerns. Personally I am not with the Government in these trading enterprises, because I really think these matters should be left to private enterprise. Take butchers' shops. I feel as positive as that I am standing here that the shops have not been a success from any point of view. Only a limited number of people enjoy the advantage of these State butchers' shops; and, besides, we see private enterprise selling at the same prices right

next door to the Government shops. If the private shops can do that, where is the necessity for Government interference with the trade? The same applies, I think, to the timber mills. I cannot believe the taxpayer is getting full value for his money there. I read just recently that the Worsley mills had cut out after a number of years. The life of a mill centre is comparatively short, and when a large sum of money has been invested in a milling concern one must expect to make large profits in order to compensate for the loss which will eventually occur in the removing of the plant. The same remark applies to the brick works. We have State brick works, and we were told by a member of another Chamber that the making of the bricks would be so profitable that the result would be to pay off not only the deficit, but our national debt as well. The Government, however, do not seem to be in any hurry to tell us what the railway line into the brick works cost, what the capacity of the works is, or what profits have been made. I do not think the Government will make any profit from the brick works. I do not think any of the State trading concerns will show a profit. I believe those trading concerns have a good deal to do with the piling up of the deficit, which goes on increasing month after month. My experience as an employer for a good many years in this State is that while the Government continue the system of day labour the State does not make progress. People will not work on day labour for the Government as they will work for private employers. Under the Government there is not the same supervision as private employers insist upon. Moreover, as has been mentioned by one speaker here to-day, it is not always possible for even a man recognised as a loafer to be got rid of under Government employ, because there is such a thing as political influence, which sometimes will keep a man in his place even if he is not worth his money. I do hope that the Government will speedily revert to the contract system, because that will be better for them and save them a lot of trouble. Under the con-

tract system they will know exactly what they will have to pay for a given undertaking, whereas with the day labour system one never knows what the cost will be. Unfortunately, owing principally to the drought, we have an unemployed difficulty; and many men who have flocked into town are being kept here and furnished with free meals. It is true the menu is moderate and possibly not altogether enticing, but still it may be as good as or even better than the men have been used to while in ordinary employment, especially if they are bush workers. I am afraid that so long as the Government continue to furnish these free meals the men will stay here, and so Ministers will have an unemployed difficulty as long as they remain in office. My idea of relief work is that it should never be made attractive. The work should be supplied, so that men may not be in actual want of food or of shelter from the elements. I know that many years ago in Victoria relief work was supplied by the Berry Government. That is my earliest recollection of relief works. Sir Graham Berry told the unemployed, "I am providing work for you, but I do not want to make it so attractive that men will leave their situations in the country to come to the city. I will supply you with work, but it will be so distasteful or unremunerative that you will go away and leave it so soon as you see something better." Personally I do not go so far as that, but I do not think the Government should pay the highest rate of wages for relief works. The men should be encouraged to move round the country and look for work for themselves or start work on their own account. Again, in connection with relief work in the metropolitan area, I think it should be a condition that young, able-bodied men should not be employed. Certainly, the married men and aged men should be given as much employment as possible under the circumstances; but lusty young fellows, I consider, should be made to hustle for themselves. Let those young fellows show independence of spirit and get out into the country, even if they do not receive the full wages that they expect;

half a loaf is better than no bread. The ordinary business man is not getting the profits he has been accustomed to make; he has to be content with less. That is the experience of every man who has to hustle for himself. Such men have to cut their coat according to their cloth. All I can say as regards the unemployed, however, is that there is no cutting of cloth about it: they want the very best of broad cloth with the finest of trimmings. With regard to the clearing contracts on the Yandanooka estate, I observe there have been complaints that the price of 17s. 6d. per acre is not a fair price. I know something of that country, and I consider that price a very fair one indeed. As Sir Edward Wittenoom has already told us, not every man knows how to earn money at clearing. The work requires a little experience. A carpenter or a bricklayer or a mason should not be taken straight away and put into bush country with the expectation of making much money in clearing at 17s. 6d. an acre. In any case, however, the Government are not anxious to have Yandanooka cleared at full wages. They offer this work only in the goodness of their hearts so that these men should not come to the city or go hungry. It is laudable on the part of the Government to see that the men are provided for; and so long as the men can earn something in reason to enable them to mark time until things improve, that is all that can be looked for. It is relief work, and the Government should say to the men, "You can take it if you like, if you cannot get something better. You can always have this and make a living at the price we offer, if you cannot obtain more remunerative work." Under such conditions the unemployed difficulty will settle itself. But so long as the Government offer the highest rates ruling for relief work, they will have any number of civil servants or Government employees. As I have mentioned before, I consider that the single men should not receive the same consideration as married men; the single men should be told plainly that they must get work elsewhere. Another com-

plaint I have is that preference to unionists should still exist in this State. I had hoped that times had altered somewhat, and that men because they are men would be able to demand from the Government equal treatment one with the other. As far as I can see, that is not so. I have been told of numerous instances where men applying to Government departments for work have been asked what union they belonged to, and if they did not belong to a union they were given the cold shoulder. That is not right. It is not British. When a man wants to enlist to fight for his country, he is not asked the question whether he is a unionist or otherwise. He goes to enlist because he is a man trying to do his duty by his country, and when the nation is in trouble he does it willingly. Therefore it is only fair that he should have a share of what is going, notwithstanding the fact that he is not a unionist. Owing to the drought we find that many of the farmers, especially in the wheat belt, have no feed for their stock, which is in a starving condition; and therefore farmers have had to look around for means of saving their breeding stock. What do we find? That the Government will ship this stock to Bridgetown, say, taking the stock down at full rates, and at the end of the terms bringing back free such stock as may survive. That may sound liberal to the uninitiated, but it is not liberal at all. A man with 1,000 breeding ewes to convey 200 miles would have to find about £40 or £50 in cash. The trouble is that the unfortunate farmer as a rule has not the cash. In Victoria and New South Wales after a recent drought the Government were far more liberal. They even took the stock away with just a nominal deposit on the ordinary railway freights, and I think the freights altogether were only about a third or a fourth of the rates originally charged on stock under usual circumstances. Mr. Hamersley to-day told me of the case of a farmer, in his district, who in order to move his starving stock to a more favoured district had to pay £180 in cash to the Railway Department before the

stock was moved. That is not generous treatment because, if the stock was sold now, even half fat as it is, it would probably go into consumption, and the State eventually would be the loser. Numbers of farmers, owing to this condition imposed by the Government of cash for services, have been compelled to sell stock that in many cases has taken years to bring to a state of perfection. I know in my own district of magnificent sheep sold for slaughter, sheep that never ought to have been slaughtered. The country will be the poorer for it later on. I contend that the Government should be more liberal. The Railway Department of course say, "We are a trading concern; how are we concerned in it?" But they are concerned in it, and they will suffer later on through having less stock to carry. In the same manner, if the Government do not supply seed wheat to the farmers the Railway Department will lose by having less freight to carry next year. Really, the Railway Department are interested in the same way as the Government are, and I consider that more liberal treatment should be extended to settlers compelled to move their stock to more favoured districts. Once again with regard to the unemployed. In connection with the building of workers' homes, out of every £100 spent in this direction I suppose £60 would go for material. There would be really only £40 available for wages out of every £100 spent on workers' homes. I do not think there is any need just now for pushing on with the homes. I advocated the introduction of the Workers' Homes Bill, because such a measure was badly needed at the time. Now, however, the scheme has been somewhat overdone. Anyone looking around the city and suburbs will find scores and even hundreds of houses empty, and it is a notorious fact that rents have decreased enormously. Present rentals do not show even a moderate interest to those unfortunate enough to hold house property. Therefore the object of the Government in initiating the workers' homes scheme, namely, to reduce rents, has already been attained. Houses are

now as cheap as any reasonable man could demand. For that reason I think the Government should call a halt and, instead of spending £100 to the extent of £60 on material and only £40 on labour, should devote the whole of the £100 to labour. Take the railway lines now in course of construction. There is the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line, for instance. Unfortunately, a harvest has not been secured this year, but on the other hand, there is a period of twelve months ahead to allow of the construction of roads leading into the various sidings that have been completed. In that direction there is employment for any number of men, and the whole of the amount would be expended on labour.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Would there be no material at all?

Hon. C. SOMMERS: The material is only gravel. Therefore, say ninety per cent. would be spent on labour and only ten per cent. on material. The material, moreover, is in the State, and we would not need to send abroad for it. It is all on the spot. We want these roads. If a farmer is living ten or twelve miles from a railway siding, and there is say six miles of heavy sand to get through, it is an impossibility for him to cart his produce to the railway. He has not strength enough to cart his wheat. If the Government want traffic for their railways, they must give road facilities. It is no use building a railway unless access to it is provided. Helping the farmer is what the Government have set out to do, and the road construction I have suggested would be practical help. The railways want the freight as quickly as they can get it, and the farmer requires to get his produce to market as easily as possible. Here, then, is an opportunity. Instead of spending the money in alleviating distress in the City, let the men go out and earn a reasonable wage, and the Government will have something permanent in return. They can either construct the roads by contract or give the money to the roads boards. I really think the roads boards could do better with the money than could the Government, and certainly they would

save the Government the cost of supervision. As for the State's trading enterprises—the balance sheets I believe, from what the Colonial Secretary says, are nearly ready—the Government must know whether they are paying or not. If they are not paying I say let us close them up and have the first loss as the best loss. They never will pay under the Government. Even with the monopoly we have in the railways the service scarcely pays. In many districts the Government have a monopoly of the liquor traffic, and even there the profits are not nearly as great as private enterprise would make them, while the establishments are not run any better than they would be by ordinary decent private owners. If there were no monopoly in regard to railways we would have competition, and so would secure a reduction of rates. The facilities offered on the railways are not good. One's stuff is thrown out at sidings, where it has to look after itself, and there are no roads to those sidings. My chief reason for rising was to remind the leader of the House that now we are starting a new session we should not have an echo of the old complaint that Bills are brought down at the last moment and no opportunity afforded for discussion.

Hon. E. McLARTY (South-West) [8.34]: After so much has been said it would be difficult indeed to make a speech without repeating much of what has fallen from previous speakers. A good deal has been said on the question of unemployment and the prevailing distress. All members are sensible of the fact that distress does prevail, but I must say I agree with the last speaker in regard to the means of giving employment. At the present time I can hardly understand how so many men can be employed about the metropolis at a high rate of wages. There is a great deal of work offering in country districts, and we know how difficult it is to obtain any money from the Government. They have stopped the subsidies to local authorities, and where at one time a roads board could go to the Government and secure £100 for some urgent work, there is now no chance whatever of success for such a mission. I

contend that a great number of unemployed might profitably be sent out to make roads in the various districts. Again, we have passed some railway Bills and no attempt has been made to construct the lines. Many of the unemployed might have been engaged in clearing. During the past week I have been spending a few days at the Caves House and at Busselton. I found the people there very anxious about the Margaret River railway, which has been promised to them for a long time, and which has been passed by Parliament. A large number of men might have been sent down there to clear the line and make ready for its construction. They would have been employed on work for which money will have to be expended later on. Again, I agree that although the Government are justified in seeing that the people are not hungry and not out in the cold, yet I hold that men are pouring into Perth in large numbers, knowing that they are to get these free meal tickets and a place in which to sleep, and in consequence they are making very little effort to secure employment. As an employer I have not found many men coming to me anxious for work. If they do come they want the highest rate of wages, and are quite independent about it. The other day a man applied to a neighbour of mine for employment. He was told that there was none available. But as my neighbour was driving to the railway station he offered the applicant a ride. So much did he sympathise with the man that he actually took off his boots and gave them to this seeker after work, because the latter was practically bare-footed. The man again appealed to him and said, "Could not you find me something to do, boss?" My friend said, "Well, I do not want you at all, but you can put in a week about the place if you like, and I will give you board and lodging, and at the end of the week a sovereign to help you on the road." I would not like in this Chamber to repeat the reply my friend got. It was not complimentary, but very expressive, directing him what to do with his work. That sort of thing is happening very frequently, and I think that

when there is actual distress in the country, the working man, as well as other people, should be prepared to concede a little. Mr. Cornell has referred to the case of the men on the Golden Mile. I am sure it is very commendable on their part, and speaks volumes for their loyalty and patriotism that they should impose a tax upon themselves and contribute a large sum of money as they have done; but I would remind Mr. Cornell that other people are doing the same thing. Those in better positions have not been forgetful of their obligations, and have contributed largely to different funds, many of them withholding their names from publication. I can vouch for that. The hon. member also blamed this Chamber for the deficit. It is very simple to say that. If those people who stood the heat and burden of the day in the earlier stages, and perhaps met with a little success, are to be burdened with the whole duty of carrying the Government and the country perhaps they might produce a deficit. But I am in accord with other speakers—and I am saying it without any offence to the Government. I do not approve of the way in which the money has been expended, and I am alarmed when I think what is going to be the end of it. We have gone for years on the policy of borrowing and spending. We found ourselves a few months ago without money and without employment for the people. There is a state of depression, and hundreds of men without work throw themselves on the State and the Government. We know what has taken place. The Premier has come back from the Eastern States and told us that he has three millions. I wonder what the Government will do when that money is exhausted—because that three millions has not been made a present to us; it has to be repaid, and it is increasing the interest bill enormously. Surely at a time of such distress it behoves every man to turn his attention to what is best to be done, and the Government to consider how best to expend that money in a way that will produce a return. I am afraid a great deal of the money will show a very poor return. I am not opposed to workers' homes as far as they are needed. I think, however, that the requirements in this direction have been fully met for some time past. I have heard a member of the Government say "If you can guarantee to give the workers homes at a reasonable rental there will be no necessity to go on with the building of those homes." It is pretty hard that private individuals should find homes for the workers at cheap rentals when we have such iniquitous rates to pay for the work going on at the present time. I believe bricklayers are receiving 17s. a day, and I am also assured that the union rate of work is 300 bricks a day for a man to lay. Why, he could lay them before breakfast, and not a very late breakfast at that. Then he requires to have a labourer at 12s. or 13s. a day. As a matter of fact a man is doing in three days what he could do in one, and he is getting a high rate of pay for it, yet people are expected to erect buildings and let them at a low rental. There are plenty of places empty, and rents have come down considerably. I know it to my sorrow. I have no hesitation in saying that the construction of workers' homes should be stopped, and that the money should be devoted to some purpose which will give a better return, and which is very much more needed. Let them go on with the construction of railways already passed and, as already pointed out, the construction of roads and the clearing of land. With reference to Sir Edward Wittenoom's remarks about clearing the land by day labour, there is a good deal to be said. Unless there is proper supervision over the men who are working on contract it is comparatively easy for them to do a good deal of what is known as fiddling. They can chop off the trees and leave the roots to be an obstruction. They are not so likely to clear it thoroughly as if they were paid by the day. It behoves the Government to have men, who understand the business, to inspect the work and see that it is properly done

and not only half done and that the specifications and everything connected with the work are properly set out. Under these conditions I do not agree with Sir Edward Wittenoom. I always opposed the day labour system and would give contract work wherever it was possible to give it. I am satisfied that the day labour system in this State is responsible for a great deal of the deficit to-day. Yesterday afternoon whilst Mr. Cullen was speaking, he made some remarks in connection with men receiving 9s. a day and not earning as much as 5s. and Mr. Ardagh asked him to give some instances. If he wants them I can get him 50 or a hundred instances. I have seen works going on where I believe that the men could have finished it in as many hours as it took them days to do. I remember an instance in which there were two labourers and two tradesmen on a job. The labourers had nothing whatever to do and the tradesmen were simply filling in time. The supervisor came along and made the remark, "I cannot see anything more done here than was done a fortnight ago." That, however, was all he said and he passed on. Subsequently a third tradesman was employed on the work who was not a union man. He went to work on the job—I know the man very well and used to complain of the time he took to do his work—and he was told that there was no necessity for him to work at that rate and that he must take his time over the job. He was told a second time that he must not get along so fast. The man himself told me that he had never had such a time in his life. He said, "I do not know how to fill in time till 12 o'clock on a Saturday. On one Saturday I had finished my job at 9 o'clock, and I said to the boss when he came along, 'I have finished the work,' and he said 'You are not worrying, are you?' and the boss then passed on to another job and left me. I accordingly went on until knocking-off time without having done any work." I know this to be a fact, because it came under my own notice. I told this also to the responsible heads

in the department and said that they should take this as an instance, and should take steps to get their work valued, and see what the cost had been for carrying it out. If they had taken my advice they would have been surprised. They admitted to me the difficulty that they had to contend against where small bodies of men are employed, and where it was not convenient or hardly possible to keep a man on to act as a constant supervisor over the work. This is not the case where large bodies of men are employed and where perhaps they have their gangers and get far more work out of their men. I am not condemning all the work that has been done by the Government. I have seen men working on the railways and working very hard. I do say that the system, however, is not the right one. I am satisfied that hundreds of men who are employed by the Government—and I go further than Mr. Cullen—do not even earn 5s. a day or a part of it, because I have seen them putting in their time at their work and doing nothing. Only yesterday in the City I was doing some business, and it was remarked to me that there were numbers of men employed in survey work close by, and further that the time that they had been on it was out of all reason. They went on to say to me that they were quite satisfied that the intention of the men was to make the work last until the following Saturday. I know that sort of thing is going on. I have entered my protest in this Chamber against this system year after year, and against the system of doing so much by day labour. I am satisfied that the time is drawing near when there will have to be a change. There is no question about it; the country cannot stand long the way we are going on. I have no doubt that the Government have done what they have thinking that they were doing right, but they are going on wrong lines altogether and the system they are carrying out will be absolute ruination to the State in my opinion. We must have a different system, and we must spend our money to the best advantage. We must curtail the work and not keep

more men employed on a particular job than is necessary. It is all very well for hon. members to say they are opposed to wages being reduced. No one wants to see the workmen's wages reduced and to see them obliged to work for what is less than a fair day's pay. At the same time, if we take the railway system of the State and look ahead and consider what the returns will be during the next twelve months compared with what they have been in the past, is it businesslike and reasonable or commonsense to suppose that we can employ the same number of men when there is only half the work to be carried out, and pay the same wages and yet keep on going? It is preposterous. No man in his private capacity, if he knew that his business was not paying and had a large number of hands employed, but would look around to see how he could reduce his expenditure. He would if possible do without a number of his employees and so save part of the expense. It is absurd to say that thousands of men can be kept on at the same wages when there is less work for them to do. Where is the money coming from and who is going to pay it? I suppose Mr. Cornell would say that those who were in a better position must be taxed up to the eyes. The people who are paying the taxes now are at their wits' end to know how to do it. There are all sorts of taxes to be paid. If a man has a bit of land, it is in the opinion of the Labour party sufficient to say that he is in a position to pay anything. When we realise the drawbacks of this season and think of the poor results of a year's labour—and I can speak from my own experience and my experience in my orchard, where, as soon as the fruit begins to ripen it is moving with fruit fly, and I have to strip the trees and give the fruit to the pigs and lose scores and scores of pounds, and where there are big quantities of apricots which have to be boiled down for the same purpose—we must see the seriousness of the position. The same thing applies to the potato crops. They are a failure in many places. It is said that the disease in some instances is

due to Irish blight, but many people doubt that. At the same time there is some very serious disease affecting potatoes. It is found in the south-western districts to some extent, and it is causing a great deal of anxiety. Our crops, the early crops in the south, are very poor. But the season has affected people in all parts of the State, and the late crops in the southern districts are in danger. I have 40 acres myself. It is a late sown crop, but it has turned out so badly that I have turned my stock on it to eat it off. I can assure the House that when we come to pay our way and to pay the taxes which are now imposed on us, there is very little left for the development of our holdings. I do not know any individuals who are on the land who, if they do make a little profit, whether they put their money into the banks or into their pockets, have anything left for the development of their holdings and the extension of their operations, so that they may produce more for the wealth of country. It is this further production that the country stands so much in need of. Until the people are in a position to spend money on developmental work, it is perfectly certain that the State cannot progress as rapidly as could be desired. The taxes are falling heavily on a great many people. Mr. Cornell says that the Bill to amend the land and income tax was brought into the House but was rejected. I do not know how the hon. member thinks that people can pay any more than they are paying. For my part I am contributing my share to the Treasury and many other people are doing the same. What I desire to emphasise is the fact that we must take seriously into consideration what we are going to do with the money we have in hand, if we have anything to spare. A great deal of it has been earmarked. We must spend it to the very best advantage and with the greatest possible care. Another three million has been added to our indebtedness, and my opinion is that it will go like water through a sieve, and that the distress will be greater than it has been in the past. Then we will have to go to those despised capitalists or

banks, which are being everlastingly abused, and ask them on our bended knees to give us a little more to go on with. We cannot keep on borrowing and spending and slashing our money about and still keep the State in a prosperous condition. The best work that the Government have undertaken has been the clearing of the land at Yandooka. I am not prepared to state with any authority as to the price that has been paid for the work. I have heard it could be done at 17s. 6d., and that this price would give a fair return for the contractors. It is only light timber, and I understand that most of it is ring-barked. Of course there are large bodies of men who are not always conversant with the best methods of clearing, but at the same time, I do not think the price offered was an unreasonable one. I am sure that men who are competent and understand their business could make a good wage out of such a price. I know of a case which came under my notice the other day where in a certain district the police constable had been instructed that he was to supply necessitous cases with rations. A man went to this constable and asked for rations, and the constable remarked, "You are a big strong fellow and ought to get work." The man replied, "I am earning plenty of money and have several contracts on hand." The constable asked him what he was doing there and the young man replied that it was no place for the constable to question him in that way, that the constable had instructions to give him rations and that he was to supply him and do what he was told. I mention this as an instance to show how careful the Government should be in making use of this benevolent system and how this system is going to be abused; I am afraid it has already been abused. It is all very well to help those who are in need, but there must be some limit to the system of feeding men. As Mr. Sommers has already pointed out, there is a tendency to cause men to crowd into the cities and for the occasion to arise for finding them with food and lodging, which can only lead to disastrous results. There is a certain number of men

in Perth who never do any work, and who will pull you up week after week and ask you to give them the price of a meal or of a bed. I have seen these men from year's end to year's end. Many of them are young men, too. They have no intention of working and they should be carefully watched out and made to work or allowed to starve. This may be a somewhat harsh thing to say, but I am afraid it is the only way of dealing with the man who will not work and who lives by going about and soliciting money as many of them are doing in the streets of Perth to-day. It is of course understood that it is often difficult for men who are married and have families, but who have no employment to leave town and go into the country to work. These should have the first consideration if there is any work going in the metropolis, or within easy distance of their homes, but I would send all the young men out to the country where they could do work, which would be remunerative to the State and from which the State could get some return. I saw in the paper that a number of men employed on railway construction work have decided that they would accept 9s. a day on the grading works at East Perth. I am sure they thought they were making a great concession in accepting 9s. a day. To my mind, however, they were very fortunate to get it. My experience of workmen is that they are not prepared to do more as a rule than they can possibly help, and that they expect the largest possible wage for the little they do. I have nothing further to say but to again express the hope and to emphasise it that the Government will take the greatest care in the expenditure of this money and see that we get some return for the outlay.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Clarke debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.4 p.m.
