

Hon. T. Walker: And Bunbury has swallowed another million.

Mr. HARRISON: We can still obtain money for developmental work, and in fitting out prospectors with plant—the Repatriation Board is furnishing them with supplies—we could take advantage of the knowledge of local roads board officials to ensure that such assistance was given to genuine men who would do their part thoroughly. The member for Bunbury said if we were in earnest we could do something. We as politicians can only give facilities. We want every citizen to be earnest and then, if we provide the requisite facilities and show confidence in the Government and in our country, we shall stimulate confidence in the men who are developing the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We have confidence in the State but not in the Government.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 4.52 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 5th August, 1919.*

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

### QUESTION—TORBAY-GRASSMERE DRAINAGE.

Hon. H. STEWART asked the Minister for Education: Will the Government lay on the Table of the House all papers dealing with the Torbay-Grassmere Drainage Scheme?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: Yes. The papers are now being collected, and will be laid on the Table in a few days.

### QUESTION—SOLDIERS' SETTLEMENTS, GERALDTON.

Hon. H. CARSON asked the Minister for Education: 1, Will the Government give immediate attention to the question of providing land in the Geraldton district for soldiers' settlements? 2, Will the Government have

further inquiry made in regard to estates already submitted for purchase by the Land Purchase Board and refused?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, If the hon. member will specify the estates to which he refers, inquiry will be made.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from Thursday, 31st July, 1919.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South): I am certain that all members of this Chamber are pleased to see Dr. Saw amongst us again after the services he has rendered to Australia and the Empire at the Front. I also think we were all very interested in his informative speech when moving the Address-in-reply. There was one part of that speech which struck me as particularly apt, inasmuch as it was a comment upon the actions of a political party that appears strangely inconsistent. He stated that this party had as the foremost plank of its political platform the policy of a white Australia, and that almost the next plank was the abolition of compulsory service for Home defence. I am a strong believer in the policy of a white Australia. I rather dread the prospect of the Australia of the future being a piebald Australia. We have two examples in the world of the dangers that may arise to Australia if we abandon our policy of a white Australia. We have the case of South America where the two races are inter-mixed, and there is now a race there that does not tend to the advancement of the country. It is an altogether inferior race in South America, and the prospects of that great country are not nearly so bright as they would be were it in the hands of and controlled by an entirely white people. The other example which may be quoted is that of the United States. In South America the two races intermarry. In the case of the United States, the two races keep apart, and the negroes are increasing in greater proportion than the whites. We constantly have reports of racial riots there. Only a few days ago in the newspapers we read cables showing particulars of disturbances between the blacks and the whites. The fact that the negroes are increasing in such rapid proportions as compared with the whites, and that the inferior races are reproducing their species much more rapidly than the superior race, is one great cloud hanging over what would otherwise be the bright future of the United States. For those and other reasons I believe it is the duty of the people of Australia to-day to as long as possible keep Australia white. Australia is the last of the world's spaces to be filled, and it is the duty of those who are here to-day to keep it as a place where the white races of the future may expand. It may be argued that it would be better for the people in Australia to-day that coloured

races should come into Australia, and that the present white races should be a sort of superior people while the inferior races would be doing all the heavy work. Even if it could be shown that it would be better for the white races of to-day that the coloured races should come into Australia, I think we ought to take a broader view of the question and look forward, not only to the interests of ourselves and our children, but also to those of our children's children. Because of that it is essential that we should maintain a policy of a white Australia as long as we possibly can. But I can scarcely understand the argument of individuals who are just as strong as I am in favour of a white Australia, and at the same time opposing compulsory service for home defence. The two planks are curiously inconsistent, and it is difficult to conceive responsible men being in the position of supporting them both. So far as the Speech generally is concerned it does not contain any novel features, and because it does not contain novel features in so far as legislation is concerned, I am not inclined to find fault with it. What is wanted at the present time is not so much new legislation as good administration. There is much in the way of adverse criticism that I could indulge in, and I think any member of this House could indulge in, regarding the action of the Government. I am not merely referring to the Mitchell Government but also to the two previous Governments which were in office during recess. The Governments in office since last we met to my mind committed many grave blunders, but the times are much too serious and the discontent too great for us to indulge to any extent in severe criticism. Any criticism that we should direct towards the Government nowadays should not be so much destructive criticism, or if it be destructive criticism I think we should be prepared to provide something of a constructive nature to replace what we are proposing to destroy. I am glad to see that the Government have promised a Price Fixing Bill. I thoroughly approve of that Bill. At the same time it is not a cure for high prices. Furthermore, I admit that price fixing may be attended by many evils; it may in some instances discourage production, and even importation, and thus promote shortage of supplies and compel high prices. There are dangers connected with price fixing, but at the same time there are abnormal conditions, and I approve of the suggested legislation as a temporary expedient, inasmuch as it may be likely to check profiteering. Price fixing is also necessary in view of the present discontent. It is essential that the Government should do something, and if possible make prices reasonable and prevent any extortion that may be imposed. I was rather surprised that there was no reference whatever in the Speech to the somewhat extraordinary action that has been taken by the Federal Government in connection with the mining industry. The Federal Government have prohibited the export of base metal ores except to the Eastern States. That is a mat-

ter which vitally affects several mining communities in Western Australia, and to me that action appears grossly unjust. The Federal authorities have given various reasons why they have prohibited the export of base metal ores. The first reason that is cited is that it is claimed it gives employment to men in Australia. Whatever employment it may give to men in the Eastern States in ore reduction works, it is absolutely certain that it checks production in Western Australia, and prevents employment here and the opening up of our mineral resources. Another argument that is advanced by the Federal authorities is that the War Precautions Act makes the procedure they have adopted necessary. The war has been finished for more than nine months, and even if the total output in Western Australia of lead and copper were shipped to an enemy country it would not give that country one day's supply. Moreover, with one small exception, none goes there or has ever gone there. Another of the reasons advanced for this action of the Federal authorities is, that protection is the policy of the country. When protection goes to the extent of forbidding export it seems to me that it is a case of protection run mad, and Western Australians are refused permission to produce their own materials. Let us take a parallel case. Suppose the same principle were to be applied to wheat as has been applied by the Federal Government to base metals? What would happen? It would mean that no person would be allowed to ship his own wheat to the best market, but he must send it to Melbourne to be ground into flour there and he must take what the Melbourne millers would choose to pay. Surely that would be neither just nor fair, and neither would it be in the interests of any industry. I would like to know the views of the State Government on this matter, and I would like to know what action they have taken to protest against it. I hope the leader of the House will be able to throw some light on the matter. I desire also to refer to the trouble which is so serious just now upon the goldfields, and which is indirectly affecting the whole of the State, namely the firewood workers' dispute. The goldfields throughout the whole of their history in Western Australia have been singularly free from any serious industrial dispute. There has been no prolonged strike there and there are few parts of Australia where so many men are engaged and where there have been so comparatively few cessations of work. The only cessations of any length or consequence we have had there have been in connection with the wood lines. The production of firewood for the mines is really the key to the industry, and its cessation at once puts a stop to work on the mines. In every instance the wood line troubles have been very difficult to deal with. Personally I have made every endeavour to get at the facts of the present dispute. One hears the most contradictory reports from both sides, and probably each side is inclined to exaggerate its own merits and

minimise or altogether ignore the other point of view. I have suggested a solution of the difficulty, and I think it is the only possible one that I can see at the present time. It is the solution which was applied to the wood line disputes which occurred before, namely, settlement by negotiation. On one occasion the then Premier of the State, Sir Newton Moore, went to the goldfields and both parties agreed to submit the matter to him. The dispute was settled in a few hours. On another occasion when the men were on strike a Labour Federal Minister, the late Mr. Fraser, was on the goldfields. The trouble was submitted to him, and again it was fixed up in a few hours. On the third occasion Mr. Collier was Acting Premier, and again the dispute was settled. What I would suggest now is that the wood line companies should place their case entirely in the hands of either the Premier or Mr. Scaddan, and give them discretion to act as they thought right, and if the wood line workers would place their case entirely in the hands of the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Collier, to act in accordance with what he thought was just, I firmly believe that if those representative gentlemen met, having full power from the respective parties to act in accordance with their best judgment, an arrangement would be devised which would be acceptable to both sides, and work would be resumed. I am glad that the Government have given relief to the large number of men on the goldfields who are out of work through no fault of their own. In the distribution of that relief errors may have been committed, but it was better that those errors should be committed than that no relief should be given. It is inconceivable that men who are unable to provide for their own requirements should be left with their families without the necessaries of life. The Government are to be congratulated upon the prompt manner in which they distributed relief to those who were unfortunate enough to be out of employment through circumstances over which they have no control. Before concluding I would like to welcome the new member, Mr. Pantou, to this House. He will find in this Chamber a number of men who, however they may differ, are ever ready to hear another's views and to give them consideration. Furthermore, I would like to extend to you, Sir, my congratulations on the honour that has been conferred upon you by your fellow members, an honour that has been well earned and well deserved. I also wish, in common with other members, to express my deep regret at the death of our late esteemed and worthy President. The late Sir Henry Briggs was a friend of all of us. He was a man who was kind in thought and word and deed. It is a great many years since I first met him, so many years ago that one does not like to count them. I was not a member of this Chamber then, nor had I any idea of becoming a member of Parliament. I do not think he was then a member of Parliament. But, on a visit he paid to the goldfields, I was able to render him some trifling service, the value of which he greatly exaggerated, and

when he returned to Perth he was kind enough to send me a book which I now greatly value because of the inscription it contains, and also because the book, to my mind, is typical of the man. The book was that beautiful, I might almost say, great work by Lubbock, "The Pleasures of Life." As members know, our late President thoroughly appreciated the pleasures of life, the pleasures of books, the pleasures of reading, the pleasures of friendship, the pleasures of conversation, the pleasures of nature and of art. Had a man moulded his life upon the contents of that book, I think he would have become the man we knew our late President to be. Now he has passed away I think a fitting epitaph on him might be—"He served his country and loved his kind."

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North): I did not intend to speak this afternoon because I understood Mr. Lynn had engaged to continue the debate, and knowing that, when he makes a speech, he does so fully and well, I did not anticipate that I should have an opportunity until to-morrow. Let me preface my few words by stating how gratifying it is to see our old friend Dr. Saw amongst us again. He is one of the best illustrations that could be afforded of men who at once recognised their duty to their country and their Empire. He left his profession at the call of country and went forward willingly and did his duty manfully, and we are all pleased to see him back. I would like also to extend a welcome to the new member, Mr. Pantou. I am sorry I have not his personal acquaintance but we must all admit, judging by what we have read of him in the Press, that the views he has expressed must, to a large extent, be in strong contrast to those which have been expressed in this House at different times. For all that, I personally welcome him because it can be no longer said that this House represents only one portion of the community. Now, at all events, we have here one who has been a recognised representative of other views than those to which this House has been accustomed. Perhaps, like some others, he has come here to curse, but let us hope, like them, he will remain to praise. I intend to deal with merely a few of the paragraphs in the Governor's Speech. I congratulate the Government on the Speech because it is brief and embraces some of the principal topics of the day.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is not very meaning.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I am not going to say it makes any sensational departures or forecasts, or any wonderful disclosures, but it does seek to deal with those troubles under which this State at present is undoubtedly labouring. The first and most important statement is that in the fourth paragraph which says—"Grave industrial turmoil is manifest in almost all parts of the world." This, to my mind, is the most serious part of the whole Speech. It indicates a very serious state of affairs which, to a

large extent, exists not only in this State and in the Commonwealth, but in all parts of the world. Everything depends on a satisfactory settlement as to how this State or the Commonwealth progresses. The problem at present is how to allay it. If we can only find out what is at the foundation of the troubles existing betwixt labour and capital, and do something to allay it, we shall thereby overcome most of the existing troubles. No substantial progress can be made until some understanding is arrived at or something is done to bring together the industrial portions of the community. There is, unfortunately, an appearance of a very great difference of opinion and a certain amount of class hatred. This is very regrettable and can have originated in sentiment rather than in fact. Two or three arguments are frequently put forward from different points of view. One is, why should one man work more than another? The second argument is that the worker should have all the results of his labour, and a third, that no one should work because it adds to capital. In spite of those views, someone must work, because work is the fundamental requirement of our existence. All will admit that one of the obvious things essential to our existence is food, and food can only be brought forth by work. There are four articles of food which are absolutely necessary to our existence—bread, meat, vegetable and fruit. I pass by such other articles as fish, poultry and eggs. How are those necessaries to be produced? They can only be produced in one way, and that is by work. There is no artificial way of producing them. It must be done by work. The question is, who is going to do this work?

Hon. J. Cornell: That is where we differ.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Members of Parliament should try to work out this problem, because my theory is that until we can arrive at some understanding by which we can mutually work together, the country cannot progress. By going into the very fundamental part of the whole business, I am trying to show that food must be produced and someone must produce it. There are a lot of workers—and by workers I mean particularly those who work with their hands—who do not care about working anywhere except amid the pleasantest surroundings. Numbers insist on working in secondary industries in towns and cities, where they can have access to the amusements and the pleasures of life, and where they can enjoy themselves much better than if they were engaged in primary industries. They do not care about working in the primary industries in the country, and those who are willing to work in the primary industries are asking such wages now as have hitherto been unknown and, in consequence, the cost of production is so expensive that it raises the cost of living, and everyone grumbles. The only way to overcome this is to find some way by which all can mutually work together. A reply often given to this

question is, "Give the wages asked to those who undertake the primary industries and they will be content." If we do give them the wages they ask, the price of production is raised and the question of the high cost of living comes in. This, in turn, is met by the next succeeding paragraph in the Speech, in which we find that it is intended to fix prices. Therefore if, on the one hand, the cost of production is raised by an increase in wages and other expenses, and price fixing keeps down the return to the producer, production will not continue. Let us follow this matter to its logical conclusion. Suppose there is not sufficient food to go round, or it is of such a price that people cannot afford it. What happens? It has been suggested in the newspapers, and I believe by some people at Boulder the other day, that they did not intend to see themselves, or other people, starve so long as there was food about. Imagine what takes place. The food is seized by force. How long will that continue? Only until the shops are emptied once. People will not produce if that sort of thing takes place and it can only lead to a state of chaos. Therefore, if these conditions continue, where shall we drift? We are told that there are numbers of people advising the workers to this course of action. What is the alternative to the existing state of affairs, and what is proposed in place of it? If only we can discover something that will bring all parties together, we may be able to solve the problem. The point I am trying to make is that these differences of opinion exist, and exist most strongly and most markedly. I tried to show some of the results which must accrue if these differences continue. I urge that all the efforts of members of Parliament should be used in the direction of coming to some arrangement by which the present state of affairs can be ameliorated and both parties can work amicably together. One mistake, in my opinion, is to have strife when these differences of opinion arise. Why not let the disputes go on, and work in the meantime on the understanding that any settlement arrived at will be retrospective? Thus the industries would be kept going, and the workers and all others concerned would get the money for themselves and their families. Let the parties make their own tribunals. I am not in favour of the Arbitration Courts; I should like to see them done away with. I am sure the sensible leaders on each side must see that it would be better to continue work during discussions, as I suggest. Of course, if the worker will not work under any circumstances, and will not allow anyone else to come in and work, under the views put forward by Mr. Kirwan, the question arises, who is to do the work? I have seen statements in the newspapers that no settlement is desired. Recently I saw the following statement—

If every present claim were granted, settlement would be no nearer; the leaders would take possession of all that was given

and prepare the way for new assaults upon society.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But I did not say anything like that.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: No. I am quoting from a newspaper. If that state of mind exists, of course a solution of the industrial problem is impossible. But I cannot believe that men of brains—and all the brains are not to be found on one side in these disputes, by any means—will wish to bring about conditions such as those. Still, what can be the end of the turmoil if it continues? I have thrown out these views merely because I consider that that is the great trouble we are all labouring under at present. Once settle that matter and get our industries going, with each party contented as nearly as possible—I do not suppose profound contentment will ever be met with—and many of our other troubles will decrease materially or diminish altogether. Another paragraph in the Speech refers to increased production. Here again it is a question of labour, and until that question has been settled it is useless to talk about increased production. We hear a good deal about secondary industries, the establishment of butter factories, and so forth. But how can that be done until there is some recognised position as regards labour? We know that no industry can be carried on without labour. Capital is necessary to industry, and labour is necessary. Take the case of butter factories. Suppose a man has a good farm and buys 100 cows at £20 a piece—£2,000—makes all arrangements for milking, engages five or six men to help, obtains all the paraphernalia necessary for sending the milk to market, and then just in the middle of it his men say to him, "Another 10s. a week, or milk the cows yourself." The man has either to give the increased wages—and up goes his cost and there is a grumble about high prices and a demand for price fixing—or he must let his dairying enterprise be ruined. Until the industrial position is altered, no one, I think, will put his money into a venture of that kind; and thus production is limited. I must leave it to those who know more about the subject than I do to see if they cannot discover some remedy by which this evil may be overcome. With regard to a man getting all the results of his labour, there is only one way that I know of, and that is to go on a farm; and sometimes the full results of a farmer's labours include losses. Undoubtedly, the man who farms gets the full results of all his labours, including losses. Another paragraph of the Speech refers to giving reliable facilities of transit to the North-West. That is an extremely important matter, because that part of our State is apt to be largely, I will not say neglected, but overlooked. Here, again, however, comes the eternal question of labour. Had it not been for the seamen's strike, there would have been no trouble at all as regards the North-West, because the steamers would have been

going up and down the coast, and the price of meat here would have been 6d. per lb. less. The seamen's dispute could have been conducted while the work of running the steamers was going on, and then there would have been no trouble in the North-West and no grumbling here about meat supplies and the price of meat. I would say more on this subject, but I am confident the Government are fully seized with the necessity for affording all the facilities they can in the way of steamship communication between this part of the State and the North-West. The matter is a very serious one, seeing that the North-West has no railway service but is entirely limited to steamer communication. The Speech also contains a paragraph about immigration. That, I think, is looking a long way ahead. We have to settle our present difficulties before we introduce more people into this State. At present we have numbers of our own people idle, and many of them living on Government relief. Therefore it is useless to talk about introducing immigrants, who would probably join the unemployed in drawing relief from the Government. I trust, therefore, that the Government will not regard immigration proposals too seriously at the present juncture. As regards repatriation, I am still of the opinion that the Government would have done a great deal better had they adopted the suggestion I made here last year—that the Yandanooka, Avondale, and Brunswick properties owned by the Government should be turned into probationary farms, so that those returned soldiers who cared about going into the country could have at once been sent to those estates and been paid a living wage there for six or eight months, until they found whether or not they liked country life. That would have obviated their congregating in the cities, than which there can be nothing worse for men. The estates in question ought not to have been cut up, but should have been used for the purpose I indicate. On those lines the properties would have been improved and our returned soldiers would have been afforded an opportunity of finding out whether they cared for country life. Another point which I am rather inclined to favour, as doing away with a lot of the assistance to farmers and the molly-coddling of the farmers, is that the Government should offer to advance the sum of 5s. per bushel on wheat. In my opinion, more would be done for farming by that means than by anything else, because it would induce men to take up farming land and work it with a view of success. If the Government should lose a little, through not being able to sell the wheat at a sufficiently high price, it would be only another way of spending money that they are spending at present. It would be the most effective way of assisting the farmer with public money. The extra 8d. per bushel would save a good many thousands of pounds in other directions. I do not maintain that this course would pay the Government directly. I recognise, as I think all of us do, that the Government find them-

selves in an exceedingly difficult position. As to price fixing, I am not going to address myself to that subject now, because I understand that a Bill for this purpose is coming before the House. With respect to the finances we shall also have an opportunity of saying a few words later. However, to my mind, and I cannot help impressing it once more upon members of this House, the great thing is to find a solution of the labour and industrial difficulty. If only we can do that, then our State will go ahead. If we cannot do it, Western Australia must go back. Our taxation is bound to be extremely severe. We have to find money not only to meet the cost of administration, but also money for loans to help our soldiers. Money is needed in all directions; and, if there is no production, where is the money to come from? Indeed, if there is no production, where is the food to come from that is required to maintain our population? I have pleasure in supporting the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson debate adjourned.

*House adjourned 5.30 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 5th August, 1919.*

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

### QUESTION—FIREWOOD WORKERS' DISPUTE—RELIEF.

Mr. GREEN (without notice) asked the Premier: Has his attention been called to a report in to-day's "West Australian" to the

effect that he has not sent instructions to the officer who is charged with the distribution of relief to the unemployed on the Eastern Goldfields, and have the instructions been sent since the report was published?

The PREMIER replied: Relief is being distributed. The report in question refers to some conditions relative to the matter, and those conditions have been mailed to the fields to-day.

### QUESTION—BASE METALS INDUSTRY.

Mr. MALEY (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Will he make a statement to the House regarding the position of the base metal industry arising out of the recent conference attended by him in Melbourne? 2, Are not the Government of opinion that the embargo placed by the Federal Authorities on the export of ore or concentrates is strangling the industry in Western Australia, by reason of the absence of treatment facilities here? 3, What steps do the Government propose to take to urge the removal of the embargo?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: I regret that I am unable at this stage to state exactly what occurred at the conference in question, the matter being confidential pending representations being made by the various State Governments. I am, however, in a position to say that the deliberations of the conference disclosed the fact that the entire copper mining industry of Australia was practically closed down owing to the sudden collapse of the market upon the declaration of peace. In connection with other base metals the problem, so far as Western Australia is concerned, is evidently one of finding efficient means of treatment locally. At present we have to send most of our metals to the Eastern States for treatment, which means that we have to pay the freight from Western Australian ports very frequently after rehandling here, to New South Wales for refinement, and then we have to pay the ordinary freight charges from the port of Sydney to the markets of the world. The problem is a pretty big one, but I want to assure the producers of base metals in this State that we are going to try to solve it as quickly as we can. I have obtained some information from the Eastern States regarding the matter, and I learn that the establishment of local works for treatment will require a fair amount of capital and careful handling, otherwise there will be mistakes. However, that is the only solution of the problem that I can see for the base metal producers of Western Australia. I assure the hon. member that the matter is receiving the careful attention of the Government.

Mr. Maley: What about the embargo?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: As regards the restriction imposed upon base metals produced in Western Australia, it has been decided as a matter of national policy that these metals shall be refined in Aus-