

Mr. MALEY: The farmer of this State, by reason of the war and the consequent depression, has been in a poor way for the last four years. To-day the farmer is recovering his position and the future looks bright for him.

Mr. Pickering: And for the country.

Hon. P. Collier: Oh, that follows.

Mr. MALEY: Yes, the good old ship of State has been in trouble because the farmer has been battling against the seas of adversity. To-day the farmer is coming into his own, and the development which had been arrested during the past four years is proceeding. When the farmer is in a good way, he is the fertiliser of every avenue of trade in the State.

Mr. DUFF (Claremont) [5.10]: I did intend to touch one or two subjects such as mining, but as the debate is approaching its conclusion I think those subjects can perhaps be better dealt with when the Estimates are before us. After a trip to the Eastern portion of our agricultural belt, I am pleased to say that the crops are looking exceedingly well, and the farmers are very sanguine of getting a record yield. I am pleased to say that the soldier farmers there appear to be very contented with their lot. It is a matter for congratulation to the Premier, Mr. McLarty and the staff, that they have handled the soldier settlement scheme in such a capable way. When the Premier was elected to office, all of us on this side of the House recognised that he had a very stupendous task before him.

Hon. P. Collier: You were a bit doubtful about him at that time.

Mr. DUFF: We were doubtful about getting a man to take the task on.

Hon. P. Collier: Is that how he came to get it?

Mr. DUFF: I believe that influenced me in my vote. We can congratulate ourselves that we were able to get a man of his force and optimism to take the position.

Mr. Green: Would not you give it a go?

Mr. DUFF: I might have done so. I have given many things a go, and have been successful in some of them. I hope the Federal Government will give the State every facility to settle upon its agricultural lands an unlimited number of settlers. After all, the man who tills the land is the one who is to be relied upon to fight for it in time of danger.

The Minister for Works: Hear, hear! It has always been so.

Mr. DUFF: There is another matter I wish to mention, and I hope the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) will not think I am usurping his position by bringing it forward.

Mr. Pickering: He has the same right.

Mr. DUFF: My only reason for bringing it forward is that I am mixed up in the mining portion of his electorate. Several meetings have been held in Westonia district to urge the adoption of a land scheme for that

particular area. A league has been formed, known as the Westonia Agricultural Land League. The league, which includes in its membership the most influential people in the district, is endeavouring to bring about a land settlement scheme. I am quite satisfied that at Westonia we have land which is absolutely unexcelled in this State, but the objection will always be raised, as it was raised 10 or 11 years ago when the late Mr. Paterson was managing the Agricultural Bank, that the rainfall is insufficient. That argument cropped up in regard to the Merredin district, but later on Mr. Paterson was impressed, and the area was extended to the rabbit-proof fence.

Mr. Harrison: Meckering was the limit at one time.

Mr. DUFF: Beyond the rabbit-proof fence, we have two farmers contiguous to the railway working their farms in a very big way, and making them pay better perhaps than some of us people who are farming at Merredin. We go to Southern Cross and we find there six farmers working without any assistance from the Agricultural Bank and they are making their farms pay. So that, after all, the rainfall argument must fall to the ground. But that is not altogether the trouble with the Westonia people. They have the mining regulations in the road. The mining regulations state that within two miles of the nearest boundary of any townsite or suburban area 20 acres will be allotted, and that beyond two miles from such boundary the area will be 500 acres. Those who have been farming will agree with me that 500 acres of land is not enough for a man to farm properly. He certainly cannot grow wheat and go in for mixed farming on such a limited area. Nothing less than 1,000 acres will do. I am going to ask the Premier to cause this regulation to be amended so that the beautiful forest lands which extend from the railway for miles around the Westonia goldfields may be thrown open for settlement. I am going to advocate a combination of mining and agricultural interests, because when the areas are being cleared for farming purposes the timber cut can be used on the mines for firewood and also as mining timber. In that way the farmers will be realising something as the result of their initial labours. In other instances such timber has to be burnt. There is also a market for that class of timber at Kalgoorlie. It can be shifted at Walgoolan, where this belt of country starts. I can assure the Premier that if he will go into this matter he will be able to assist 200 or 300 people to go on the land, all of whom are waiting now to take up areas there. So far as the rainfall is concerned, records have been kept for the past five years, and the average during that period has been 15 inches. That rainfall extends from April to October, and anyone who has had anything to do with farming is aware that that is all that is required, and in the area in question it falls in the proper

months, especially in September, when it is looked for. If the Premier will only take up this matter we may in those parts create, by the admixture of mining and agriculture, a Ballarat or a Bendigo. I intend to refer to a subject which I believe is exercising the minds not only of the people of this State but of everyone in the Commonwealth, namely the prevailing industrial and social unrest, which I claim is mainly due to the non-standardisation of the cost of foodstuffs and other commodities required in our homes. To my mind it is sheer waste of time for the judges in our Arbitration Courts to attempt to fix wages when, directly they do so, up go the prices of commodities. We have started at the wrong end. What I recommend is that we immediately standardise the cost of living. It is easy to do so in a country so prolific as Australia is. It has a sparse population, and that is an advantage in carrying out such a scheme. If we can do that, we will adjust wages and thereby bring about social and industrial contentment. Such a step would, I think, overcome in an appreciable way our present industrial difficulties. Perhaps someone will say that I am trespassing in the sphere of Federal politics, but I believe, and I think everybody else believes, that this question gravely concerns us as a State and as a portion of the great Commonwealth. Australia to-day is bulging with exportable foodstuffs and other commodities. We have meat, wheat, wool, butter, bacon, and I could go on for a considerable time enumerating other things, not forgetting fruit and vegetables. We produce all these things prolifically, but they are not made available at a fair price to us Australians. Take our meat. When the Wyndham works were started by the Labour Government, was it intended that they should only export? If that was the case I am very sorry for the intention of Parliament at the time, because after all should we not look after our own first? In Perth to-day it is not possible to get more than a pound or two of dripping, a product that must, with the fat cattle we have in Kimberley, be there in tons. It seems, however, that the desire is to export everything that we are short of in Perth. It seems rather peculiar that mutton should be so cheap to-day. I think we can get meat to-day for 4d. or 5d. a pound, where as a couple of months ago it fetched 1s. 2d. a pound. We all remember a cable from London which told us that there was a glut in the market, and that Australian meat was selling at 6d. a pound. On the very same day sales of mutton were effected in the Midland yards at 1s. 1d. on the hoof.

Mr. Harrison: What about the pelt?

Mr. DUFF: The hon. member says what about the pelt? We will give him the pelt in. The price is too high, and the sooner the suggestion which was advanced by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) that chilling works be erected at Fremantle to receive the products of the different freezing works is adopted, the better it will be for the people of Western Australia. It would anyhow bring a little competition along, and

that would help us to get our meat at something like a fair price. It behoves every country, on account of the world's condition, to be selfish and to look after itself. I am wondering, too, why we have not more flour mills, and why, instead of exporting wheat we do not export flour. We know that to-day we are practically starving for the by-products of the mill.

Mr. Harrison: Why?

Mr. DUFF: We know why. Because they are rushing away the wheat, perhaps to a better market. I am credibly informed that a day or two ago there was not a bag of bran to be purchased in Kalgoorlie or in the sister municipality of Boulder.

The Minister for Works: We could not get it in the south-west.

Mr. DUFF: The time has come when this matter should be taken seriously in hand. Two nights ago we saw that soldiers who had taken up land for poultry farming, turned it up because they had to pay 12s. a bushel for their wheat. Fancy asking 12s. a bushel for wheat in a country where there is such a prolific growth of this commodity. When Sir Henry Lefroy submitted his motion to Parliament last session suggesting a guarantee of 5s. per bushel to wheat growers—and I am claiming to be one of them—it was thought that the price we were going to get was an extraordinarily good one. But now we are asking 12s. a bushel.

Mr. Pickering: Are you turning it down?

Mr. DUFF: No, but I have a little feeling for other people who are starving for it. Let us fix the price for home consumption on a reasonable basis, and we can export the balance to the world's markets. We can then get what is called the world's parity.

Mr. Harrison: What is it?

Mr. DUFF: I would like to know myself.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No one else knows.

Mr. DUFF: It should be our duty to provide for ourselves first and export afterwards, preferably to Great Britain. What is wanted in Australia is a cheaper breakfast table. I believe to-day we are paying 100 per cent. more than we should be paying for our meals, and I do not think it requires a knowledge of economic science to enable us to make effective suggestions such as those I have put forward. We have our pooling system, which provides the machinery for carrying it out. I believe all the difficulties can be overcome.

Mr. Pickering: By the farmers sacrificing everything.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are doing very well.

Mr. DUFF: They are sacrificing nothing. Let us provide for ourselves first. We were satisfied with 3s. 6d. per bushel at one time. I trust that some action will be taken by the Chamber in the direction I have suggested. It is the only way out of the difficulty. If we can get a resolution through the House and forward it to the Federal Parliament they will realise that we are in earnest in moving in the matter. I believe also that if the Prime Minister will adopt the suggestion I have made he will be able to bring down

with one barrel the profiteer and the Bolshevik whom he professes to be so anxious to bring to book.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [5.30]: I am not altogether disappointed at the lack of policy disclosed in the Governor's Speech. I never expected anything better from the present Government, despite the fact that last session they were continually desiring to get into recess for the avowed purpose of preparing measures to put before Parliament. We find in the Speech practically nothing of any value.

The Minister for Works: You must carry on with hope.

Mr. LUTEY: Hope is very good, but we want something more than that. From the speeches delivered, I am convinced that there are very few, even on the Ministerial side, with confidence in the Government. The only speaker who has complimented the Government on their policy is the member for Greenough (Mr. Maley). The member for Subiaco (Mr. Brown) and the member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) severely criticised them. In fact, judging by their speeches, I cannot understand why those two members are not on this side of the House. Possibly the close approach of the elections induced them to frame their speeches in the way they did. If their utterances had been made by a couple of Labour men outside of Parliament, that little Mephistopheles from Wales would have deported them from Australia. The member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) also warmly criticised the Government. I believe that if a vote were taken, and if members on the Ministerial side voted according to their utterances, the Government would find themselves in the cold shades of Opposition. I visited the House years ago when the late Hon. Frank Wilson was leader of the Opposition, and the Labour Government were in power. At that time the Opposition were continually criticising the Labour Government and asserting that there was no necessity for further taxation, that nothing but business acumen was necessary to bring about a satisfactory state of affairs. Then we had as Premier Sir Henry Lefroy, whose sole policy was produce, produce, produce; and now we have Mr. Mitchell, whose sole policy seems to be expressed in the words, vigour, enterprise and goodwill. I have yet to learn that the community of Western Australia lacks vigour. Taking them generally, they are an essentially vigorous population. But it seems that any old cry is good enough for the present Government. As for enterprise, I should like some of the Ministers to let us know what form the enterprise of the present Government has taken. Last session, and indeed the session before, I had occasion to draw attention to the necessity for a largely increased output at the State brickworks. The Minister for Works at that time complained that he could not get the essential machinery. Now I am credibly informed that there is sufficient machinery at

the State brickworks to largely increase the present output, if only they had another Hoffman kiln. Yet the Minister for Works, the most enterprising of Ministers—which is not saying much for the present Government—cannot see his way clear to erect that additional Hoffman kiln in order to increase the output, notwithstanding that a number of bricklayers are walking the streets for want of bricks to carry on with.

The Minister for Works: That is scarcely correct.

Mr. LUTEY: I am informed that it is so, and I believe it is true.

The Minister for Works: I can take you to a dozen houses in course of construction hung up for want of bricklayers, not for want of bricks.

Mr. LUTEY: I am surprised to find that no steps have been taken to ensure a sufficient supply of bricks. As for goodwill, I fail to see that the Government are doing anything to create goodwill in the community; in fact they appear to be moving in the opposite direction. We find that the employers, who are the masters of the present Government, are doing all they can to foment ill-feeling. Quite lately Mr. Dunne has been down the South-West forming another union amongst the employees of the fruit-growers, notwithstanding that there is already a union in that industry. Such action will not tend to goodwill, but will be prejudicial to the fruit-growers and to the State generally. Any responsible Government seized with the seriousness of the present situation would bring down industrial legislation, but there is no suggestion in the Speech of any move in this direction. In view of the congestion of the Arbitration Court, the slowness of its procedure, and the general unrest prevailing, one would have thought something would be done to amend the Act. There is no mention in the Speech of any such intention. The public service strike could easily have been averted. Nine months ago the public servants held a big demonstration outside Parliament House. Surely that should have been accepted as an indication that those men were serious in their demands. Any Minister of business acumen, with a knowledge of industrial affairs, would have set to work to settle the trouble out of hand. I was amazed to see the public service come out as strongly as they did on that occasion and make their demands at Parliament House. One often hears reference to the riots on the goldfields, but I am convinced that the public servants of Perth, on the day of their demonstration, were more determined than those men on the goldfields who made their protest some months ago. Yet the trouble with the public service was allowed to go on increasing in strength for nine months, until at last the country was faced with a strike that might have had very serious consequences. The general public, perhaps, do not realise how near we all were to a calamity. The Premier says the country is prosperous. It may be so in a