

Mr. BROWN (Subiaco): There are three golden rules which every speaker who desires to be effective should observe: first, to stand up; second, to speak up; and, third and most important, to know when to shut up. I disagree with the criticism of the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) of the speech of the leader of the Opposition in this debate. I think the leader of the Opposition was very fair and impartial, and delivered a criticism of the Ministry and their following which was well deserved. One thing said by the member for Pilbara in which I fully agree with him is that the time is past for party politics. The hon. member stated that the time had arrived for the formation of a party of the electors of Pilbara and himself. The Premier has said more than once that he believes the day of party politics to be past, and that he will do what he can to prevent a continuance of the system. The Minister for Mines at a very crowded meeting held in the Perth Town Hall a few weeks ago emphatically stated that his experience of party politics was such as to lead him to regard the continuance of that system as undesirable. We have also heard from the member for Guildford (Mr. Davies) his objection to party politics, and the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) has stated straight out that he wishes to be relieved from party politics. Further, the member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany) last night expressed his approval of the abolition of party politics. The member for Subiaco is quite in accord with all those speakers, and I hope that in the immediate future there will come into existence in this House a body that will put a stop to the principle of the ins and outs. Nationalism was a suitable name for a special time, but that time is now past. I hope Ministers will stay on the floor of the House, and that in future we shall have in this Chamber, instead of His Majesty's Ministerial advisers and His Majesty's opposition, only His Majesty's Ministerial advisers. During the war we learnt of a territory termed "no man's land," on which friend and foe met to save life, and very often succeeded in doing so. I should like to see a "no man's land" created in this House, so that all the members of this Chamber could meet in the endeavour to save this State from losing self-government. At present we have in this House two well-defined parties—the private enterprise party, who see only through the right eye, and sometimes not very clearly with that, and the State enterprise or Labour party, who mostly see only through the left eye.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What about the Country party?

Hon. P. Collier: They have no eye at all.

Mr. BROWN: Both the parties I have mentioned may be described as one-eyed. These two parties are in the habit of calling each other very disagreeable names. The State enterprise party call the private enterprise party shipping sharks, freezing lambers, manufacturing boodlers, beef brigands, bread and butter exploiters, and a thousand and one other uncomplimentary terms. The private

enterprise party retaliate by saying that there is no good on the other side, that members opposite are mostly thieves and loafers and blackguards and drunkards and gamblers. After all said and done, what is the use to the community of having those terms thrown about? The time is past for that kind of thing, and both sides should drop it entirely. In connection with national enterprise, the whole community is now called upon to consider what are the public utilities which should be nationalised. I think everyone will agree that nationalisation of railways is the proper thing, inasmuch as it results in equitable treatment of all parts of the country as regards railway facilities. We have had railway nationalisation in Australia for many years, and America and Britain are now deciding upon that system, which tends to prove that it is the right system. If anything requires nationalisation, it is the shipping industry of the whole world. Extreme injury has been done by the profiteering tactics of ship owners during the last five years.

Mr. Jones: You had better come over and sit with me.

Mr. BROWN: If the hon. member will come half way, I will meet him on that neutral ground which I have mentioned. As regards shipping, the enormous governmental transport of all classes afforded to ship owners an opportunity to impose outrageous freights, at the same time telling the people that this was being done because of the dangers to which the ships were exposed. But, as a fact, the whole community paid extremely high insurance charges, so that the ship owners as ship owners incurred little or no more risk than in the days before the war. I contend that a regard for the welfare of the community should have induced the ship owners to be satisfied with reasonable profits. But they have always obtained more than reasonable profits, in my opinion. To-day we are faced in Australia with a stoppage of sea transport which has already extended over nearly six months, with the result that all our coastal towns are in difficulties, and great suffering and want have been inflicted on the people as a whole. Some say that the seamen should have less or more pay, and others say that the ship owners have been getting too much. I am sure that a nationalisation of the shipping industry would bring about the transport of commodities in a reasonable way and at reasonable cost. The ship owners claim that they must have a fair rate of interest on the capital they have invested, but instead of being satisfied with 15 or 20 per cent. on their risk, they want 200 or 300 per cent. Australia should stand out in the matter of State steamships, and I compliment the Prime Minister, Mr. Hughes, on his courage in taking upon himself the responsibility and criticism and abuse involved in committing Australia to an expenditure of 11 millions sterling for the purchase of ships. The more ships we have in Australia the safer shall we be from the profiteer. We may have one fight with the shipping boycott, such as is

now being introduced in England by the shipping conference. But if the shipping conference decides that they will not allow shippers to send goods to Australia in the Commonwealth vessels then we, as buyers of the goods, will retort, "We will not buy from those merchants unless we get a fair deal in connection with the ships." Another enterprise which should be nationalised is that of banking. We have to-day all over Australia banks out of all proportion to the requirements. They occupy expensive buildings, have expensive furniture and fittings and costly office staffs. A small community of five million people have to carry them all.

Hon. P. Collier: And in comparatively small towns we find two and three banks.

Mr. BROWN: In Kalgoorlie there are seven private banks and two Government banks, practically not one of them earning a living. If the banking business were nationalised half the people so employed could be turned out of their present occupations and sent to do some useful work elsewhere. In addition, these banks, owing to the expenses and the necessity for making big dividends for their shareholders, charge out of all proportion for the services they render, when we go to borrow money. Many people have more money than they know how to use. They go to that bank which will give them the highest interest, and in consequence that bank has to charge a higher rate than the borrower can afford to pay for money for developmental work. If it were possible for the nation to own all banking, a man with a lot of money might get one per cent. Then the bank might add another 1½ per cent. for administrative purposes, and the borrower would perhaps get his money at three per cent. and do a lot of developmental work, which is at present impossible. Another public utility which should be nationalised is insurance. To-day we are paying excessive premiums for the services rendered. We have 42 insurance companies in this State, everyone of them in an expensive building with an expensive staff, and having to create big dividends for its shareholders. There is no competition in insurance. The companies have a schedule of rates and a schedule of payments, and if a big insurance proposition comes along they split it up and so share the risk. A private system of insurance might have been reasonable in the past, when competition existed, but when no competition exists the nation should take charge of insurance. Another suggestion which I would make is as yet a bit ahead of practical politics. But these things must be spoken of in advance, before we are ready to deal seriously with them. I contend that coal should be nationalised. The greatest mineral the world has is coal. Probably the greatest discovery yet made by civilisation was the discovery of coal with its use for steam purposes, lighting, heating, and for the thousand and one chemicals produced from coal. Humanity does not know what we owe to King Coal. Another thing which, in my opinion, should be nationalised, is land. I

am a great opponent of the freehold of land. I think land nationalisation should be considered in all seriousness. In the past everyone has been trying to get hold of as much land as possible. I have done the same thing myself. But I am living under a social system which I wish to see altered, and I should like to prevent any more land being alienated under the freehold principle. I contend that the principle has been abused. In the very early days conquest was responsible for the distribution of land for services rendered. At a later stage we had purchasers securing the right to use some of that land, and to-day also we have to ask somebody else to let us have a bit of land for our own use. Another feature in connection with the freehold of land is that a man may become the owner of a specially favoured site convenient for public buildings. If that man is to have that benefit over all others he should be made to pay specially for it. I have enumerated four or five public utilities from which I think the people should get the whole benefit.

Hon. P. Collier: The king industries, the base of all other industries.

Mr. BROWN: We are practically living on, from, or by those industries. In connection with land, the day will come when there will be no land for the children, unless somebody else more fortunate is prepared to allow them to have some of the alienated land. The biggest problem we have in the State at the present time is political. The question is, can we maintain our local self-government under existing conditions? This question will have to be seriously considered by every Parliamentarian and by the public. I think the abolition of party politics would put us on the right road to continue local self-government. If we proceed as we are doing the day is not far distant when our money-lending friends will come along and ask us to pay with our own money, and not by further loan money, for the goods that we have had. When that day comes we shall be either taken over financially by the Commonwealth or absorbed and administered as a second Northern Territory or Papua, and that will be the end of us as a local self-governing State. In connection with finance, we have not during the past eight years once balanced our books. We are now going on into the ninth successive year of that sort of thing. During those eight years we have accumulated 3½ million pounds worth of goods for which we have not paid. It is a pretty awkward position to have to make provision for that great debt. We have a particularly long coastline, and a particularly big territory to develop, and, having regard to our small population, we have developed a little more rapidly than we ought to have done. The Commonwealth now think of reducing our per capita return by half-a-crown per annum for the next six years. If they seriously mean that, we shall have to get some slogan to frighten them from that line of action. I suggest some such slogan as

"Support secession as against absorption." I am not fond of secession myself, but we have a right to live our own lives. We have done what no other Australian State has done in the same proportion, namely, we have put away five million pounds as a sinking fund with which to redeem our loans at maturity. Other States have done hardly anything. A few have small amounts to credit, but in proportion to the amounts borrowed they have nothing like our sinking fund. We might get for our immediate wants a little more revenue. I am sorry the Premier did not mention that we want more revenue. We may get a little more from income tax. I think we shall have to increase that tax and, in addition, get some revenue from an unimproved land tax, and also increase our probate duties. We must get more revenue, because we have to increase the salaries of the Public Service, the railway and tramway men, the school teachers, and the police; in fact, every Government employee except those receiving substantial salaries have to be paid more money. And, as we went back by over £600,000 last year, even with our increased income tax of £190,000,—those items of increase which I have mentioned obtained during only two or three months of last year,—we have to get more revenue from somewhere, and I think the sooner the Premier says where it is to come from, the better for all concerned. I quite agree with the Premier when he states that the first line of defence for national safety is in the farm. Whatever other persons have to put up with, the farmer has always done the hardest work for the smallest comfort. Any proposition for lightening the burden of the farmer will have my support. Moreover, I think the farmer's wife and his children should be sympathetically considered. If railway fares were reduced by 50 or 75 per cent. the farmer's wife would be able to travel to the metropolis and see something other than what she sees on the farm, and she would be able to transact in the town or city a lot of business relating to the farm. Also, if the farmer's children were given the same advantage, they would see something different from what is before them every day on the farm, and in consequence we should have greater happiness and contentment all round. The same thing would apply with regard to maternity cases among the farmers' wives. Every help that can be given by the Government to those wives should be sympathetically extended. The time is ripe for the State Government to take action with regard to the Federal maternity bonus of £5. If that maternity bonus of £5 is necessary to a city dweller, £10 is not too much for the farmer's wife, living five or ten miles back from the nearest town or railway station. I think the time has arrived when we should have some alteration in our Legislature. The single electorate system should be abolished and proportional representation adopted in its place. Tasmania has had proportional re-

presentation for some time, and it seems to me the system affords Parliamentary representation to both majorities and minorities.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is not very successful in Tasmania.

Hon. T. Walker: They talk of abolishing it.

Mr. BROWN: Possibly they are only now beginning to see its benefits. Possibly, also, the party politicians are still animated by the spirit of "I'll hold what I have got." Ministerial by-elections ought to be abolished. They are not required under the Federal Constitution and I see no reason for retaining them under our own. Persons appointed to the Ministry no sooner take office than they have to fight an election, even if they have been elected by the people a month or two before. This costs the Ministers concerned and the country a considerable sum of money. There is a general waste all round.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): This is the only State in which it is done.

Mr. BROWN: With reference to the Initiative, Referendum and Recall, we know well that the old system of allowing the Government to bring forward what measures they liked is not in the best interests of the country. The people should be given an opportunity by the Initiative to bring in any particular form of legislation that they think advisable and should not have to wait for Parliament to say when it will give that measure of reform.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is the particular measure of legislation that we most want.

Mr. BROWN: If we had the Initiative, Referendum and Recall, the party system would die out. We would then have elective Ministries on the floor of the House, and not caucus Ministries as we have had for the last 30 years on both sides of the House. If we were all of one party we should have the benefit of the brains of both sides of the House. When members were placed in Ministerial authority they could remain there so long as their behaviour was as it should be. They would be enabled to obtain a grasp of the details of office in such a way that the departmental officers would endeavour to do better for the State than they are doing now. The member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) spoke about the tramway extensions southward and eastward of the river. He made out a good case for a few thousand people at an expenditure of a few thousand pounds. In my opinion the municipality of Subiaco has a greater claim for tramway extensions than other municipalities. I wish the Minister for Mines to realise that the laying of a tram track and a double track from Thomas-street to Bagot-road, is the first thing that is required to be done, and that the extension of the double track from Bagot-road to the Park gates, which has been promised for five years, should also be carried out. This promise was not given effect to owing to the want of rails and fastenings, but that excuse can no longer stand. Tramway extensions are required along Hay-street

to Jolimont, a part of Subiaco which has been long in want of such an extension. There is a population to be served of about a thousand people, and if the trams were provided for them there would be sufficient return immediately to pay interest and sinking fund. After these works have been completed then the merits of a tramway extension eastward, northward, and westward might be taken into consideration. The Crawley tram track should be continued along the river to Claremont. There is magnificent land there for residential purposes and the settlement that would ensue would, I feel sure, pay for the expenditure on the work. I am also certain that people who settled in that area would be fully satisfied with the homes they could make there. For many years past the metropolitan area has had to put up with a very unsatisfactory water supply. I know it can be said that the bore water is good enough and cheap enough. We tolerated this while the war was on, but will do so no longer. I hope the Government will realise that the people are entitled to pure water and plenty of it. The water at present supplied to us, judging by its disastrous effect upon plant and vegetable life, is likely to prove damaging to the health of the people. If that is so then many of our misfortunes are due to our water supply. In my own home I find that a great deal of damage is done to my lawns and plants by our being obliged to use this bore water.

Mr. Munsie: If you put much of this on it will kill the plants altogether in the summer time.

Mr. BROWN: It is the duty of the Government to give us a pure water supply, and to no longer rely upon this bore water which is so highly charged with minerals.

Hon. P. Collier: When I was in office the engineer estimated that it would take three or four years to complete any new scheme, and that is all the more reason why the Government should undertake it at once.

Mr. BROWN: I draw attention to this matter so that the Government may commence operations immediately, and let the people know that this is being done. It would give a great amount of employment over a period of three or four years and would afford an opportunity to those men now employed in the State Implement Works and elsewhere in pipe-making to continue making pipes for reticulation. This would also be profitable employment and not unproductive employment. Some five or six years ago, when the sewerage system was being brought into operation, the scheme outlined provided for the building of septic tanks in Subiaco. To this the residents strongly objected.

Hon. P. Collier: I had a scheme which provided for the actual completion of the Subiaco sewerage.

Mr. BROWN: A referendum was taken on the subject and the people objected to the septic tanks being placed there. We were told then that we would have to await the convenience of the Government. We

have awaited their convenience, owing to the war and the state of the finances. Now we are not going to wait any longer. I do not say that in the way of a threat. I am convinced that the western portion of the city from the topmost point of Mt. Eliza should have the sewerage and deep drainage.

Hon. P. Collier: The public health demands it.

Mr. BROWN: Not only that, but the people are prepared to pay for the benefits received in place of the insanitary system at present in vogue. A large suburb like Subiaco should be ashamed to let the world know that it is still working under obsolete conditions with regard to its hygienic surroundings. In connection with farming matters, the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) spoke to the farmers about silos and the bulk handling of wheat. I endorse what he said in regard to the timber used for these storage bins and silos. I am glad to draw attention to the very splendid set of bins that has been installed at the Perth mill. Before agreeing to any other form of construction, members can easily satisfy themselves that these bins meet the case. I hope the farmers will consider the advisability of exporting flour instead of wheat. At present the very bags which are being used are costing the farmers about 6d. per bushel. We have a milling capacity in this State capable of putting through six million bushels of wheat in a year. We require two or three million bushels for local consumption and it is not likely, judging by the returns for the last two or three years, that we shall have much more than six or seven million bushels to export. If we could get markets for our flour we would find employment continuously for these mills and of the staffs employed therein. We would have 1,000 lbs. of bran and pollard from every 3,000 lbs. of wheat which left the State. We want that bran and pollard for our pig feed and poultry feed, and for our dairying industry. We have not been able to get what we require for these purposes in the past. In addition to this use for the offal, we have also to remember its value to the State from the point of view of manure. Everyone who knows anything about the constituent parts of manure for our lands, knows that sulphuric acid forms a large proportion of manurial elements. By keeping within the State 1,000 lbs. of offal for every 3,000 lbs. of wheat we would be materially increasing the value of our lands. I wish the Government would seriously consider, before more unrest and discontent and unpleasantness occur, the arrangement of the voluntary system in connection with our fire brigade.

Mr. Munsie: I think that has been amicably settled at last.

Mr. BROWN: I hope so. A great amount of time was occupied in improving the old system, and it will require care to see that the improvement in the system is not lost. For years past many Governments