

the many problems of administration, by doing which we shall earn the gratitude of the people of the country for all time.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [8.58 p.m.] : So many subjects have been touched upon in the Address-in-reply that I wish simply to give a few impressions as they have occurred to me, a new member of this House, who is not saturated as a party politician, at all events at present. I wish to remind the House that the Address-in-reply for the first session of this Parliament commenced on the 20th November, 1917, and ended on the 24th January, 1918. So far as I am able to find out, no further result has eventuated from all those weeks of talk.

Hon. P. Collier: We were not talking all those weeks.

Mr. MONEY: We certainly had an interval, but we were talking for weeks.

Hon. P. Collier: As a matter of fact the Address-in-reply only occupied two or three days.

Mr. MONEY: The debate on the Address-in-reply for the second session commenced on the 22nd August last and I hope, in fact I know, it will end to-night. That is practically three weeks, during which we have had a multitude of speeches, accurately reported in "Hansard," but I doubt whether the result of all the time taken up in the debate will have any better effect than the debates in past years. I refer to this because to-day we have much important business to transact. We spoil a whole week in the opening of Parliament, and I feel there is great necessity for Parliamentary reform. I do not say this as affecting only the present Parliament. If we refer to those copies of "Hansard" mentioned by the member for East Perth, we shall probably find that the same thing has been going on for many years past. This might be quite satisfactory to those who have been politicians for a great number of years, but I must confess that, coming fresh to the House, I do not accept it as being at all businesslike. I hope the Government will furnish an opportunity for full discussion in the House, with a view to securing some measure of Parliamentary reform either by reducing the number of speeches, or shortening the speeches, and by the devising of some different methods than we have for conducting the business of the State. The present methods were quite good enough in the old coaching days, but they are not up to date in times of railways, aeroplanes, telegraphs, and wireless communications. To-day we have the same methods as were employed by our predecessors of 50 years ago. But the world has changed, and I think it is up to us to remember that the clothes worn 50 years ago are not suitable for to-day. I will heartily support any reform which will enable 50 members of Parliament to accomplish some work and avoid the delays from which we have suffered for so long past. The time is more than ripe for this Parliamentary reform. A number of members were returned to the House with that as a plank in their platform, namely, Parliamentary reform, and I am surprised that we have not had this matter urged more strongly. Is there nothing to do, that we can

afford to waste this time? I look back and see certain questions that are acknowledged to be essential to the prosperity of the State, questions now 15 years old. Those questions have been shelved from session to session and from Parliament to Parliament. If we could avoid this waste of time we should be better able to deal with those subjects requiring careful and earnest attention. Take as an instance the provision of cheap lime for the agriculturist. The subject has been worn threadbare. For the last 15 years our agriculturists have been told that they must have cheap lime to get the best results from their land. Successive Governments have promised a solution of this small problem. It is a matter, not of finance but of action. The lime is there, the agriculturists are there, and all that are required are facilities. If past Governments had not promised those facilities for obtaining cheap lime, the people themselves would have provided it years ago. As to the necessity for the lime, let me refer the House to the report of the Agricultural Commission, page 7, where this passage occurs—

Wherever the land is drained and brought under cultivation, its improvement would be materially assisted by dressings of cheap lime. Indeed, practically no other agency is capable of producing so much result under intelligent application, and it is a reflection on the State's agricultural policy that the many deposits, which have for years been known to exist in a form available for immediate use, have not been made available long ere this. The deposits at Lake Clifton and Capel are, we find, in the hands of concessionaires, whose obligations, inter alia are to supply certain quantities of lime to farmers at 10s. to 12s. per ton on rails. In the case of Lake Clifton the obligation is not insistent till after the declaration of peace. The lime deposits are, therefore, to a certain extent, locked up, and we can only express these opinions at this stage:—(1) That 10s. to 12s. per ton is too high a price for agricultural lime on trucks, say, Waroona, and in fixing such a price the State has sacrificed the interests of its farmers (2) That if the rates fixed are incapable of revision to something like 5s. per ton, the State should make the best of a bad job by arranging with the concessionaires for the early delivery of lime for the benefit of the limited number of settlers whose added rail age costs do not prohibit its use.

I think that is sufficient reference to confirm the importance of this lime question. On another page the Royal Commission have found that the lime should be delivered to the agriculturists at 5s. per ton. I am not aware at present of anything being done to put those recommendations into effect. I instance that as a matter which, perhaps, would have been attended to much sooner but for the unnecessary time taken up in the debate on the Address-in-reply. It is recognised that the most important subject we have to deal with to-day is the financial position. To my mind Western Australia has nothing to fear so long as we have an energetic, wise and far-sighted policy to follow. I am satisfied that there is no reason whatever for despondency or pessi-

mism in Western Australia. On the last occasion of my speaking on the Address-in-reply, I took the trouble to investigate the national finances of Western Australia as contrasted with the Government finances of the State, and I was surprised to find the small difference in the national finances as before the war and as three years after the outbreak of war. To-day I am more than ever convinced that my conclusions on that occasion were right. It is not only our present finances that we must look to, but it is the natural progressive increase of wealth that must eventuate as time goes on. The deficiency is entirely a Government deficiency, and it is necessary to have a remarrying of our assets, and to look to those directions whence the wealth is derivable. When I say that the national finances balance, I mean this: we have suffered in respect of our timber of late, we have suffered in other directions, but however much we have suffered in our gold mining industry, or our timber industry, it has been compensated by the increase in the wool, the increased values of stock, and the increased values of wheat as compared with periods before the war. Why I desire to strike a note of confidence is this: if we only look back a few years in Western Australia we find we had no wealth of coal. That has been developed since. It is a wealth that is naturally and progressively increasing. And we have other wealth which will naturally and progressively increase by the development of our agricultural and pastoral properties. We are capable of carrying four or five times as many sheep as we have now, and we are capable of a similar increase in cattle. Our timber has gone up in value, our coal has gone up in value, in fact, everything is tending in the direction of a great increase in the value of the wealth of Western Australia. As prices go up, as values go up, so much better are the people able to bear the taxation. If for their sheep they receive 30s. instead of 10s., how easy it is for them to meet the financial troubles that face us to-day. Again, the depreciation of our currency is another great factor which will help us considerably in paying off our national debt. If only we can husband our national resources, our national State debt will be as easy to pay as the proverbial falling off a log. The mere natural increase in wealth, the depreciation of the currency and increased population, these three items will entirely clear off the State debt of Western Australia. These are no times for us to go about with our tails down. If it is necessary to put stiffness into the Government, by drugs or otherwise, we must try to do it. Although I have mentioned these matters which may give us the necessary optimism and spirit to go on, with the will to succeed—because I am convinced that if we are to succeed, half the success will be due to the tone and spirit with which we go about our work—there are other matters which require close attention. I know what I speak of. When I talk about sheep increasing in value, I know that, with the help of our refrigerating works, they will increase in value. When we

speak of the value of meat we know that meat must be of value. The world to-day is meat hungry. It is starving for meat. It is cold for the want of woollen goods. These are essentials. To show how scarce in Europe cattle and sheep are I would inform the House that there is a shortage there of no less than 28 millions of cattle, 54 millions of sheep, and 32 millions of pigs. The world's market for some years will be good for all the meat that Australia can possibly produce.

Mr. Harrison. That is absolutely correct.

Mr. MONEY: The world's market will be good for all the wool that Australia can produce for some years. With a prospect like this, if we had an ordinary business to deal with, we should say that we had excellent prospects indeed. A business producing as much as Western Australia might well view with pessimism the future if it was found impossible to sell the goods that were produced. Let us look at Western Australia in the light of a business proposition with markets like these before it. I say that the prospects could not be better, and that they never have been better in the history of Australia than they are to-day. I would go further and say that the prospects have never been half so good as they are now. The world's markets are there for the sale of all the produce that can be turned out by Western Australia. Having investigated our assets I say there is no reason to doubt the future, if we only go about our business by means of proper methods. I have some good intelligence to give to the House in reference to our coal production. For some years past it has been considered that Collie coal is not a good bunkering coal and not fit for railway purposes. Necessity has shown that it has met the requirements of most of our local railways. It has been used for bunkering purposes for some time past with the greatest success. The best information that I can give to members, however, is that it has been shipped from Western Australia as a full cargo, and has reached Mauritius in excellent condition. The boat conveying it took 31 days to reach its destination, and we have just heard that the only difference in temperature between that existing at the time the coal went into the hold at the south-west port and its arrival at Mauritius was ten degrees. I am sure that the Minister for Works will be glad to know that the efforts of the Government at the Collie coal port will not have been in vain, and that immediately these works are completed, which were promised by the Government in 1911 as part of their policy, but the completion of which has been delayed, involving considerable waste of money, there is every prospect of our getting the coal bunkering trade for the whole of Australia, as this will be the last port of call for boats going home via the Cape. This will not only mean increasing the value of the assets of Western Australia by converting Collie coal into cash, but will increase our railway revenue, and will be equal to building two new

ships to meet the shortage of shipping we have to-day. This will also help in other directions in getting our surplus food stuffs away, which have already been accumulating too long. When I speak of two ships I think I am within the mark. Ours is the first and last port of call for ships coming from and going overseas, via South Africa. Every boat that comes from the Eastern States on its way to Europe, via South Africa, will be able to carry so much more cargo by reason of the fact of its being able to bunker coal from this State, and if each boat can do this it is only a matter of calculation to show that this becomes a national and not a local question. There should, therefore, be no further delay than can possibly be helped. I am glad to see that this South-West port is one of the public works which it is the intention and policy of the Government to go on with. I am satisfied there will be no cause for regret if the work is done immediately. We shall then be able to obtain a depth of water of from 30 to 33 feet, which will enable any boat of any size coming to Australia to call there and get its coal. That in itself is a natural increase of our assets. There are other minor matters in which we might all assist if we would. I think we are suffering to-day from a lack of co-ordination amongst the various Government departments. I am speaking as much as possible in the abstract when I say that in our public departments we have sometimes one department refusing to do something on the ground that this is a matter affecting another department, and vice versa. It should be recognised that our departments stand in much the same light to the people as our finances stand to the State as a whole. We must regard the finances as being the total aggregate finances of Western Australia for the moment. Similarly our Government departments must regard themselves as being in existence for the benefit of all the people of Western Australia, not in their own interests or in the interests of any of their officers. I am also satisfied that there is a great want of economy in the administration of our local affairs, and that there is too much centralisation. We should do very much better if we could split up our Public Works Department into different districts, and have more local management of local affairs.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We already have district inspectors. What more do we want?

Mr. MONEY: As a rule the inspectors come from Perth. This means delay, and very often the work has to be inspected again. We are suffering from too much centralisation and should have more local management.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You will increase the cost considerably if you have offices in each place.

Mr. MONEY: We have the offices there already in the shape of our roads board offices. When I speak of local administration, I do not mean an agent from the head office in a country district. I mean that the people of

the State must take more interest in their local affairs, and that the roads boards must have power, if necessary, to take a bigger hand in the management and construction of their own works, instead of paying 30 per cent. more than they should pay owing to the system of administration from a central body.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I thought you were talking about the Public Works Department.

Mr. MONEY: It is no good bringing ideas forward in this House if they are not going to be taken any notice of. We have suffered too much in the past from delays. The object of parliamentary reform is to avoid this parliamentary delay, and these delays in despatch of Government business and the business of the country. I hope that some notice may be taken of the speeches which have been delivered on the Address-in-reply.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

House adjourned at 9.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th September, 1918.

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

ELECTION RETURN—CLAREMONT.

The SPEAKER announced the return to the writ issued for the election of a member for Claremont, showing that Mr. Thomas Duff had been duly elected.

Mr. Duff took and subscribed the oath, and signed the roll.

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers presented" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

BILL—INTERPRETATION.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [4.43] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to amend the existing Interpretation Act of 1898 in two particulars: firstly, in respect of the provision in Section 11 of the existing Act that any by-law or regulation shall continue to have the force of law until disallowed by both Houses of Parliament, and, secondly, in respect of the absence in the existing Act of any provision for continuing a temporary Act during the passage through Parliament of a Bill for continuing such temporary Act. Opportunity has been taken to re-enact the principal measure and its amendments in consolidated and revised