

the manufacture of boots, furniture, and other things something like 15s. out of every pound goes to labour. If the 2½ millions to which I have already referred were diverted into other channels, it would provide from three to four times the amount of employment that is being given to-day. Where then does the argument come in about the loss of employment? We would have more men owning their own little homes, there would be happier families and better clothed women and children, while better men would form the backbone of the community. If this thing is done, it will not be for to-day or to-morrow, or for the duration of the war, but we will never go back on it, and in 10 years' time we will reflect and wonder how the existing condition of things to-day was ever allowed to go on.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Would you provide some measure of protection for the licensees who have taken long leases?

Mr. THOMAS: I would. The publicans in many instances to-day are not making even a profit, but in any case I am not out on a crusade against any individual. The publican is no worse off than any other person at the present time. If the best and most sober and upright, and most religious members of this House were put in charge of hotels, and they found themselves up against the proposition of making those hotels pay, they, by force of circumstances, would be compelled to run the traffic for what it was worth, and it would be the duty of the Legislature to make it impossible for them to do that. We owe a solemn duty to the country, and if members do not take advantage of it, it will be an everlasting disgrace. I think it is somewhat discreditable to find that the people who have pretended to fight the temperance campaign are not to-day attempting to strengthen the hands of members of Parliament to carry the Bill for the referendum through both Houses. Why are not the temperance advocates doing something to convince the majority of the people and members of Parliament that

such a measure as is proposed by the Government is desirable.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: They are getting ready.

Mr. THOMAS: I think it will be necessary to have all the agitation possible to convince the people of Western Australia of the desirability of bringing about the early closing of hotel bars. The full blast that they can bring to bear upon public opinion will be required if this Bill is to find its way through the Legislative Council. I trust that if no other good follows as the outcome of the labours of this session, that this measure will find a place on the statute-book of Western Australia.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [8.42]: It was pleasing to hear the hon. member who just sat down speaking in such a determined manner on the question of the early closing of hotels. I consider, at a juncture like this, that the people should have the opportunity of deciding whether the hotels should close at an earlier hour. I have no doubt that if the question goes to the people it will be decided by a big majority that the sale of liquor should be confined to restricted hours. The womenfolk, at any rate, will vote solidly for the earlier closing of hotels. Like my friend the member for Bunbury, I am not a teetotaler, but I am not what may be called a temperance crank. The Governor's Speech is brief and the addresses which have been delivered by hon. members have likewise been brief, and it is my intention to follow on similar lines. We have felt the war cloud hanging over us and we find it difficult to touch on matters which might be termed purely parochial. I was very pleased to see that resolution passed, expressing confidence in those directing the affairs of the Empire, and containing also an expression of optimism, that we will come out on the right side. Similar expressions are required in reference to the affairs of our State. We want a spirit of optimism, a belief in the future of our own country. I believe that Western Australia will prosper in spite of any Government, whether Liberal or Labour.

The Premier remarked that certain members were candid enough to admit that the Government had rendered all possible assistance to the farming community; and he went on to say the Government did not claim any credit for that, because it was essential in the interests of the State. When, last session, I declared it was the duty of the Government to assist the farmers, that by so doing the Government were only protecting their own assets, I was jeered at. I am pleased indeed to find that the Premier and his supporters have realised that the farming community should have due consideration. The Premier also stated that, not having any harvest to carry, the Railways had lost approximately, £190,000. It goes to prove that if we take care of the country, the towns will take care of themselves. It should be the duty of the Government to foster our primary industries. We heard a good deal from the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) in regard to the coal kings and their monopoly. As a matter of fact, there are no greater supporters of the coal kings of New South Wales than our Government. In the 1913-14 report of the Commissioner of Railways, we find that the Government imported coal to the value of £94,254, and used our local coal to the value of £90,680. When hon. members speak of monopolies they should bear in mind their own industries. I would like to draw attention to the fact that the money sent out for imported coal does not pay wages in this State, does not pay rates and taxes here, and does not help to educate our children. I trust the Government will determine to use nothing but our local coal on the Railways. I know it is said that it is not suitable to our locomotives, but I maintain that we should make the locomotives suitable to the coal, and not import coal suitable to the locomotives. If the amount of money annually sent out of this State to foster the so-called coal kings were spent here it would be of vast benefit to the community. The question of whether the Government did right or wrong in entering upon the State enterprises is

purely a matter of opinion. In any case those enterprises should be capitalised. In respect to the implement works, the Minister for Works ought to welcome a select committee. If he is so sure that he is on the right track he should have nothing to fear.

The Minister for Works: I have nothing to fear.

Mr. THOMSON: Then the Minister ought to welcome a select committee.

The Minister for Works: No man who resigns should have an inquiry made into his case.

Mr. THOMSON: It has been asked, should our Railways and harbour works be considered State enterprises. The member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) dealt fully with that, and I do not propose to labour the question. In my opinion a public enterprise is or should be a public utility, of benefit to the whole community. In respect to the State Sawmills, things are not perhaps just as we would like them. Indeed, in respect to the whole of our State enterprises, there is abroad a feeling of distrust, and I think the Government would be wise to appoint some sort of commission of investigation. It would serve to set the public mind at rest.

Mr. Foley: Do you consider the present abnormal time opportune?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, because if anything is found to be wrong it could be rectified and the enterprises established on a proper footing when normal times returned. I propose to relate an incident which came under my personal notice, and which serves to create doubt as to the manner in which affairs are being administered in some of our State enterprises. The Public Works Department called tenders for the erection of a building, and specified that the timber to be used in the structure was to be secured from the State sawmills at a price of 20s. per hundred delivered on trucks at the nearest railway station. The price at which the contractor could procure the material from local merchants was 13s. per hundred. Of course we can easily make our State enterprises pay if we are going to compel contractors to pur-

chase material from the State mills at 20s., notwithstanding that the same class of material can be purchased elsewhere for 13s.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Did you get any explanation?

Mr. THOMSON: I did not require any; the facts were irrefutable.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The department could have supplied an explanation.

Mr. THOMSON: This is not an isolated case.

Mr. Taylor: Were those prices quoted in the specifications?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, on trucks at the railway station. The contractor brought the specifications to me and asked if I thought it was a fair thing. Again, the department called tenders for a bridge in the Denmark district, specifying that powellised karri was to be used. Powellised karri at Denmark railway station costs £6 6s., to which must be added 5s. for cartage, or £6 11s., whereas jarrah could be delivered on the spot at £5 per load.

The Minister for Works: Probably the engineer preferred powellised karri.

Mr. THOMSON: But it is not good business to cart material huge distances and pay enormous railway freights when the material is procurable on the spot. This was for a bridge, and we know that jarrah is a splendid timber for bridges.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Not splendid. It is reasonably good timber, but not splendid; it never was.

Mr. THOMSON: I am only quoting these instances as showing why there is a certain degree of distrust in regard to our State enterprises. In view of the large amount of money we have invested in these enterprises, one can only hope that all is well, and that they will return a profit. But in the face of instances such as I have quoted one wonders whether things are quite right.

The Minister for Works: If you had asked me about this I would have made inquiry. It is the first I have heard of it.

Mr. THOMSON: I gave the information to the Press. This is old; it happened some months ago.

The Minister for Works: I see; it is a political matter.

Mr. THOMSON: No, it is not. If the House had been sitting at the time I would have brought it before the House. I merely quote the instance as explaining some of the distrust manifested in respect to our State enterprises.

Mr. O'Loughlen: As a principle, do you believe in State sawmills?

Mr. THOMSON: I am not prepared to say I do.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Your party started two of them.

Mr. THOMSON: The State sawmills are not going to injure the big firm, although probably they will have the effect of closing down small millers, men who cannot stand up against the competition of the Government.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If the State mills charge prices such as you have quoted, the small private mill need have no fear.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: We cannot have a monopoly in State mills.

Mr. THOMSON: That is the point. Apparently the Government are desirous of obtaining a monopoly to supply our public departments with material from State enterprises. Some hon. members may regard it as right that the Government should charge 50 per cent. more than one has to pay to a private individual, but that is not my view.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): That is not done.

Mr. THOMSON: I tell you I can produce the specification.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I say you are wrong.

Mr. THOMSON: I am right. If a private individual is desirous of purchasing jarrah from the State mills he will get it at a considerably lower price than those mills are charging for material for public works.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I think you are making an absolutely false statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon member must withdraw.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I withdraw.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not in the habit of making false statements in the House.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You have not been here long enough to acquire a habit.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope I never will. Whenever I make a charge against the Government I shall be able to substantiate the charge.

The Minister for Works: If you had brought that complaint to me it would have been rectified at once. It is the first time I have heard of such a thing taking place.

Mr. THOMSON: I am merely stating what has happened and giving a reason for the distrust in our State enterprises.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Do you know whether that is still existing?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): We had some distrust regarding the chaff merchants at Northam and have not heard too much about it from your side of the House.

Mr. Wansbrough: That does not clear this matter up.

Mr. THOMSON: The Honorary Minister will not put me off the track with the chaff he is trying to throw about. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister for Lands on bringing his inspectors together and giving them instructions to spread agricultural knowledge throughout the various districts they visit. This was a step in the right direction and the Minister deserves commendation for having initiated the movement. I would like him to go a step further and confer with the Education Department with a view to having agricultural subjects taught in the country schools. The leader of the Country party referred to bulk-handling of grain. I admit this is not a time to urge the initiation of any scheme which would involve a large expenditure of money. The member for Nelson expressed the hope that the Government would consider the question of preparing a site at Albany for the installation of bulk-handling. The Minister for Lands will remember that a large deputation waited upon him at Katanning and

made that request, and I am pleased that in a private conversation with the Minister I learned the Government had not lost sight of the proposal. I believe that in due course bulk-handling will be initiated in this State. The Premier estimated that we would have 18,000,000 bushels of wheat. That, at a cost of 3¼d. per bushel for bags, means that the cost to the farming community will be £243,750.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It does not; not by a long way.

Mr. THOMSON: If the Honorary Minister doubts me he can figure it out for himself.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I know it does not. You will not get as much for bulk as for bagged wheat.

Mr. THOMSON: It would pay the farmers in this State to undertake a direct tax in order to have bulk-handling initiated, because in a short space of time the whole of the money required for bags would be saved. The present system results in waste to the community, and if we could save only a half of that £243,000, the country would be better off for the adoption of bulk-handling.

Mr. Foley: Whom would you tax to provide it?

The Minister for Lands: You must get an increased price from the other end for your bulk wheat.

The Minister for Works: You would only get the price for ungraded wheat.

Mr. THOMSON: I am merely dealing with the question of bags and there is certainly cause for reflection. Personally, I think the sooner we adopt the bulk-handling system the better.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You look at only one side of the question.

Mr. THOMSON: I know more about the wants of the farming community than the Honorary Minister. I would prefer to see more flour exported from the State, so that we could retain the huge amount of money being sent away every year for the purchase of bran and pollard. During the six months ended May, we imported bran and pollard to the value of £60,814. This is one of the reasons why

I am not an ardent federalist. I am what some people would call a little Australian. Western Australia joined the Federation at least 25 years too soon, and we are not in a position to foster our industries as Victoria and New South Wales were able to assist theirs. If we had not joined the Federation, I believe we would have been in a better position financially than we are to-day. Dealing with education, we have had laid before us an excellent report from the department. The Minister for Education remarked that compensation had been made for the shorter school hours by giving the children extra homework. I made the statement that that did not apply to my district, and I here reiterate it. The regulation has not had effect in my district, and that is one of the grievances I have. Recently I met a group of children in Perth and asked them why they were not at school. The reply was, "The Government are too hard up to pay the teachers; therefore we have to have one day off every three weeks." It is pitiable to hear such remarks from children.

Mr. Foley: They are great readers of politics.

Mr. THOMSON: The statement was made to me and I say it is pitiable that children should be placed in a position in which they could make such remarks.

Mr. Foley: It has been hammered into them for political reasons.

Mr. THOMSON: Some members can never see anything beyond political reasons. I believe a majority of the teachers would have been quite prepared to work full hours at their present salaries.

Mr. Munsie: And you would have made just as great a complaint about the reduction of teachers' salaries.

Mr. Foley: Better to do that than charge for education.

Mr. THOMSON: It is amusing to hear members maintaining that salaries have not been reduced. It is farcical to contend that such is the case. Salaries have been reduced.

Mr. Munsie: They have not.

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member would have a most difficult task to convince the wife of a civil servant that she

was not receiving less money every week for housekeeping.

Mr. Munsie: No one would attempt to prove that.

Mr. THOMSON: Then why will the hon. member persist in stating that salaries have not been reduced?

Mr. Munsie: Because the husband is giving less service to the State.

The Attorney General: He has received a *quid pro quo*.

Mr. THOMSON: That is purely a matter of opinion. Touching one phase of the war, everyone must admit that technical education has proved a tower of strength to the German nation.

Mr. Munsie: And the nationalisation of coal mines.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): And natural brutality.

Mr. THOMSON: The lesson we can learn from the war is that we must give our children more technical education. The Government have done much in this direction. They have provided facilities, but there is one great weakness. While providing facilities for those intellectually clever and studious and desirous of improving themselves, there is a great difficulty in that a majority of the children on reaching the age of 14 and leaving school, have no further desire to acquire knowledge.

Mr. Foley: They have greater facilities in this State than in any other.

Mr. THOMSON: They may have in the hon. member's district, but they have not in mine. I am referring to the matter as it affects my district. In the cities and more thickly populated centres, the facilities are available, and this order of things should apply to the whole State.

The Attorney General: How could you find the money for it?

Mr. THOMSON: I will explain where I consider the money could be found. Supporters of the Government are asking for helpful criticism.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): We are not asking for anything; we take all you give us.

Mr. THOMSON: While members say they are desirous that there shall be a political truce, the unfortunate part is

that they consider the criticism helpful whenever it is to the liking of the Government, but if we criticise any particular portion of their administration we are accused of introducing party politics. That is the attitude of some members on the Government side.

The Minister for Mines: You have never made a speech that has not been complaints from start to finish. You have complained more than all the rest put together.

Mr. THOMSON: And with just cause too. Whenever I have been in a position to commend the Government I have done so, but if I have grievances, and if I consider my constituency is not getting justice, I will voice my complaint. Under our system of education at present infant classes are nothing more or less than State nurseries. It would be interesting to get a return of the number of children under five years of age attending school. I consider we are paying an enormous amount of money to nurse the children in our schools. Instead of taking the children at five years of age, I advocate raising the age to six years.

The Minister for Mines: Six is the compulsory age now.

Mr. THOMSON: Children are received at from four and a half to six years.

The Minister for Mines: From two and a half I think.

Mr. THOMSON: The schools should take no children under the age of six years, and the money being spent on the kindergarten and Montessori systems should be utilised to give the children technical education. If boys and girls, on leaving school, were compelled to attend classes on one or two afternoons or evenings each week, the outcome would be that employers would benefit as a result of the technical knowledge acquired by the children. I think it would be practical to give them one or two afternoons off, and not necessarily the whole afternoon. I think that the money we are spending, on playing at school on the part of children under six years of age, could be better spent by giving our boys and girls technical education, and by compelling them to attend.

The Minister for Mines: That policy would hit the sparsely populated agricultural centres more than any other part of the State.

The Attorney General: I would like to know what would be said at Katanning if we stopped taking children under the age of six.

Mr. THOMSON: That has not troubled the Minister very much when the Government have been saying all over the State that the children should have one holiday in every three weeks. I think the same thing would apply. I maintain, with all respect, that the suggestion I am offering is a good one. It would be of better advantage to the boys and girls to have the compulsory technical education that I have mentioned instead of their time being otherwise wasted—at all events, it is a waste so far as the State is concerned when we turn our infant schools into State nurseries.

The Minister for Works: A child of five years of age is a very good thing to have in a district when you want to make up the requisite numbers for a school.

The Minister for Mines: The trouble in this State is that when children have gone through a course of higher education there are not sufficient openings for them to be employed. They should rather go out upon the lands of the State.

The Attorney General: They want children even under 14 to be relieved from compulsory education now.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope, at all events, those are very few in number.

Mr. Munsie: They are at all events equal to the number of those who are complaining about the one day's holiday in three weeks.

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member for Hannans is apparently the authority for the Minister. He gives us all the information required, and it is unnecessary to apply to the Minister.

Mr. Munsie: And it is reliable information too.

Mr. THOMSON: It has been forecasted, but it is not in the Governor's Speech, that we will probably have

brought forward this session increased taxation proposals.

The Minister for Mines: Where is that forecasted? It must be a wireless gone astray.

Mr. THOMSON: The Government are in this position that they must get revenue. We, as a party on this side of the House, have been accused of turning down the income tax proposals of the Ministry. The statement has been made that if we had passed those proposals the land would have been flowing with milk and honey. People always omit in making that statement, however, to say that that tax was being imposed purely to find work for the unemployed.

The Minister for Mines: That could have been struck out easily.

Mr. THOMSON: If a tax is to be introduced I know of no form of taxation fairer than the income tax. I am a believer in that tax, and the more I have to pay to the Taxation Department on that score the better I like it. If the Government are considering the introduction of such a tax I would say to them, "Do not tax the other fellow; tax yourselves as well." I consider that the Government should reduce the amount to at least £100.

The Minister for Mines: Reduce what?

Mr. THOMSON: The exemption. My reason for this is that it would enable the Government to tax single men and women who are receiving fair salaries, and have no responsibilities and no ties.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How do you know they have no responsibilities, particularly the single women?

The Minister for Mines: How would you tax the single women when the men have gone away to the front?

Mr. O'Loughlen: And women who are out of work.

Mr. THOMSON: If single women are out of work they would have no tax to pay. There are scores of single men who have been receiving fair salaries and have no responsibilities, but are getting off scot free. Sufficient consideration has not been given to the married men.

The Minister for Works: We were all single at one time.

Mr. THOMSON: Possibly we were. I do not propose to deal with that question. The Government are asking for helpful criticism. This is not carping criticism. I throw out that suggestion because I believe in it. I would like to urge upon the Government, seeing that they have to look round for revenue, the necessity for seriously considering the introduction of a tax upon amusements.

The Premier: We introduced a Bill to provide for that.

Mr. THOMSON: I am convinced that if the Government introduced a tax on amusements entirely by itself it would be carried.

The Premier: Why by itself? They could have made it by itself by amending the other Bill if they had wished to do so.

Mr. THOMSON: If the Government are looking for revenue I suggest that course to them.

Mr. Heitmann: Why tax men for the amusements they go to, when others prefer to put their money into the Savings Bank?

Mr. THOMSON: I would tax amusements because I regard them as the superfluities of life. In my opinion all luxuries should be taxed.

The Premier: Amusements are not the superfluities of life.

Mr. THOMSON: They are one of the luxuries of life.

The Premier: They are a necessity.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It would be a poor world without a little of it.

Mr. THOMSON: If the people are desirous of going to picture shows, or to a racecourse, or any other place of that description, they will cheerfully pay any extra tax that the Government may like to put upon them.

Mr. Heitmann: The question is, is it a fair thing to tax them?

Mr. THOMSON: I say it is fair.

The Premier: If you think it is fair, why did you not help to pass it when it was here?

Mr. THOMSON: I am pleased at the brevity of the Governor's Speech. I should have liked to have seen an amendment introduced of the Roads Act. The

road boards have had several conferences, and are of opinion that there are matters of vital importance which require to be amended in that Act.

The Minister for Works: I have read their conference notes and cannot find anything very vital.

Mr. THOMSON: It is a matter of opinion as to whether this is vital or not. In the opinion of the Roads Board Conference, it is desirable that these amendments should be made. In reference to the freezing works, I am not going to enter into any discourse on the contract system or any other system. I consider it is a wise step to introduce these freezing works into the North-West. I hope the day is not far distant when we shall have freezing works in various portions of the State. One feels diffident about touching on matters affecting one's own constituency at a time like this. During last session there was passed a Bill for a railway from Nyabing to Lake Pingrup. These people are anxious to know when it is going to be started. I would like the Minister for Works to make some announcement. I know he is placed in a difficult position owing to want of cash, but I hope that is not always going to be the case.

The Minister for Works: It will take its ordinary position with other railways.

Mr. THOMSON: When the hon. Mr. Johnson was Minister for Works he toured the district, and gave the people a definite assurance that he would have a survey made of the line from Ongerup to Needilup.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You do not say the Minister for Lands made a promise?

Mr. George: Did he ever make anything else?

Mr. THOMSON: I regret to see that Ministers are casting reflections upon one of their colleagues.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The most promising man in the House.

Mr. THOMSON: When Ministers doubt the promise made by one of their colleagues what are the people to think? I hope these matters will be attended to in due course. I trust at a later period

when the Estimates are being discussed to deal with one or two matters, and to have a little more to say then.

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning) [9.25]: I was very glad to notice in one part of the Governor's Speech that there were no Bills to be brought before us of a party nature. I was hoping that the same element which appeared in the Speech would be found expressed in our debates, but already the member for Bunbury (Mr. Thomas) has become militant. He brings in all kinds of matters which are of the utmost party importance. If this session of Parliament is to be brought to a close without party matters being discussed I think we ought all to set the example. The member for Bunbury is not an unimportant member of "our party," and he should be kept quiet. So far as I am personally concerned, I desire to say that the views expressed by the deputy leader of this side of the House (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) are mine precisely. The temperate method adopted by the deputy leader in addressing the House is to be commended by all sides. I am sure that every member on this side of the House, at all events, was very pleased indeed with the way he placed the business before the Chamber. Speaking on the question of the war—because it seems to me to be the all-absorbing topic—I want to say that in the Eastern States the other day, when everybody was bustling about recruiting—especially in Victoria—and hustling up men, bands playing, Ministers of the Crown and members of the Opposition touring the country and sounding the big drum, and rounding up the men, I felt proud to think that we back here in Western Australia, without all that paraphernalia, were still able to hold our own in the matter of recruiting.

The Attorney General: And did more than the Eastern States in comparison.

Mr. ROBINSON: Before the week of that big beat up we were ahead of all the other States in Australia. Owing, however, to that big beat up Victoria, I think, now takes the lead.

The Attorney General: In proportion to the population.